

Chinese Medicine and Depression

Causes of Depression

The Chinese studied depression in humans for thousands of years. They saw several causes, including over-contemplation, unhappiness, too little exercise, constitution, poor diet, excess sex, overwork, and drugs.

The main causes are over-contemplation and unhappiness. The problem begins slowly, usually as some frustration or stress in the family or at work. This causes your energy (Qi) to get stuck, primarily in the chest. *Anything that causes your energy to get stuck causes depression.* Long-term anger or frustration, too little exercise and unhappiness at any age can lead to depression. Another cause is what the Chinese call "Phlegm" - fluid that collects and condenses in your body, blocking energy from reaching your brain.

Experts agree that the main treatment for depression, antidepressant drugs, only help half of the time, only treat the symptoms, and have serious side effects. Not to mention, drugs and therapy can be *very expensive*. And, psychotherapy is often ineffective alone, since there's a physical component to depression.

Since depression is generally caused by stuck energy/Qi or "Phlegm", natural inexpensive cures for depression must always move the stuck energy, and/or get rid of phlegm.

Food Therapy and Depression

Eat a diet composed primarily of:

- **Cooked vegetables** (fresh, lightly cooked, big variety)
- **Whole grains** (brown rice, buckwheat and millet are all good)
- **Animal protein** (small amounts, more like a condiment than a main course)
- **Water** (room temperature)

To get good effect, stay away from everything else until you recover, especially:

- Dairy
- Sweets
- Cold foods
- Fruit juices
- Oily-greasy foods.

Foods that Calm the Spirit (depression, poor concentration, memory / sleep problems): whole wheat, wheat germ, brown rice, oats, mushrooms, cabbage, silicon-rich foods (celery, cucumbers, lettuce), magnesium-rich foods (whole grains, legumes, leafy green vegetables, cereal grasses, sea vegetables, aloe vera), apples, watermelon, mulberries, lemons, dill, basil, chamomile tea, oyster shell tea, catnip tea, apple cider vinegar, omega-3, Dragonwell green tea

Natural/Home Remedies for Depression

Oriental medicine uses several natural remedies for depression that are very helpful. These include acupressure (or acupuncture), diet, herbs, exercises, lifestyle modifications and massage techniques.

The best place to start is by stopping the causes. Obviously, your depression will just continue unless you stop doing whatever it is that causes your depression. This seems obvious, but we're conditioned to look for "something to fix us" (pills, for example), rather than look at why we have the problem in the first place. As we listed above, you will see that the main causes of depression are over-contemplation, unhappiness or long-term anger or frustration, too little exercise, constitution, poor diet, excess sex, overwork, and drugs.

These are things you have control over, and most likely, you probably don't realize how much they are affecting you.

In order to relieve your depression, you must:

- Stop worrying
- Stop thinking so much
- Get lots of exercise
- Eat the right diet
- Stop engaging in excess sex
- Don't overwork
- Don't do drugs
- Build up your weak constitution through healthy living and eating, appropriate exercise and correct lifestyle.

These things are easy to talk about, but not so easy to accomplish, so here are some recommendations to help:

- Upper body exercise that move the energy/Qi in your chest. Do it as soon as possible when depression sets in. This includes push-ups, rowing exercises, hitting a punching bag, or any other exercise that emphasizes the chest muscles.
- Deep breathing exercises can powerfully move the energy in your chest.
- Strong "belly-laughing." as well as forceful crying. You probably already know how good you feel after a hard laugh or a good cry.
- Get a chest massage. You don't need a professional, you just need someone to gently rub your chest to move the blood and energy stuck there.
- Meditation is the absolute best method for stopping over-thinking and worrying. You can take a class, read a book on it or learn it online, but the basis is simple. While it can be difficult to clear your mind at first, it's like practicing any skill: the more you do it, the better you get. One day you'll find your emotions stay very level and your mind is calm. Do not underestimate the power of meditation. There's a very good reason why millions of people all over the world have practiced it for hundreds of years. It works.
- Acupressure to your foot with a hairbrush. Tap your soles with a hairbrush for about 5 minutes. Concentrate mostly on the place just below the ball of your feet in the center, 1/3 of the way from your toes to your heel.
- Acupressure to your scalp with a wooden comb. You could use your fingers if a wooden comb's not available. Brush from the centerline of your scalp out to both sides, and from your forehead to the back of your hairline.
- Massage your ears. Pull on your ears in different directions with your index finger and thumb. Do this in all areas of your ear. Breath slowly and deeply while doing this. This is an excellent therapy, not only for depression, but many other health problems as well.

Acupressure and Depression

Apply medium pressure to cause slight aching, for a minimum 60 seconds/3x day, with your finger or knuckle to:

- **HT 6** Located on the little finger side of the crease of your wrist, just medial to the tendon you feel at the edge of your wrist.
- **GV 19, 20 and 21** Find Du20 by putting your left thumb on the top of your left ear, your right thumb on the top of your right ear and touching your index fingers together on top of your head. Feel for the hollow near the top center of your head. GV 19 and 21 are located one thumb's breadth in front and behind.
- **Yintang** Directly between your eyebrows. This point calms your emotions and relieves depression.

- **Ren 17** - In the middle of your sternum, level with the space between the fourth ribs (between the nipples if they are not sagging). Excellent for all types of emotional problems.

