

I Was Told I Have Blood Stasis. What Does That Mean?

Blood stasis is a term used by some Eastern medical practitioners meaning that the blood is not flowing or circulating as optimally as it could to all parts of the body. It is considered to be one of the major causes of pain. Blood stasis can refer to a localized area and possibly be caused by overuse or trauma including sprain, broken bones, or bruises, etc. Other possible causes are listed below. Systemic or generalized blood stasis may cause fatigue, varicose or spider veins, fibromyalgia, headache, reynaud's, digestive problems, or constipation, among other symptoms.



Possible Causes of Blood Stasis or Stagnation

There are many causes of blood stasis. Too much or too little of something can cause an imbalance in our body. Too little nutrients, too much sugar, too little sleep, too much alcohol, can damage our cells and impair function.

Lack of movement decreases the circulation of blood. Too much movement such as over training can damage the muscles or tendons and lead to inflammation and swelling which can decrease blood flow over time.

Emotional stress can lead to tight muscles which slows blood flow over time and can result in Qi and blood stagnation.

Trauma can lead to decrease in blood flow.

Decreased Qi (which can be thought of as a form of energy), not enough blood, heat in the blood, and cold in the body can lead to blood stasis. The most common cause of blood stasis is Qi deficiency because Qi moves the blood.

Possible symptoms of Blood Stasis

Darker complexion or darker areas, for example dark circles under the eyes, bruises, purple hue to nails or lips.

Pain that is fixed, boring, or stabbing in quality and worse with pressure.

Painful or irregular periods, abdominal pain, clots in the menstrual blood.

Chest pain or pressure, heart palpitations.

Upper abdominal pain.

Swelling, pain, and/or stiffness to the arms, hands, legs, or feet.



Contact your doctor if the pain becomes severe, you lose bowel or bladder function, suffer sudden weakness to your legs, have pain in your chest that may spread to your neck, jaw, back, or arm or suddenly changes in quality.

I Was Told I Have Blood Stasis. What Does That Mean?



Foods and Practices Around Eating That Can Help Move Blood

Try not to eat when you are stressed.

Eat slowly, taking time to chew your food thoroughly.

Breathe deeply and focus on gratitude for each bite.

Eat until you are only 70 to 80% full.

If your pain is helped by heat, eat warming foods such as spices and avoid cold foods such as ice cream and raw salads.

Blood stasis can be accompanied by damp and pain may be improved by avoiding damp producing foods such as peanuts, soy, and dairy.

Try taking a calcium and magnesium supplement to help relax the muscles and calm the nerves.

These foods are considered blood moving:

Eggplant (specific to the uterus)

Cayenne pepper, Chili pepper

Onion, Scallion, Garlic

Ginger, Turmeric

Hawthorne berry

Shiitake, Saffron

Vinegar

Lifestyle Instructions to Help With Blood Stasis

Pain often results from repetitive use of the same joints, muscles, or tendons or from injuries that reoccur to the same area. If you are performing the same motion or set of motions over and over again and you have pain, stop the activity for a period of time (days to weeks) to let your body rest.

Perform mild to moderate exercise 3 to 4 times a week to keep Qi and blood flowing.

Get a massage.

Practice deep breathing.

Do yoga, Tai Chi, and/ or Qi Gong as frequently as daily.

Try heat such as a heating pad to the area to see if it makes it feel better. (This often works well with uterine cramps).

Visit your local Chinese Medicine practitioner for acupuncture, cupping, Tui Na, electrical acupuncture, and /or herbs.

I Was Told I Have Blood Stasis. What Does That Mean?
(c) 2019. Natalie Ledbetter LAc and Whitney Cauley LAc. May be used for patient teaching and information. Other use by permission only.

References:

- Maciocia, G. (2004). *Diagnosis in Chinese Medicine, A Comprehensive Guide*. New York, NY: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone
Pitchford, P. (2002). *Healing with Whole Foods, Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition*, (3rd ed.). Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books
Clinical Manual of Oriental Medicine (3rd ed.). (2016) pages 490-494.. City of Industry, CA: Lotus Institute of Integrative Medicine