

LIVER QI STAGNATION We see the Liver as the energetic fan of the body, it's job is to keep everything moving smoothly, when it doesn't we tend to get frustrated, emotional, and it often has an impact on our menstrual cycle. I often see this in people with a lot of stress or change in their lives, or when they are trying to avoid things emotionally.

Irregular cycle, meaning that it changes a lot from month to month. PMS can include mood swings, irritability, sighing a lot, swelling of the abdomen and chest area, and stronger pain at the beginning or before it starts, these symptoms go away and we feel better once the bleeding does start.

The can be a normal good red colour, but there does tend to be a lot of clots and the amount can be anywhere from a little to a lot. How long you bleed can change from month to month, and sometimes can start with a little bit for a couple of days before it becomes a good flow. In this case the PMS symptoms can last until it starts properly.

What to do The best thing for this is activity, get the energy moving! Even if you don't feel like it at first, once the energy is moving it tends to help us feel better, and the bleeding starts more easily too.

Foods that move energy: **herbs** like rosemary, basil, oregano, and kurkuma, are great. **Vegetables** like beets, turnip, parsnips, artichoke, cauliflower, sprouts, cabbage, onions, mustard leaves, asparagus, and spirulina. **Fruits** include citrus, plums, peaches, apricot, cherries, and my favourite rhubarb! **Drinks** include coffee, jasmine tea, and alcohol. Smoking a joint can also be helpful for this type of person.

BLOOD STASIS, similar to above but it is the blood that isn't moving well. More often I see this in people who have fibroids, polyps, cysts, or endometriosis. It can also occur after major surgeries, or be a common side effect of using a copper spiral (without hormones) because there is a physical thing in the way.

An irregular cycle, usually late, and can even be a couple of months in between cycles. PMS is the same as in Qi stagnation, mood swings, swelling, etc. The pain however is more the sharp stabbing type pain, and pressure usually makes it worse. Don't like to be touched.

The blood is quite dark, wine red or purple, can even be blackish with a lot of dark large clots. The amount of flow can be a little bit, not moving, or a lot when it does start moving. Also can depend on what the underlying cause is. Also, the first or last couple of days can be more of a brownish discharge which is old blood.

What to do Activity helps a lot, it helps get things moving. Heat from a hot water bottle or heating pad can also help the blood move on the days of pain.

Food wise: Veggies: eggplant, chestnuts, pumpkin, onions, turnip, beets, lotus root, bell peppers, and leeks; peaches, papaya, rhubarb, cherries, lemon, and lime; **Herbs** chili pepper, kurkuma, dry ginger, nutmeg, basil, saffron, and cinnamon – but good idea to stop with cinnamon and chili pepper once the flow starts well; sugar preferably brown sugar or honey can also help. **Drinks** coffee, and alcohol help things move. Smoking a joint can be helpful in getting everything moving.

Qi DEFICIENCY: Not enough energy to make things happen. Feels tired before, after or during their menses, emotionally weak, a soft voice, loose poop, lower back pain, and the cramping pain is more of a dull pain that has a downward pulling feeling that can go into the legs. Usually the pain is more in the second half or at the end of the cycle, and locally feels better if the person presses on their abdomen. The cycle itself is quite irregular, can be early or late, or even have spotting between

cycles. Not enough energy to start, or not enough energy to hold the blood and therefore it starts early.

This type usually bleeds for a longer period of time, and there is a lot of blood. The colour is more of a pale red and it typically has more of a thin or watery texture.

What to do People who have Qi Deficiency typically have a history of fatigue, illness, or events that they have not recovered from. Good nutrition, and proper rest over time can help rebuild the body's strength. Activity is not helpful at the moment, although gentle gradual activity over time can improve the body's strength.

Food becomes quite important. Simple foods, easy to digest foods are preferred. Soups, stews, porridges, rice bowls. Kidney bean soup is a great one for this. **Grains** Oats, rice, barley, spelt, rice; **Veggies** squash, carrots (cooked) rutabaga, parsnip, turnip, green peas, sweet potatoes; **Legumes** chickpeas/ garbanzo beans, lentils, blackbeans, kidney beans; **Fruit** cherries, dates, papaya; **Herbs** onion, black pepper, ginger, cinnamon, garlic, nutmeg. Smoking a joint or drinking alcohol can make the pain worse.

BLOOD DEFICIENCY: This can occur due to an acute situation such as an accident or injury or procedures where there is significant blood loss. Or it can be due to a long history of illness, anemia, or previously having heavy menstrual cycles. Generally the time it takes to improve this situation is linked to how long the causal history has been there.

The cycle itself is usually longer and there can be months missed, and the bleeding is only for a couple of days with a small amount. The colour is pale red or pink and it has a thinner or more watery texture. Pain is of a more dull type during the second half or end of the menses and while it is more dull in nature it can still be strong, and there can be lower back soreness.

Dizziness, insomnia, numbness of arms or legs can be there all the time, but will typically get worse during menses, as can heart palpitations and anxiety.

What to do rest and good food go a long way to helping in the long run.

Foods: **Grains** Oats, rice, sweet rice; **Veggies** artichoke, beets, shiitake mushrooms, spinach, sweet potato, alfalfa sprouts; aduki beans, black bean, kidney bean, black soybean; **Protein** tofu, tempeh, miso; **Fruit** apricot, avocado, cherry, dates, figs, grapes, blueberries, raspberries; **Nuts** coconut, hazelnut, peanuts; **Herbs** parsley, and nettle tea. Floradix liquid iron supplement (vegan)

YIN DEFICIENCY Associated menopause, this is a cycle that is always changing, usually tapering off over time it can actually start by becoming early with spotting, and then over time it becomes less and less frequent. The amount of blood can range from dripping small amounts for several days, or heavy bleeding that changes to become less and less over time as the cycle also becomes less frequent. The colour of blood is a nice red or a bright red. It can be thick, but typically becomes watery as a person gets closer to menopause.

Pain is of a dull nature and more in the second half of the cycle, the person can also have a sore lower back that feels hot, and they can also be having hot flashes, night sweats and insomnia.

If you are a person for whom menopause makes sense, then most of the advice is about making the side effects more manageable: IE: soaking your feet in hot water at night before bed to make sleeping easier (it helps in grounding). But because this is normal, we are not looking to change the situation.

If this is an unexpected change, then talking to your healthcare provider might be a good idea.

Foods: **Grains** wheat, millet, kamut; **Veggies** alfalfa, artichoke, asparagus, mungbean sprouts, potato, sweet potato, nori seaweed, spinach, tomato, stringbeans, peas; **Legumes** aduki beans, black beans, kidney beans, mung beans; **Fruit** apple, avocado, banana, starfruit, mango, pear, persimmon, pineapple, goji berries, strawberries, raspberry; coconut milk, sesame seed; nettles; honey

Acupressure points to use for any type of menstrual pain Easy to find pictures on google.

LR 3 (Liver 3) on the top of foot

SP 8 (Spleen 8) inside of the leg, along the Tibia 3 fingers below where the bone changes under the knee

BL 67 (Bladder 67) outside bottom corner of the baby toe

PC 6 (Pericardium 6) 3 fingers from the wrist crease between the 2 tendons – helps with emotions and frustration, also nausea. Makes it easier to relax.

SP 6 (Spleen 6) inside ankle, 3 fingers above ankle bone along the Tibia. Good for helping it start in Qi stagnation and blood stagnation type.