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Hepatitis C Center

Ayurvedic Medicine for Hepatitis C

Last Updated: Nov 01, 2015 | By Emily Soares Proctor



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Ayurveda is a holistic healing system from India that offers personalized treatment for health issues based on balancing an individual's constitution. In Ayurveda, each person's constitution consists of three bodily energies, or doshas, known as vata, pitta and kapha. According to Ayurvedic medicine, ill health and disease occur when the doshas are imbalanced. Dietary and lifestyle changes along with herbal therapies are used to restore dosha balance and health. Ayurveda has not been proved effective for hepatitis C treatment and cannot cure the disease, but it might provide symptom relief for some people through a set of practices to calm mind, body and spirit.

Pitta-Calming Diet

Ayurveda sees liver disorders primarily as a result of aggravated pitta. In "Hepatitis C Choices," Dr. Shri Mishra -- a medical doctor with Ayurveda expertise -- recommends dietary changes to calm pitta. He recommends avoiding or limiting these pitta-aggravating foods:

- Alcohol and coffee.
- Red meat and egg yolks.
- Oily and fried foods.
- Spicy, salty and sour foods.
- Yogurt, butter, sour cream and cheese.

Ayurvedic medicine generally promotes a vegetarian diet for liver disorders such as hepatitis C. Mishra recommends:



Dr. Tina M. St. John

Hepatitis C Center Guide

Overview

Causes, Risks & Prevention

Signs & Symptoms

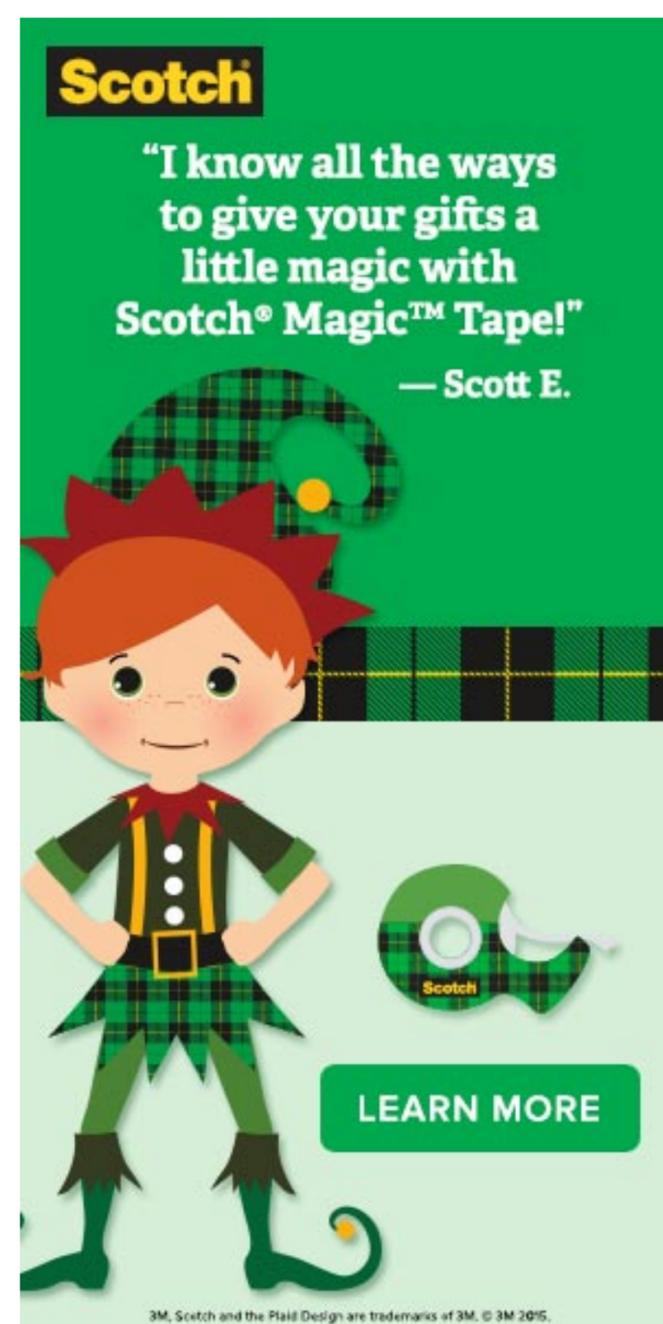
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- Bitter and sweet vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, green sweet peppers and leafy greens.
- Ripe fruit, sweet fruit such as cherries, apples, melons and pineapple.
- Grains such as barley, oats, wheat and basmati rice.

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Pitta-Vata Diet

Herbal Remedies

Ayurveda uses a number of herbs to treat liver disorders such as hepatitis C. Two common examples are *Andrographis paniculata*, also known as kalmegh, and *Curcuma longa*, commonly called turmeric. Kalmegh has been shown in animal and laboratory studies to have antiinflammatory and antioxidant properties, according to the authors of a June 2010 "Indian Journal of Natural Products and Resources" review article. These effects might help protect the liver from hepatitis C-related damage, although this has not been proven in human studies.

Curcumin is the primary active compound in turmeric. This chemical has been shown in animal and laboratory studies to have antiinflammatory properties, reports the author of a June 2009 "Alternative Medicine Review" article. Hepatitis C causes ongoing inflammation in the liver, which can lead to severe scarring and cirrhosis. Tamping down liver inflammation can, therefore, be useful for people with hepatitis C. However, curcumin has not yet been shown to slow hepatitis C progression in human studies.

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Lifestyle Practices

Adequate sleep is an important part of healing in all medical disciplines, including Ayurveda. Those with hepatitis C are especially in need of adequate sleep to decrease pitta, but they should not sleep late. In the book "Living Easy With Ayurveda," Dr. J.V. Hebbar recommends that people with aggravated pitta awake early in the morning and go to bed early enough to sleep 7 to 8 hours nightly. According to Ayurveda, the night is divided into three periods, each dominated by the characteristics of a separate dosha. Because of these periods, arising early in the morning yields more energy, explains Hebbar, and going to bed past midnight causes less sound sleep. People with a pitta imbalance should avoid daytime naps to assure more restful nighttime sleep, says Hebbar.

Avoiding anger and stress is important to reducing pitta, which can be lessened by relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation. People with hepatitis C are also encouraged to avoid smoking and spending too much time in the direct sun, as both activities increase pitta.

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Anxiety and exertion both aggravate pitta, so relieving stress is an important aspect of Ayurvedic treatment for hepatitis C. For people capable of performing gentle exercise with their doctor's approval, yoga poses promote mental peace and clarity while improving physical strength. According to Ayurveda, some poses can promote body detoxification, improve circulation and encourage immune function. Mishra suggests that yoga also supports the nervous system and reduces energy demands on the body. Working with a skilled yoga practitioner is important to optimize benefits and avoid injury.

Meditation is an integral part of yoga. Deep breathing during meditation increases relaxation and can improve lung capacity. For those dealing with hepatitis C symptoms, the opportunity for quiet and mental peace can be an important part of relieving stress.

Next Steps

Ayurveda recognizes each person as an individual with complex characteristics, and Ayurvedic treatments for hepatitis C offer the potential for a holistic, customized approach to addressing symptoms. Seek the guidance of an Ayurvedic practitioner experienced in hepatitis C treatment if you're interested in pursuing this form of therapy. However, these treatments should not replace standard medical care. Hepatitis C is a serious medical condition that requires regular monitoring by a healthcare professional. Additionally, Ayurveda is not appropriate for people with advanced liver disease, especially for those with liver failure.

If you choose Ayurveda as part of your hepatitis C treatment plan, make sure to tell each of your healthcare providers about all medicines, herbs and supplements you are taking to assure there are no dangerous interactions among them.

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