



Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) **and Chinese Medicine**

Irritable Bowel Syndrome is a complex disorder in which the intestines lose their ability to efficiently move their contents. Symptoms may include abdominal pain, headaches, fatigue, depression, anxiety, bloating, diarrhea and/or constipation. Stress, diet, emotional factors, hormone levels, and medications can trigger these symptoms.

Traditional Chinese Medicine looks at the body differently than Western medicine. The body according to Chinese Medicine is a garden that needs to be cultivated and maintained in order to grow strong and remain healthy. Good health happens when all of the organs and meridian systems are balanced and working together.

According to Chinese medical theories the Spleen is the organ in charge of digestion and absorption of foods and liquids. The Spleen is easily affected and weakened by poor eating habits and diet, antibiotics, excessive worry, or a weak constitution. When a weakened Spleen cannot metabolize or break down food efficiently, “dampness” appears in the body. Dampness occurs when rotting, undigested food sits in your gut, causing a variety of symptoms. If dampness “rises” to your head, you may experience dull headaches, a “foggy” feeling, and unable to clearly concentrate. Over time this can lead to bloating, fullness, bad breath, and loose stools.

In Chinese Medicine the Liver is associated with emotional health. Stress and anger directly influence the function of your liver and the result can be stress-induced IBS. If your liver is compromised, you may experience alternating diarrhea/constipation, as well as bloating, gas, headaches, and cramps or dull pain.

Another scenario is that your Kidney Yang could be unbalanced. If your Kidney energies are compromised, you may experience early-morning diarrhea, cold limbs, weak knees, low sex drive, a sore back and possibly bladder incontinence.

Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine can create a clear picture of the root imbalance(s) that can lead to IBS. These imbalances caused by IBS are between at least three major organs; Spleen, Liver and Kidney.

The most distinctive element of Chinese medicine is that each treatment is individualized according to the specific needs of each patient and their health picture. When you meet with your practitioner, he or she will discover which organ imbalance is contributing to your IBS. They may suggest a few therapies in order to maximize your healing such as herbs, acupuncture, changes in diet or exercise.

Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine can provide a safe, natural, drug-free, and effective way to address IBS.