

# Acupuncture & IBS

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) 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. These can be triggered by stress, diet, emotional factors, hormone levels, and medications.

## Let's talk acupuncture.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can offer a safe, effective, natural, and drug-free way to address IBS. This holistic healthcare system 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.



## How does your garden grow?

According to Chinese medical theories the **Spleen** is the organ in charge of digestion and assimilation of foods and liquids. One of the main functions of the Spleen is to aid in the production of Qi. Spleen Qi is the energy that provides power and nourishment for the entire body.

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, full headaches, a "foggy" feeling, and unable to clearly concentrate. Over time, this can lead to bloating, fullness, and loose stools.

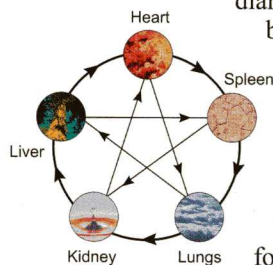


Another function of the Spleen is to produce Blood from the food it breaks down and to convert it into usable energy to power your body. If your Spleen isn't properly cared for, the body's energy levels will not be supported and illness may occur.



In Chinese medicine the **Liver** is associated with emotional health. Stress and anger directly influence the function of your Liver. Alcohol, drugs and medications, or a poor diet further compromise its function. When this happens, your Liver energy overflows, in a figurative sense, and attacks the Spleen. This is an easy battle to win if your Spleen is already weak. The result can be stress-induced IBS.

If your Liver is compromised, you may experience alternating diarrhea and constipation, as well as bloating, gas, headaches, and dull pain. In this case, your Liver is the root of the problem, and your Spleen the secondary problem.



Another scenario is that your **Kidney Yang** could be unbalanced. Kidney Yang is energy that provides warmth for your body. This energy warms up your Spleen to aid in the digestion and breakdown

of food. If your Kidney energies are compromised, you may experience early-morning diarrhea and possibly bladder incontinence, cold limbs, weak knees, and a sore back.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can create a clear picture of the root imbalance(s) that can lead to IBS. When you meet with your practitioner, he or she will discover what meridian systems are contributing to your IBS. They may also suggest any number of adjunct therapies in order to maximize your healing such as herbs, changes in diet, breathing techniques, or exercise.

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