

GERD Awareness

Did you know that acupuncture can help with a number of digestive issues? Yes, it is true!

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), aka heartburn, occurs when stomach acid flows back into your esophagus - the tube connecting your mouth and stomach.

If you suffer with heartburn, or you've ever suffered with it, you might have felt hopeless and frustrated at times. The allopathic medical world says that there are no known causes and the only known treatments are either medications or dietary adjustments.

Wouldn't it be nice to know what causes it in the first place, so that you can start treating and healing the root cause?

Enter Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). TCM has known for thousands of years that the blueprint of many physical manifestations is an imbalance of our Qi (energy). Reflux esophagitis in TCM focuses on transforming, harmonizing, and restoring the normal movement of the stomach Qi to prevent it "rebellious" upwards. The treatment with acupuncture and/or herbs focuses on restoring normal functioning of the lower esophageal sphincter (LES), enhancing gastric motility, and improving gastric emptying.



Causes of Stomach Qi Rebellious:

1. Eating too quickly
2. Eating when stressed or angry
3. Burning the midnight oil
4. Eating while walking or standing, repeatedly and over time
5. Anxiety
6. Drinking too much water with a meal or shortly after which diluted digestive enzymes, makes digestion very difficult.

If we take a look at the most common lifestyle factors which cause or exacerbate GERD, or the upward rebellious of Stomach Qi, we can see that simply doing the opposite of what causes it will be helpful. Also, introducing calming practices like meditation, walking in nature, and of course, coming in for acupuncture treatment. Because whilst changing our habits will help to prevent GERD from returning, healing the problem and lessening the damage done by the issue is where acupuncture and TCM shine.

Quick At-Home Tip:

Something very simple you can do at home to help yourself is, after every meal, stroke down the midline from the bottom of your rib cage to the top of your belly button for about two minutes gently. This will help the Qi to move downwards instead of rebelling upwards.

Here is some more good news: In a 2018 study, Acupuncture was trialled over a period of 6 weeks with daily treatment for GERD, with a few days break in between each week of treatment and the TCM control group fared significantly better than the Western medicine control group. There were also far fewer side effects (virtually none) in comparison to the control group who were taking Proton Pump Inhibitors and other medications for GERD.

The study concluded that compared with PPIs or Prokinetics therapy alone, acupuncture therapy can better improve the clinical total effective rate and symptom relief. Acupuncture also may decrease the recurrence rate and adverse events in the treatment of GERD. Our results suggest that TCM is a promising alternative therapy for GERD patients.

So, if you, or someone you know is suffering from GERD, there may be hope on the horizon! Give us a call to see if we can lend a helping hand.

Source:
Xiao J, Yang Y, Zhu Y, et al. Efficacy and Safety of Traditional Chinese Medicine on Nonerosive Reflux Disease: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med*. 2018;2018:1505394. Published 2018 May 24. doi:10.1155/2018/1505394

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