

Balance Point Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine

Understanding Liver Qi Stagnation

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the Liver ensures the smooth flow of Qi throughout the body. When Liver Qi stagnates—often from stress, emotional strain, or poor diet—energy flow is disrupted, leading to tension, digestive upset, and mood changes.

Western medicine might associate this with stress-related digestive or emotional imbalance. From an acupuncturist's view, stagnation develops gradually and affects digestion, emotions, and hormonal balance.

The goal of acupuncture and lifestyle therapy is to move Qi, relieve tension, and restore harmony.

Common signs include: irritability, mood swings, rib-side tightness, sighing, bloating, PMS, headaches, and a feeling of something “stuck” in the throat.

Classical Sayings About the Liver and Qi

- “When Qi stagnates, pain results.”
- “The Liver governs the smooth flow of Qi.”
- “When the Liver is harmonious, emotions are peaceful.”
- “Anger injures the Liver.”

Dietary Guidelines

A light, balanced, mostly warm diet helps move Qi and prevent stagnation. Eat regularly, avoid excess, and choose fresh, seasonal foods.

Macronutrient Balance:

40–60 % whole grains & vegetables

30–40 % lightly cooked greens & colorful produce

10–20 % lean protein & healthy fats

Meals should be simple, nourishing, and not greasy.

Foods That Promote Smooth Liver Qi Flow

- **Aromatic:** mint, basil, citrus peel, fennel, ginger, garlic, rosemary
- **Greens:** broccoli, spinach, kale, bok choy, mustard greens
- **Sour:** lemon, lime, vinegar, light pickles (in moderation)
- **Grains:** brown rice, barley, millet, oats
- **Pungent:** radish, daikon to disperse stagnation

Foods to Limit or Avoid

- Greasy, fried, or heavy foods that impede Qi flow
- Excess alcohol, caffeine, and sugar that stress the Liver
- Too many cold or raw foods that weaken digestion
- Processed and refined foods that cause stagnation

Summary

Regular acupuncture, gentle movement, and a fresh, balanced diet keep Liver Qi flowing. Include aromatic, green, and lightly sour foods, manage stress, and eat mindfully to maintain emotional and physical balance in TCM.