What is Liver Qi Stagnation and What Can I do About it?

Liver Qi stagnation is when the energy or Qi of the liver system does not flow as easily and freely as it should. Liver Qi is largely responsible for the movement of Qi through the entire body and the free flow of blood which provides fluids and nourishment. Liver Qi can become blocked or slowed down as a result of anxiety or stress, as well as certain foods in the diet. When this happens, different symptoms can occur.

Symptoms of Liver Qi Stagnation Can Include:

*pain along the ribs  *fullness in the upper abdomen  *irritability  *moodiness  *depression  *anger  *PMS  *muscular pain  *finger/toenail problems  *breast distention or tenderness  *irregular periods  *sighing  *bitter taste in mouth  *feeling of a lump in the throat  *stomach ache

Activities that can help:

Exercise such as walking, running, swimming, dancing, jumping, biking
Tai Chi or Qi Gong
Time spent outdoors
Creative pursuits that you enjoy
Meditation and deep breathing
Focusing on what you are grateful for

Food Can be Used to Treat or Prevent Liver Qi Stagnation

Certain foods, spices, and herbs can move liver Qi and help resolve stagnation. Many helpful foods are pungent (have a strong taste or smell). Foods to be included in your diet as tolerated include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pungent anti-stagnation foods:</th>
<th>Non-pungent anti-stagnation foods:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>watercress</td>
<td>beets</td>
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<td>onions</td>
<td>taro root</td>
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<tr>
<td>turmeric</td>
<td>strawberry</td>
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<td>basil</td>
<td>chestnut</td>
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<td>bayleaf</td>
<td>pinenuts</td>
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<td>cardamom</td>
<td>cherries</td>
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<td>marjoram</td>
<td>cabbage</td>
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<td>cumin</td>
<td>turnips</td>
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<td>fennel</td>
<td>cauliflower</td>
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<td>dill</td>
<td>broccoli</td>
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<td>black pepper</td>
<td>brussel sprouts</td>
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<td>rosemary</td>
<td>kohlrabi</td>
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<td>lemon balm</td>
<td>sweet rice</td>
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<td>mint</td>
<td>peach</td>
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<td>mustard greens</td>
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Bitter or Sour Foods to Reduce Excess of the Liver

- rye
- romaine lettuce
- asparagus
- radish leaves
- citrus peel
- dandelion root
- milk thistle seeds
- chamomile flowers
- quinoa
- lemon /lime /grapefruit

**Things to Reduce or Avoid**

*Hydrogenated and poor quality fats such as margarine, canola oil, shortening, and rancid oils or oils that have been used multiple times to fry foods can cause inflammation and may cause extra work for your liver.

*Excess nuts and seeds. (Small amounts such as 1/4 to 1/2 cup can be healthy)

*Harmful chemicals in food, water, and personal care products. See Environmental Working Group for lists of chemicals to avoid, foods that are best if organic, and for information on many personal care products.

*Drugs. This includes some illegal drugs, a number of over the counter medications, and some prescription drugs which have the potential to cause liver damage. Don't stop any of your prescription drugs unless counselled to do so by your prescribing physician.

*Alcohol- processed in the liver, it can be harmful to liver cells, especially if taken in excess.

*Sugar and dairy and highly processed and refined foods

**Foods That Detox and Cool**

- celery
- mung beans
- seaweed
- cucumber
- rhubarb root
- tofu
- millet
- mushrooms
- radish

**Foods That Harmonize the Liver**

- honey
- apple cider vinegar

**Refreshing Liver Harmonizing Cooler**

Combine one TBSP of unrefined apple cider vinegar and one TBSP of raw local honey with one cup of filtered water, mix well, add an ice cube and enjoy.

**Herbal Preparations**

There are many herbal formulas that may be used to help soothe the liver and move Qi. Take your herbal formulas as directed by your Chinese Medicine practitioner.

**References:**


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