

What is Blood Deficiency and What Can I do About it?

Blood deficiency is common in our modern, stressful world and this can lead to many symptoms. Blood in Chinese medicine is very important and has many functions. It carries nutrients, oxygen, energy, and moisture to every cell in the body. Blood nourishes the mind and is necessary for thinking, remembering, and concentrating. It nourishes the skin, hair, nails, muscles, and tendons. It helps keep us rooted and grounded and helps us in our ability to sleep.

In Chinese medicine, the function of digesting and transforming food into blood is attributed primarily to the Spleen (including the stomach and pancreas). The energy from oxygen collected in the lungs is combined with the energy from food transformed in the Spleen and blood is formed. Blood is stored in the Liver, especially at night and is released when we wake up in the morning and when we need more blood. Thus these organs are important in maintaining the balance of blood in the body



Symptoms of Blood Deficiency can Include

pale lips, tongue, and/or nail beds
dry skin, hair loss, dizziness, weakness
poor memory or ability to focus, headache
anxiety, depression, fatigue, insomnia



Possible Causes of Blood Deficiency

Diet and habits around eating-

Not enough blood building foods, too many cold or damp foods that slow down blood production in the Spleen, and eating while under stress, or eating too fast can affect the Spleen's ability to make blood.

Worry, anxiety, or overthinking-

The Spleen, the primary organ of blood production, is affected by these states and can decrease its ability to transform food into blood.

Excessive work-

Both physical and mental work consume Qi and blood and over work can lead to both Qi and blood deficiency.

Strong Emotions-

Strong emotions, when held in, tend to stagnate the Liver. This can cause the Liver to supply less energy to the Spleen which then may make less blood.

Blood loss-

Heavy menstruation, child birth, or internal or external bleeding can lead to blood deficiency.

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Poor diet, lack of proper nutrition, and digestion problems can lead to blood deficiency.

Foods and Supplements That Can Help Build Blood

B12

Beans

Beef

Beets

Brown rice

Carrots

Chicken

Eggs

Iron (take with vitamin C to help absorption)

Leafy greens

Liver/pate

Nutritional yeast

Oatmeal

Pumpkin

Quinoa

Sea vegetables

Seeds and nuts

Spirulina /blue green algae

Sweet potato

Foods to Avoid or Take in Moderation to Help Support Your Liver and Spleen in Order to Support the Blood

Alcohol

Greasy, heavy, fatty foods

Dairy products

Highly processed food

Refined carbohydrates (sugar, white flour)

Processed grains

Cold food like ice cream and cold shakes

Large amounts of raw vegetables

Tofu, soymilk

Prevention and Treatment for Blood Deficiency

Eat healthy nourishing foods.

Eat slowly and with gratitude.

Try not to eat when you are highly stressed.

If you are under stress, try meditation, yoga, or another activity that helps you feel more calm.

Take frequent breaks from your mental and physical work to allow your body and brain to rest. A balance between work and rest is necessary for your body to work properly and optimally and make Qi and blood.

Have an outlet for strong emotions such as exercise, martial arts, or a hobby.

Practice open communication with your family, friends, and coworkers.

See your acupuncturist for herbs, acupuncture, and moxa.

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