



KATIE BRINDLE

Diverticulitis Guide

Treatment techniques Rooted in Chinese Wisdom



Overview

Diverticulitis is a condition in which small, bulging pouches (diverticula) in the digestive tract become inflamed or infected. Western medicine attributes it to factors such as ageing, obesity, smoking, lack of exercise and a low-fibre diet. In contrast, Chinese Medicine views Diverticulitis as a result of imbalances in Qi, the vital energy in the body and disharmonies within, primarily, the Large Intestine and Spleen, with the Liver also playing a significant role. It is often linked to an accumulation of Dampness and Heat in the Large Intestine, causing inflammation and obstruction, abdominal pain, fever, nausea and a marked change in bowel habits.

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Causes

- Damp-Heat in the Large Intestine: This is the key pathogen in the occurrence of Diverticulitis, resulting principally from Spleen and Liver Qi deficiency: a poor diet with Damp-producing foods, and unprocessed emotions. These disharmonies can lead to an accumulation of Dampness and Heat in the Large Intestine which will then cause inflammation and infection in the diverticula, presenting as the symptoms associated with Diverticulitis.
- Spleen Qi Deficiency: The Spleen is responsible for efficiently transforming and transporting food and nutrients. A weak Spleen, often exacerbated by poor dietary habits such as excessive consumption of alcohol, or overly spicy and greasy foods, along with a sedentary lifestyle, can lead to a deficiency in the flow of Spleen Qi, allowing the formation of Dampness and contributing to the development of Diverticulitis.
- Liver Heat: Emotional stress, frustration, or anger can lead to imbalanced Liver Qi that can impair the smooth flow of Qi, blood and emotions. Prolonged emotional disturbances, as well as disrupting the balance of Qi in the body, can weaken the body's defences, contributing to the formation of pathogens such as Heat. When combined with Dampness and Phlegm, this Heat can, over time, negatively affect the Large Intestine, contributing to the formation of diverticula, exacerbating inflammation and leading to the abdominal pain and constipation that are symptoms of Diverticulitis.

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Organs Implicated

- Large Intestine: In Chinese Medicine the Large Intestine is the primary site of Diverticulitis as it is involved in the movement of waste. If there is an accumulation of Damp-Heat and Qi stagnation in the area, this can result in diverticula forming; the direct cause of Diverticulitis, leading to symptoms such as pain, bloating and altered bowel movements synonymous with the condition.
- Lungs: The Lungs (Yin) are the organ pairing of the Large Intestine (Yang) and as such are also implicated in Diverticulitis. Responsible for regulating Qi and maintaining the body's protective Wei Qi, the Lungs have a direct influence on the Large Intestine's function, with imbalances weakening the immune response, impairing efficient peristalsis, and negatively affecting moisture levels, which can impact bowel movements, adding to the discomfort to the condition.
- Spleen: Responsible for the efficient digestion, absorption and transformation of food and fluids into Qi and blood, a deficient Spleen can result in impaired Qi, leading to the production of Dampness and Phlegm, which can accumulate in the Large Intestine, contributing to the formation of diverticula and inflammation. When combined with Heat, this will severely exacerbate the problem.
- Liver: The Liver is responsible for the smooth flow of Qi throughout the body. Prolonged emotional stress and disharmony, improper diet, and a sedentary lifestyle will have a profound effect on Liver Qi stagnation, creating Liver Heat and hindering the flow of Qi throughout the whole body, including the Large Intestine, contributing to the symptoms of Diverticulitis.

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Emotions

Chronic emotional stress can severely disrupt the flow of Qi in the body. Each organ has specific negative emotions attached to it which, if left unresolved, can manifest as physical problems:

- **Liver and Anger/Frustration:** In Chinese Medicine, the overriding negative emotion associated with the Liver is anger. When anger, frustration or irritability are allowed to become chronic, it can lead to Liver Qi stagnation, including Liver Heat in extreme cases. This can impede the smooth flow of Qi and blood, negatively influencing the Large Intestine, the primary organ implicated in the occurrence of Diverticulitis, and exacerbating symptoms.
- **Spleen and Worry/Overthinking:** The Spleen is believed to be affected by excessive worry, pensiveness and overthinking. These emotional disharmonies can weaken Spleen Qi, leading to an inability to manage and transform fluids and nutrients efficiently, creating the digestive environment that can contribute to the production of Dampness, which, in combination with Heat, can aggravate the symptoms of Diverticulitis.
- **Lungs and Grief/Sadness:** The Lungs are closely related to the emotions of grief and sadness. Prolonged or unresolved grief can impair Lung Qi, affecting its function of descending and dispersing Qi and fluids throughout the body. A weakened Lung Qi can lead to imbalances in the Large Intestine, potentially contributing to the development or worsening of Diverticulitis symptoms. Additionally, the Lung's role in immune function, means that emotional disturbances can negatively affect the body's resilience against inflammation and infection.
- **Kidneys and Fear:** Though the Kidneys are not directly linked to Diverticulitis, they are associated with the emotion of fear which, when chronic or prolonged, can deplete Kidney Qi, affecting the body's overall balance of Qi.

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Acupressure



Acupressure is a technique that can easily be performed as part of your self-care practices. Gentle pressure is applied to specific points on the body with fingers or an acupressure tool to help clear blockages in the meridians, the pathways of the body through which Qi flows.

ST-25 (Tiānshū):

Location: This point is located on the abdomen, two finger-widths to the side of the navel.

Why: The Front Mu point of the Large Intestine, ST-25 is directly influential in treating digestive issues. Stimulating this point can help regulate intestinal function, reduce inflammation and relieve bloating. It is especially effective in addressing symptoms related to Damp-Heat in the Large Intestine, a key pathogen in the manifestation of Diverticulitis.

SP-6 (Sānyīnjiāo)

Location: This point is located on the inner side of the lower leg. To find it, place four fingers above your inner ankle bone. The point lies just behind the shin bone (tibia), in a tender area often found just above the highest peak of the inner ankle bone.

Why: SP-6 is a convergence point of the Spleen, Liver and Kidney meridians. It is particularly beneficial for strengthening Spleen Qi, which is essential for robust digestive health and managing Dampness. Stimulating this point also harmonises Liver Qi and supports Kidney health, indirectly benefitting digestive function and helping to alleviate the symptoms of Diverticulitis.

ST-36 (Zúsānlǐ)

Location: This point is found on the leg, four finger widths down from the bottom of the kneecap, one finger width outside of the shinbone.

Why: ST-36 is a key point for strengthening the Spleen and Stomach, boosting Qi and blood, and supporting overall digestive health. It is effective in regulating gastrointestinal movement, reducing inflammation and promoting healing of the intestinal lining, all of which are beneficial in managing existing symptoms of Diverticulitis and preventing future flare-ups.

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LI-4 (Hégǔ):

Location: On the back of the hand, on the fleshy part of the webbing between thumb and index finger.

Why: LI-4, the source point of the Large Intestine meridian, is a powerful point for regulating not only the flow of Qi and blood throughout the body, but also the Wei Qi, our defensive shield. Stimulating LI-4 can help to alleviate pain and reduce inflammation, making it useful in managing the symptoms of conditions such as Diverticulitis.

LU-7 (Lièquē)

Location: Situated above the wrist on the inner side of the arm, the point is on the thumb side, just above the wrist crease, below the index finger.

Why: As a point on the Lung meridian, LU-7 helps to strengthen Lung Qi, which is essential for the overall balance of Qi in the body, as well as improving the immune response and reducing the risk of future inflammation. Gently massaging LU-7 can help in regulating and descending Lung Qi, positively influencing the function of the Large Intestine, including peristalsis, and maintaining healthy mucous membranes within the digestive tract.

Yang Sheng Practices

There are many practices, lifestyle choices, self-care tools and supplements that can be used to help manage the symptoms and the root cause of Diverticulitis, including:

- **Dietary Adjustments:** Mindful dietary practices are crucial for the management of Diverticulitis symptoms and prevention of future flare-ups. A balanced diet, rich in fibre is essential to ensure the Spleen and Large Intestine are not over taxed. Include a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains to promote healthy bowel movements and reduce strain on the Large Intestine, whilst avoiding foods that overwhelm the Spleen and encourage Dampness and Phlegm, such as excessive greasy or spicy foods, alcohol, and the Four Whites – dairy, flour, salt and sugar. Emphasis should be on warm, cooked, easily digestible meals rather than raw or cold foods, to ensure Spleen Qi is balanced.

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- Hydration: Hydration plays a vital role in the management and prevention of Diverticulitis. Drinking teas that are valued for their cooling properties will be especially beneficial for conditions where Damp-Heat is a factor. Chrysanthemum tea is often used to clear Heat and relieve inflammation; it is gentle on the stomach and soothing for the digestive system. Mint tea, also renowned for its cooling effect, will be invaluable for soothing an upset stomach, reducing inflammation and refreshing the body. Dandelion tea, a natural diuretic, can be helpful in detoxifying the Liver, helping to clear Liver Heat and stagnation. If nothing else, consume plenty of high quality filtered water, preferably warm or at room temperature, to help maintain a healthy digestive system and ensure the efficient functioning of the body's processes.
- Qigong: Gentle qigong, combining slow, deliberate movements with controlled breathing and mindful meditation, is particularly effective in enhancing the flow of Qi, as well as strengthening the key organs of the body and reducing stress. Specifically for Diverticulitis, the gentle movements stimulating the abdominal area can benefit the Large Intestine, Liver and Spleen, to promote a healthy digestive function and reduce inflammation. Additionally, the meditative breathwork of Qigong can help to alleviate stress and encourage emotional balance, further promoting harmonious Qi flow, effective peristalsis and supporting the body's natural healing processes.
- Gua Sha: Gently press-stroking the skin can enhance circulation and Qi flow. Performed around the abdominal area it can stimulate digestion and alleviate congestion in the intestines, as well as helping to reduce inflammation, transform Dampness, release Heat, encourage healing, and promote the movement of stagnant Qi and blood. Additionally, Gua Sha can help to reduce stress, a major contributory factor in digestive disorders, such as Diverticulitis.

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Useful Supplements

There are many helpful supplements that can be taken as both preventative self-care and to alleviate symptoms of Diverticulitis, these include:

- Medicinal Mushrooms: Shiitake mushrooms are renowned for their immune-boosting and anti-inflammatory properties, whereas Turkey Tail can promote gut health and respiratory function, making them exceptional supplements in the management and prevention of Diverticulitis.
- Astragalus Root: Valued in Chinese Medicine for its ability to strengthen the Wei Qi, enhancing the body's immune defences and overall vitality, Astragalus root can provide support for both prevention of future bouts of Diverticulitis, as well as easing existing symptoms.
- Slippery Elm: Also known as Ulmus Rubra, Slippery Elm is an excellent supplement for Diverticulitis sufferers due to its viscous, sticky properties. When ingested, it forms a soothing gel, coating the digestive tract and helping to alleviate inflammation and irritation in the intestines, making it especially valuable for soothing the symptoms of Diverticulitis, as it helps to reduce intestinal discomfort and promote healing of the gut lining and diverticula.

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Conclusion

Chinese Medicine understands that in managing Diverticulitis, a rounded approach that combines mindful diet therapy, stress reduction, Qigong and Gua Sha is essential. A fibre-rich diet, with warm, nourishing and simply cooked foods, along with proper hydration, will support the digestive system, and practices such as Qigong and Gua Sha will help to enhance Qi flow and organ health, particularly strengthening the Large Intestine, its paired organ the Lungs, and the Spleen. Supplements such as Shiitake Mushrooms, Astragalus Root and Slippery Elm are beneficial in boosting immunity, soothing the digestive tract and reducing inflammation. This holistic approach not only addresses the symptoms of Diverticulitis but also promotes the overall health and wellbeing of the body's key organs, essential for the long-term management of the condition.

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Want to know more?

We will be delighted to support you as you continue along your Yang Sheng journey.

The following will get you started:

'Yang Sheng: The Art of Chinese Self-Healing' available on Amazon, Waterstone and www.hayoumethod.com

Buy Yang Sheng Book

Healing Movement classes (3 x each week) and live meditations for a more in-depth and healing practice – full details [here](#)

Free Masterclass "[Master Your Health](#)" – understand the 3- step plan for preventative health. Find more Healing Masterclasses [here](#).

Free self-care weekly content [@katiebrindle](#) on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Free regular gua sha demonstrations on [@thehayoumethod](#) Instagram & the opportunity to purchase the accompanying tools from www.hayoumethod.com

DISCLAIMER:

Please note that any of these Yang Sheng techniques are designed to support your overall self-care and wellbeing and should not be used as a substitute for any Western medical advice or treatment that you may be receiving. You should not use the information in this Guide or on our website for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease and must always consult your doctor if you have any health concerns. Additionally, please note that there are a few contraindications to Yang Sheng techniques, so please visit www.hayoumethod.com to view our comprehensive FAQs.

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