

## **Newsletter From Comox Valley Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine**

Thank you for subscribing to my newsletter. I hope that you find the information useful and I welcome any questions or suggestions.

Enjoy

### **Topic of the Month**

1. Stress
2. Treatment Protocol
3. Lifestyle Suggestions
4. Dietary Suggestions
5. Question of the Month
6. What's New?

## **Relieving Stress with Traditional Chinese Medicine**

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### **Symptoms of Stress**

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Stress, this is something that more and more of my patients are experiencing daily and finding that it is interfering with their health and happiness. Recently there have been several medical studies showing the relation between high stress levels and decreased health. In Chinese medicine stress affects the flow of qi and eventually blood flow within the body, causing stagnation.

Some common symptoms of stress

- anger, irritability, frustration
- stiffness in the muscles, commonly neck and shoulders
- trouble sleeping
- depression
- irregular menstrual cycle
- premenstrual symptoms, moodiness, breast distension, bloating
- migraine or tension headaches
- chest constriction, anxiety
- frequent sighing
- gastrointestinal disorders
- poor concentration
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome

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## What can you do to Manage Stress?

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**Acupuncture** helps to move qi and blood and relieve stress. Acupuncture releases endorphins and serotonins within the brain and has a deep relaxing effect on the body, many people fall asleep while the needles are in. A medical study done at the University of California found that acupuncture decreases the sympathetic nerve activity during mental stress, lowering blood pressure and heart rate. Many people feel more energetic after as little as one treatment and have a marked improvement after 6-10.

**Herbal Medicine** is also effective to help manage stress and control the symptoms of stress within the body. Personalized herbal formulas in granule or capsule form can help with insomnia, digestive complaints, fatigue, headaches, menstruation, PMS symptoms, IBS, anxiety and muscle tension. Herbal medicine can be used alone or is most effective when combined with acupuncture treatments.

**Acupressure** is a treatment that can be performed by yourself or a partner at home. Stimulating certain acupuncture points on the body help to relieve stress and aid in circulation of energy.

LI4 – located between the thumb and second finger at the highest point of the web between the fingers. This point helps to release emotional mental and biological toxins from the body.

Liver 3- located in the web between the first and second toe. This point in conjunction with LI4 is called the four gates, points used to open the channels and remove stagnation and toxicity.

P6- located two inches up from the wrist crease on the palm side in the middle of the forearm between the two tendons. This point is used to help calm the mind.

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## Lifestyle Suggestions to Lower Stress

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**Breathing-** Many of us are shallow breathers, breathing from the upper lungs, this can often be amplified with stress. Shallow breathing does not allow the qi to circulate properly within the body. I recommend spending 5-10 minutes a day focusing on our breath and bringing the inhalation down to the belly and expanding our diaphragm and on exhalation releasing air and contracting the diaphragm. Breathing exercises will have a profound effect to lower stress levels.

***Meditation/ Visualization-*** Taking 15-30 minutes a day to meditate or use positive visualizations dramatically lower stress levels.

***Exercise-*** Moderate exercise helps to reduce stress and effects endorphins released from the brain. Exercise also moves qi and blood.

***Yoga Pilates, Qi gong*** – these exercises focus on the breath and help to move and build qi.

***Friends and Family-*** having a support group is very important to help minimize stress. Allow time during the week to spend with friends and family.

***Therapist-*** Someone who is trained to help you deal with stress and make positive changes in your life.

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## **Dietary Suggestions**

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- Do not eat late at night
- Eat small meals more frequently throughout the day
- Chew food well
- Do not overeat
- Do not drink too much fluids with meals
- Pay attention to eating, sit down to eat.
- Eat organically, locally and seasonally.

### **Foods to Eliminate/Reduce**

- deep fried greasy foods
- sweets, pastries, simple carbohydrates
- alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, recreational drugs
- spicy foods

### **Foods to Add**

- Spices to move qi- turmeric, caraway, rosemary, chive, mustard leaf, basil, thyme, mint.
- Cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts

- Leafy green vegetables
- Organic lean meats and fish

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## **Question of the Month**

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Can stress affect my fertility?

Absolutely, stress has an effect on the hormones that are secreted from the brain which can alter the menstrual cycle and effect ovulation. Stress also effects blood flow to the reproductive organs which also will have an effect on fertility.

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## **What's New?**

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I would like to invite you to the third year anniversary celebration of Comox Valley Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine on Thursday September 27<sup>th</sup> from 5-8:00pm at 2311 Rosewall Crescent, Courtenay. Join Michelle for refreshments, appetizers, door prizes and meet her friends Leanne Zdebiak Eni form Island Pilates and Sarah Seeds from Equilibrium Lifestyle Management. Bring a friend and I hope to see you there.

I am very excited to be attending an advanced course in Vancouver by Peter Deadman, a much respected practitioner of Chinese Medicine from the United States on male health. During this course I will expand my knowledge of male reproductive health to further help couples achieve their dream of a family.

\*I want to thank you all for your referrals. Referrals are an important way that my practice continues to grow and I thank you for that.

If you have enjoyed this article please forward this ezine to anyone who could benefit from it.

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