

## Blood and Iron Deficiency in Children

From a Chinese Medicine perspective, blood and iron deficiency is a common problem in children and it can occur in children aged 6 months to 12 years old. Following diagnosis, Chinese Medicine can assist with this problem. In Chinese Medicine theory, the Spleen organ makes the blood from the food and fluid that the child consumes. The Liver organ stores the blood. The primary function of blood is to nourish and moisten the body with nutrients and promote the growth of tendons and muscles. When this function is not occurring adequately various signs and symptoms can be seen in the child. These include:

- Pale face
- Lack of energy
- Poor appetite

- Heart palpitations
- Sleeping problems
- Irregular bowel movements

Chinese Medicine considers there to be three main causes of blood and iron deficiency in children.

- 1) Inadequate diet and lack of nutritious food, including not enough milk, vegetables, fruit, eggs, meat and protein. Poor nutrition can lead to a lack of energy and blood being created and circulated in the body.
- 2) Eating too much sweet food can affect the appetite and create fullness resulting in the child not wanting to eat more nutritious food.
- 3) Digestive system disorder or weakness affecting one or more of the organs involved in digestion - Spleen, Stomach, Large & Small Intestine, Liver or Gallbladder. Any disorder of these organs will affect the ability of the body to absorb the food, even if the food is good quality.

It is important to analyse the causes of blood and iron deficiency in children in order to give the appropriate treatment. In general Chinese Medicine recommends providing children with a balanced diet high in green vegetables, fruit and protein (milk, eggs, meat). It is important that children have exercise but not excessive amounts as it can quickly deplete the child's blood and energy. Children should also be encouraged to have adequate sleep and rest periods to rebuild their blood and energy.



## A Traditional Chinese Medicine Perspective On Cancer

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) cancerous growths may be caused by the following factors:

- 1) Emotions- extreme emotions can cause stagnation of the energies of the body; this stagnation of energy can become material and form growths.
- 2) Blood stagnation - usually occurs over a long period of time to the point where it forms into a physical growth.
- 3) Heat toxins- a build up of heat and toxins in the body due to stagnant energies and poor circulation of energy and blood flow.
- 4) Long term deficiency of organs- if organs lack energy they will not perform their functions effectively and this may lead to disease.

As you may already be aware of, current treatment methods in Western Medicine tend to be operations, chemotherapy and radiation therapy. There are three main ways in which Chinese medicine help:

### 1) Individuals who have already been diagnosed with cancer and

### have commenced treatment

During treatment for cancer most people will experience symptoms such as blood count problems, loss of hair, decrease in energy, indigestion, menstruation problems, and insomnia. Often the symptoms can be so severe that chemotherapy and other treatments are stopped until the person is strong enough to recommence. Chinese Medicine can help support the body during these treatments and can help to reduce the side effects of Western treatments. Using acupuncture and/or herbs to support internal organs and Yin/Yang we aim to help the individual be as healthy as possible.

### 2) Individuals who have already finished treatment

The aim of Chinese medicine is to re-establish balance and a return to health as quickly as possible for the individual. The aim is to increase the immune system to help the body to continue to clear the cancer cells and support the organ to function normally again.

### 3) Prevention

In Western and Chinese medicine, preven-

tion is recognised as the best way to avoid illness. Again both systems agree that reduction in stress and regular exercise is important in prevention. Chinese Medicine can also improve the flow of energies through the body to help prevent illness. Other tips are to not eat burned food, reduce or stop smoking, eat fresh vegetables and pearl barley (good for Spleen and Stomach).

In TCM the location of the cancerous growths will identify the organs that require treatment. Using diagnosis TCM practitioners can identify the Chinese pattern for treatment and can help support the body through other harsh treatments. A practitioner will help the body's energies to flow normally again by the use of herbs, acupuncture and/or scrubbing, to support the healing process. Chinese Medicine has been seen to lessen the detrimental effects of chemotherapy, radiation therapy on the patients system. It also improves the patient's ability to recover after these therapies.

## Chinese Medicine and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

What is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, (CFS)? Basically, CFS is a name given to any condition that results in chronic tiredness, where the precise cause is often unknown. Common symptoms seen in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome can be muscular pain and aches, generalised fatigue to complete exhaustion, poor memory, lack of concentration, depression, persistent flu-like or gastric symptoms, and a reduced ability to work. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) there are many underlying conditions which cause chronic fatigue symptoms. Stress, both long term stress and/or sudden traumatic events, such as a death, divorce, difficult work environments, etc is a major causative factor. Stress strongly affects the flow of Liver energy in the body and can cause different Liver energy disorders, such as Liver Qi Stagnation. The Liver ensures the smooth flow of energy to all parts of the body and organs; if this becomes impaired it is easy to see how tiredness would be the end result. Examples of Liver symptoms are irritability/tearfulness, sighing, and menstruation problems. Severe and recurrent colds and flu's, known in TCM as external pathogens,

can attack the body multiple times. If the body is not strong enough, it is unable to expel these pathogens. When External Pathogenic Factors attack the body and are not successfully expelled, they can travel deeper into the body. They travel into the body through the Defensive Qi (energy) by the factor of Wind and travel into the body as either Heat or Damp-Heat. This can lead to internal fluids being dried or not properly transformed, and form into internal Dampness. Damp tends to injure the yang energy of the body, it is sticky, very difficult to get rid of, and it is heavy and slows things down. Sometimes External Pathogenic Factors attack and enter the body without displaying any symptoms. They can remain in the body and turn into Heat. Eventually, this heat will surface in the body, manifesting as irritability, thirst, and sensation of heat. This Heat can damage the body fluids and Yin, and it can also damage Kidney energy. Kidney energy plays a vital role in supporting the immune system and the other organs in the body. Overwork, and excessive physical and sexual activity, can seriously deplete Kidney energy, giv-

ing rise to symptoms such as, ache in the lower back, urinary problems, hot flushes, and tiredness.

Improper diet, such as cold, spicy, greasy foods can seriously affect the Spleen and Stomach energies. This in turn can lead to Spleen deficiency and / or the production of Damp. Spleen deficiency or Damp will lead to significant digestive problems such as, burping, bloating, difficulty digesting food and heaviness in the body.

With chronic tiredness/fatigue it is important to get a correct diagnosis in order to assist in recover from the underlying cause. Acupuncture and herbs can help recreate balance in the body and help the individual return to health. Chronic fatigue is often a difficult condition to balance and the length of recovery relies on the underlying condition and response to Acupuncture and herbs. I myself suffered for three years with chronic fatigue until I had Acupuncture and herbal treatment. I was very consistent with my regime and my recovery took about a year. Chronic fatigue can often last between 2-7 years if not longer.

**“Qi according to  
Traditional  
Chinese Medicine  
can be interpreted  
as the “life  
energy: or “life  
force” which flows  
within us**

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## Should You Suffer From Breast Tenderness, Fullness and Lumps?

Breast tenderness and fullness, particularly before the menstrual period, is a very common problem experienced by women. It can vary from mild to very severe fullness, pain and swelling. In many cases this problem is accompanied by lumps in the breast. These signs and symptoms indicate a problem with the flow of energy to the breast area and should not be a normal occurrence over a long period of time.

In Chinese Medicine the organs associated with the breast area are the Liver and Stomach, with the Liver and Stomach channels both flowing to the breast. The Liver organ is responsible for balancing the Qi around the breast area. If the Liver and Stomach organs are not balanced it will cause the Qi and Blood to become stagnant and blocked,

thereby obstructing the flow of energy to the breast area. This leads to the symptoms of tenderness, swelling and pain. If left untreated the blockages will increase, causing prolonged and chronic period problems and the possible formation of breast lumps and cysts. In some cases this can lead to non-cancerous and cancerous breast disease.

Traditional Chinese Medicine, including acupuncture and herbal medicine are effective in treating breast fullness and distension, particularly before the problem becomes chronic in nature. Treatment aims to balance the Liver and clear the toxins and blockages from the body to prevent worsening of the condition. Chinese Medicine suggests that women, especially before the period, choose activities that support the Liver.



These include exercise, healthy diet and a balanced lifestyle to prevent Liver toxins accumulating.

## Sleep And Dreaming

We all know how important a good night's sleep is - we feel refreshed and energised throughout the day when we have had an adequate amount and quality of sleep. However, when our sleep is poor we feel tired and often struggle through the day with low energy levels. There are many reasons why we don't sleep well - getting up to the toilet frequently, children waking us, feeling hot at night and dreaming are just a few common occurrences. In this article we will be looking at how our dreams affect our sleep. If you have ever had a consultation with one of our practitioners you will know that we always ask you about your sleep patterns and whether or not you dream at night. Many of you ask whether or not it is good to dream when sleeping. According to Chinese Medicine theory we should not have vivid, violent or fearful dreams, especially if they wake you during the night or cause you to have a restless

sleep. Dreams of death, falling, being chased and running, and fire, are all common but indicate an imbalance in the energies of the organs that help create restful sleep. Dreaming which does not make the sleep restless, is not frightening, and does not leave you feeling tired in the morning, can be described as normal.

Chinese Medicine theory believes that a number of organs assist the body to sleep well. When these organs are out of balance poor sleep can result. The Heart has the function of housing the spirit and the mind - when it is peaceful and balanced you will sleep soundly. When a person's Heart is weak and deficient in Blood and Yin, or the Heart is agitated by Heat or Fire, the individual will find it difficult to fall asleep and have a restless sleep with lots of dreaming. The Liver also works closely with the Heart to allow the body to relax and



sleep well. When the Liver energy is stagnant and contains too much Heat the individual will experience difficulty falling asleep due to an active mind and often very active, busy or violent dreams. When a person has scary or frightening dreams this is often due to a deficiency in Kidney, Heart and Gallbladder energy. Sex dreams are common but also indicate an imbalance in the Kidney energy. If you experience any of these symptoms it is worth seeing a practitioner before the problem becomes too serious as we all know how important our sleep is to our emotional and physical wellbeing!

## What Is Pulse Diagnosis?

Pulse diagnosis is any extremely effective way of helping a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioner of providing an accurate diagnosis. The pulse is very important for two main reasons. The main reason is that it provides extremely detailed information of the condition of the internal organs, it does this because it reflects the state of Qi (energy) and blood in the body. As well as indicating the state of the internal organs, the pulse also identifies external, short-term influences (ie. a flu or cold).

A practitioner will feel the pulse on both wrists, in the three positions shown in the table below.

Position	Left Wrist	Right Wrist
Front	Heart	Lungs
Middle	Liver/ Gallbladder	Spleen/Stomach
Rear	Kidney Yin/ Small Intestine/ Bladder	Kidney Yang/ Large Intestine

A normal pulse should feel gentle, calm and relatively slow (4 beats per breath). The pulse should be strong but soft and regular. It should be neither too shallow, nor too deep. Also, one should be able to feel the rear position clearly, indicating strong kidney energy. We have twenty-seven abnormal pulses and each different pulse can indicate organ level problems. Examples of pulses commonly seen in the clinic are:

### 1) Taut pulse

Feels like a guitar string, on the left wrist it can indicate Liver disharmony such as Liver stagnation with symptoms such as; irritability, sighing, PMT. It can also indicate pain or phlegm.

### 2) Slippery pulse

Feels smooth, rounded and slippery to the touch. It can indicate phlegm, dampness, and retention of food or pregnancy. If the pulse is slippery in the Spleen position, it can indicate a feeling of heaviness of the body and limbs, being overweight or oedema. In the Lung position; it can indicate phlegm in the Lungs. Symptoms may include a productive cough with yellow or white phlegm and can also be a cough where it is difficult to bring up the Phlegm but the chest feels stuffy and/or tight and shortness of breath may be experienced.

### 3) Superficial pulse

Can be felt with light pressure from the fingers. It can indicate an invasion of Wind-heat or Wind-cold (cold or flu). It can also indicate energies stagnating at the front of the head causing a headache. It can also indicate blood pressure problems.

The pulse is an incredibly useful diagnostic tool and an experienced practitioner can use it to identify problems in the body that have as yet not manifested.



## What is Chinese Medicine

Chinese Medicine has been used for thousands of years and the theories and practices that form the basis of Chinese Medicine as we know it today can be traced back to 500BC. As with all systems of health, these basic theories have been developed over the centuries to be used widely in China and the Western world. Chinese medicine was nearly eradicated between 1914-1949, due to Western influence and Chinese warlords. Due to civil war in China, in 1928, the Chinese government was forced to bring back Chinese medicine, as their health system was unable to cope. There are around 5000 Traditional Chinese Medicine hospitals in China at present and Western medicine is often practiced along side its Chinese counterpart.

Chinese Medicine is a system that sees the body as an organic whole. It uses observations on the outside to understand what is going on in the inside.

For example, observation of the eyes can reflect the functioning of the Liver organ or observation of the skin can reflect the health of the Lungs. Chinese Medicine also recognises the relationship between humans and their environment. For example, in summer the dry heat affects the Lungs, and in spring the Wind affects the Liver organ. It is a health system based on the principles of energy (Qi) and it aims to support the body to come back to natural balance and allow the bodies energies to flow in their normal manner. Chinese Medicine understands that energy manifests as ethereal and material (ie. fluids and blood) and if the natural flow is impeded in any way disease can develop.

Chinese Medicine can identify the causes of prolonged illness by using specific diagnostic tools. A typical Chinese medicine consult will involve questions that include identification of

the chief complaint and general body function & health; observations of the body; and palpation of the body.

A unique and special treasure of the Chinese Medicine process is the pulse and tongue diagnosis. This process allows practitioners to use the body's clues to identify the internal problems present and treat the cause and symptoms of the disease. Treatment strategies are formulated from the following options:

Chinese medicine treatments include: -  
1) Herbs - pills, liquids, patches, granulated herbs

2) Acupuncture

3) Cupping - generates Qi and Yang, removes blockages of Qi and blood.

4) Channel scrubbing - removes blockages of Qi and blood.

5) Dietary Therapy - foods to assist the body in recovery

6) Exercise - Qi Gong, Tai Chi



Meet the Team: Dr Kylie Trapani, Dr Douglas Josephides & Carmel Josephides

Menopause indicates the permanent completion of menstruation and ceasing of reproductive function. It usually occurs between the ages of 48-55 years and can take 6-12 months to confirm a diagnosis. Menopause is not a disease, it is the normal physiological transition in a woman's life. Many women experience very mild or no symptoms during this time, while others can experience many symptoms of varying degrees.

From a Chinese Medicine perspective, menopausal symptoms are generally due to a decline and weakening of the Kidney Essence - both Yin and Yang aspects. When Yin is more deficient it indicates that there is not enough 'fluid' to nourish the body and too much heat, giving rise to 'hot symptoms' such as thirst, flushing

## Menopause From A Chinese Medicine Perspective

and constipation. When Yang is deficient there is an abundance of fluids and lack of warmth in the body, leading to symptoms such as swelling in lower legs and frequent urination. It is very common in clinical practice for women to have a combination of Yin and Yang deficiency, causing them to experience any of the symptoms listed below. Imbalances in the Liver and Spleen organs, such as Liver Yin deficiency or Spleen Blood deficiency, can also lead to women experiencing menopausal symptoms. These include:

- Hot flushes or red face- day or night, sometime both
- Feeling hot followed by feeling cold --
- Excessive sweating, especially with hot flushes
- Insomnia and dream-disturbed sleep
- Thirst and dry mouth
- Frequent urination - during day or night
- Anxiety, restlessness, irritability, depression
- Tiredness and headaches
- Lower back ache
- Constipation
- Vaginal dryness or itchiness

The severity of the problems a woman experiences during menopause depends

on lifestyle and dietary habits throughout her life. According to Chinese Medicine Theory, one of the major causes of menopause symptoms is emotional stress, which has often built up over time before the onset of menopause. Worry, anxiety, fear and stress weaken the Kidney energy and leads to Kidney Yin/Yang deficiency. Working long hours without adequate rest and an irregular diet also leads to a deficiency in the Kidney energy.

Chinese Medicine treatment of menopausal problems involves tonifying and balancing the Kidney energy with herbs or acupuncture. When Kidney Yin is more deficient, herbs that nourish & strengthen the Yin and clear heat are given. When Kidney Yang is more deficient, herbs that tonify and warm the Yang are prescribed. Acupuncture is recommended in treating menopausal systems as it effectively tonifies the Kidney energy and helps to re-establish balance in the body. After the practitioner has established the individual causes of your menopause symptoms we can give you advice about specific diet, lifestyle and exercise choices that would best support your body.