



KATIE BRINDLE

## Endometriosis Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



# Overview

Endometriosis is a medical condition where tissue similar to the lining inside the uterus, called the endometrium, grows outside the uterus. This can cause pain, irregular bleeding and fertility issues. It is believed to be caused by a combination of genetic, hormonal and immune factors. From a Chinese Medicine perspective, Endometriosis is often attributed to the stagnation of Qi and blood, leading to the formation of "blood stasis." This stagnation can be caused by emotional stress, dietary imbalances, or congenital weakness. The focus on managing the condition is the restoration of the balance and flow of Qi and blood in the body.

## Causes and Implicated Organs

- Qi Stagnation: Emotional stress and physical inactivity can lead to stagnation of Qi, affecting the smooth flow of energy and blood.
- Blood Stasis: Caused by long-term Qi stagnation, coldness in the uterus, or traumatic injuries. This can result in painful periods and clots.
- Kidney Deficiency: Linked to hormonal imbalances, affecting reproductive health.
- Damp-Heat: Can lead to inflammation and exacerbate Endometriosis symptoms.

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# Organs Implicated

- **Liver:** In Chinese Medicine, the Liver is crucial for the smooth flow of Qi and blood throughout the body and is also involved in regulating emotions. Emotional stress can lead to Liver Qi stagnation, disrupting the free flow of Qi and blood. Regarding Endometriosis, this stagnation can manifest as menstrual irregularities, pain and emotional disturbances such as frustration and anger, which may further contribute to the formation of blood stasis in the uterus, exacerbating pain and causing clotting during menstruation.
- **Kidneys:** According to Chinese Medicine, the Kidneys are fundamental to reproductive health, growth and ageing. They are the source of Yin and Yang energies in the body and our reserves of energy; they are also key in influencing hormonal balance. Kidney deficiency, particularly Kidney Yang or Kidney Yin, can lead to hormonal imbalances that may contribute to Endometriosis. Symptoms such as fatigue, lower back pain, irregular menstruation and fertility issues often indicate the Kidneys' involvement in Endometriosis.
- **Spleen:** The Spleen plays a key role in digestion and the transformation of food and nutrients into Qi and blood, as well as managing the blood within the vessels and ensuring it flows properly. Weak Spleen energy can lead to the production of dampness and phlegm in the body, which may hamper this flow, contributing to the formation of blood stasis and exacerbating the symptoms of Endometriosis. Additionally, the Spleen's role in blood production and circulation is crucial in managing menstrual irregularities and pain associated with the condition.
- **Heart:** Although not directly implicated in Endometriosis, the Heart is considered the Master of all the organs, governing the blood, housing the Shen, the Spirit or mind, and overseeing all emotions. Emotional disturbances, often experienced with Endometriosis, can affect the Heart, leading to symptoms such as anxiety, palpitations, or insomnia which, through the Heart's connection with the Liver and the smooth flow of emotions, can further contribute to Liver Qi stagnation which may adversely affect the menstrual cycle.

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- Uterus: The Uterus in Chinese Medicine, whilst not an organ in the traditional sense, is crucial for menstrual health and fertility so if there is coldness or stagnation in the Uterus, this can also lead to painful menstruation and blood stasis.

## 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: The Liver is associated with the emotional states of anger and frustration. When these emotions are intense or unmanaged, they can lead to Liver Qi stagnation, which is believed to affect menstrual health by disrupting the smooth flow of Qi and blood, contributing to the pain and discomfort often experienced with Endometriosis.
- Spleen: The Spleen is impacted by excessive worry and overthinking; mental states can weaken the Spleen's Qi, leading to an inability to manage blood and fluids properly which can contribute to dampness and stasis, exacerbating the symptoms of the condition.
- Kidneys: Fear, particularly chronic or deep-seated, is associated with the Kidneys in Chinese Medicine. It is an emotion that can weaken the Kidney energy, leading to imbalances in the reproductive system and causing hormonal irregularities which can aggravate the symptoms of Endometriosis.
- Heart: The Heart is closely linked with mental and emotional activities. Anxiety, often associated with disharmony within the Heart Qi, can disturb its function, leading to imbalances in blood circulation and affecting menstrual health. Anxiety may also exacerbate the pain and discomfort associated with Endometriosis. Another key emotion linked to the Heart is joy. Although generally considered to be a positive emotion, in excess it can lead to overexcitement, causing imbalances and a scattered or erratic Shen which will, in turn, have a bearing on the Liver and the menstrual cycle.

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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.

## LIV-3 (Tàichōng)

Location: Found on the top of the foot, in the fleshy webbing between the big toe and the second toe, approximately two thumb-widths from the edge of the webbing.

Why: LIV-3 is known for its ability to soothe Liver Qi stagnation, a common factor in menstrual pain and emotional disturbances associated with Endometriosis. Stimulating this point can help alleviate pain, reduce stress, and promote the smooth flow of energy and blood in the body.

## 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: This point is particularly beneficial for Spleen health as it can help to reduce dampness in the body and support the digestive system. In the context of Endometriosis, stimulating SP-6 can help in reducing menstrual cramps, regulating menstruation and addressing the underlying imbalances of Qi and blood.

**IMPORTANT – DO NOT STIMULATE THIS POINT IF YOU ARE PREGNANT.**

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### BL-23 (Shènshū)

Location: BL-23 is located on the lower back, approximately two finger widths lateral to the lower edge of the second lumbar vertebra.

Why: Directly connected to Kidney health, stimulating BL-23 is believed to strengthen Kidney function, essential for hormonal balance and reproductive health. It can help alleviate back pain, fatigue and other symptoms related to Kidney deficiency.

### REN-6 (Qìhǎi)

Location: This point is located on the midline of the abdomen, about one and a half thumb widths directly below the navel.

Why: Known for strengthening Qi, stimulating this point can improve overall vitality and strength, helping to alleviate chronic fatigue, a common symptom of Endometriosis. It can also support the health of the reproductive organs by enhancing the flow of Qi and blood in the pelvic area.

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# 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 Endometriosis, including:

- Qigong: Using controlled movement and breathing as a moving meditation, qigong can reduce stress, strengthen organs, promote relaxation and enhance the flow of Qi which will be invaluable in alleviating pain and addressing the stagnation often associated with Endometriosis.
- Meditation: Regular meditation can help to manage the emotional unrest that often accompanies chronic conditions such as Endometriosis by reducing anxiety and improving pain management.
- Breathwork: Deep and mindful breathwork can greatly assist in relaxing body and mind, reducing the stress that can exacerbate symptoms. It will also enhance oxygenation, improving cellular health and reducing inflammation.
- Diet Therapy: A diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods can be beneficial, so incorporating fruits, vegetables, omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and flaxseeds, and whole grains can help to reduce inflammation. Limiting red meat, processed foods, sugars and excess dairy is also beneficial as these can increase inflammation and hormonal imbalances. Foods should also be consumed simply cooked and eaten warm. Avoid ice and do not eat food or drink straight from the fridge. These dietary practices will be vital in supporting Spleen and Kidney health.

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- Rest: Adequate, good quality sleep is essential for overall organ support and rejuvenation, as well as emotional wellbeing, whereas poor sleep can exacerbate the pain, fatigue and stress often associated with Endometriosis. Try and be asleep by 11pm so that the Liver, especially, is able to efficiently detoxify, thereby smoothing emotions and clearing stagnation. It is also useful to try and have a short, 20-minute nap in the afternoon as this will greatly benefit Kidney health.
- Gua Sha and Tapping: Practicing gentle gua sha and body tapping will help to enhance circulation and reduce stagnation of Qi and blood, helping to alleviate pain and inflammation, release tension in the muscles and fascia and promote overall relaxation.

## Useful Supplements

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

- Reishi Mushroom: Highly regarded in Chinese Medicine for its immune-boosting and anti-inflammatory properties, Reishi mushrooms can help in the management of Endometriosis by reducing inflammation, a key factor in the pain and discomfort associated with the condition, as well as supporting the immune system.
- Dong Quai (Angelica Sinensis): This traditional herb is known for its ability to nourish and invigorate blood, helping to reduce blood stasis. It also contains compounds that can help to balance hormones and improve circulation, thereby alleviating menstrual concerns.

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- Goji Berries: These little berries are rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. They have been used for thousands of years in Chinese Medicine to nourish the Liver and Kidneys, improve the circulation of Qi and blood and help in maintaining hormonal balance, essential in managing Endometriosis symptoms, particularly reducing pain and supporting overall reproductive health.
- Turmeric: Known for its potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, primarily due to the active compound curcumin, turmeric can be a valuable supplement in managing the inflammatory aspects of Endometriosis, which may assist in reducing pelvic pain. It may also help to improve Qi and blood circulation, addressing the stagnation that is often implicated in the condition.

## Conclusion

Chinese Medicine views Endometriosis as a multi-layered condition, where physical symptoms intertwine with emotional wellbeing. The approach is holistic, targeting not only the physical aspects but also emotional health. Understanding these connotations offers a rounded approach to treating the condition, emphasising the importance of emotional wellbeing, diet and lifestyle choices, and maintaining health and balance in the body through considered Yang Shang techniques.

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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](http://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](http://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](http://www.hayoumethod.com) to view our comprehensive FAQs.

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