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FUNCTION OF THE LIVER

The most important factors involved in dealing with all diseases
of the human organism are liver and gall bladder congestion. In
fact medical doctors have found that in all serious diseases,
particularly cancer, the liver was in extremely poor condition.

If the liver is 100% clean, (virtually impossible these days) and
functioning correctly, we would be practically free of disease
and even the aging process would slow down considerably.
Of course, as herbalists we know that when an organ is full of
mucus or pus and not functioning correctly herbs can be a
definite aid, but the body has to heal itself...
and that requires energy and time.

This will come through detoxification, with correct diet,
fasting, poultices, compresses, exercise, water therapy,
patience, etc. Only then, after this has been achieved, will
herbs help correct any functional disorder. That is not to say
that herbs do not work in congestive or inflammatory disorders,
but through experience the results are more effective when the
herbs are used in conjunction with dietary changes and
detoxification. It is important then to realise that regardless

of the area of the body dis-eased, without liver cleansing results will be minimal.

The liver, is the largest and most complex organ in the body. It cleanses 600 litres of blood daily, processing all matter, food or otherwise, that finds itself in the system. All toxic material ingested through the portal vein system (via the stomach and intestines) will be acted upon by the liver and neutralized, thus preventing absorption into the main bloodstream. This includes chemicals, preservatives, nicotine, alcohol, artificial substances, etc, (This is why prescription drugs have to be of a high enough dose to overcome and bypass the detoxification and neutralization process of the liver). Even the most natural and purest of foods can be poisonous to the body if the liver is not functioning properly. Sugar will be changed into glycogen for storage for example, but excess amounts will pass on into the general blood stream affecting other organs such as the kidneys.

Fats can also accumulate in the liver from over consumption of foods such as meat, milk, cheese, white flour and even brown rice if eaten to excess. The ducts of the liver and gall bladder become obstructed with thickened bile and stones due to the excess cholesterol and bile caused by the over-consumption of foods and fats. These conditions are the direct or indirect cause of most disease today.

Among the liver's many functions is the processing of bile from blood, (approximately one pint daily in a normally functioning liver). This liquid (next to the blood), is the most important in the body. Other functions of the liver are the processing of glucose, haemoglobin, transformation of protein and fat, vitamin

and enzyme production, regulating levels of iron and body temperature, cholesterol levels and lipid metabolism,

detoxification and the production of substances to prevent infection. Nearly all of the compounds used by the body are produced in the liver. When this organ is overloaded toxins remain and eventually the kidneys are left to deal with this. Then, with both organs unable to operate correctly, the liver becomes enlarged. It is at this point that it ceases to function appropriately and toxic waste finds itself into the general bloodstream. Overeating, as well as too much of any food, can also cause an enlarged liver.

Chills and fevers are the liver's response to congestion, an overactive liver suffering from heat in the summer and an insufficient liver not tolerating cold in the winter.

The bile, which is stored in the gallbladder in a more concentrated form, is of extreme importance in all areas of the body. The gallbladder actually draws the bile into itself from the liver duct. Many back problems in fact are the direct result of inadequate bile flow. The synovial fluid around all joints will decrease if bile flow is low, sometimes causing terrible pain. Many people will take cortisone injections for relief believing it, mistakenly, to be arthritis or some other inflammatory disease. The cure of course comes with liver cleansing.

Another area of the body that can suffer from lack of bile are the sinuses. This soothing lubricant (bile) keeps mucus membranes moist, otherwise they become dry and inflamed. Most allergy conditions can be traced to liver congestion. Avoiding foods that create a reaction bring relief but will not cure the allergy. Allergies and sinus conditions will often disappear after the liver has been cleansed.

Some of the many herbs that can be used to relieve liver

congestion are:

Dandelion, Cascara, Oregon Grape root, Gentian root, Culvers root, Poke root, Black root, St. Benedict, Sage, Agrimony, Myrrh, Tormentilla, Celandine, Artichoke, Woodruff, Barberry...etc. These are herbs that promote bile flow. (Many of these herbs if taken indiscriminately, can cause severe reaction. Always seek the advice of a qualified Herbalist).

Signs and symptoms.

There are many signs or symptoms that indicate the liver or gallbladder are congested. Insomnia and waking between 1 and 3 a.m., or sleeping all night and waking up feeling that you haven't slept at all along with weakness, sluggishness and tiredness. When there is no bile in the stomach there can be nervousness and migraine headaches and digestion is seriously impaired.

Emotional upsets such as sudden anger and depression are sure signs. No bile can also cause gas in the stomach producing pain around the heart and sternum area and water may develop around the heart and in the lungs. Visual problems may develop, neck and shoulder pain, low back pain or pain in the joints especially the knees, weakness and pain in upper front leg muscles and calves, pain in the arms and top of the right hand. There is likely to be dry or oily skin, itchy ears, muscle pain after working, heartburn, diarrhoea, constipation, frequent urination, pain between the shoulder blades, colitis, ulcers, hiatus hernia and digestive problems, (especially after eating), too much sleep, nausea, vomiting, certain foods repeating, (such as radish, green peppers, cucumber and onions), pain in the right side radiating to the back, colic, mental problems, pain in the liver or gallbladder area, headaches and a bitter taste in the mouth.

External signs.

Reddish blue colouring under the eyes and over the forehead and other areas of the body. Two vertical lines between the eyebrows, yellow eyes or skin, a red nose etc. Other problems caused directly by liver congestion are spastic colon, worms, infections, chills, anal itching, anaemia, diabetes, obesity, underweight, appendicitis and heart palpitations. Liver congestion can also lead to ear problems, swollen legs (edema), skin diseases, rheumatism, arthritis, glandular imbalances, menstrual problems, nervous disorders, muscle weakness, bronchitis, sclerosis, T.B., cancer, sterility, impotence, thyroid conditions, etc. etc. There are many other related conditions but they could fill a book. Obviously it is important to keep the liver clean by eating properly, walking in the fresh air, breathing deeply and taking proper rest and meditation.

It can readily be seen then, when dealing with any disorder of the body, that the liver must be taken into proper consideration to enable any treatment (herbal or otherwise) to be effective. In the next issue of the Newsletter I shall look at the specific applications of the herbs and their various benefits.