

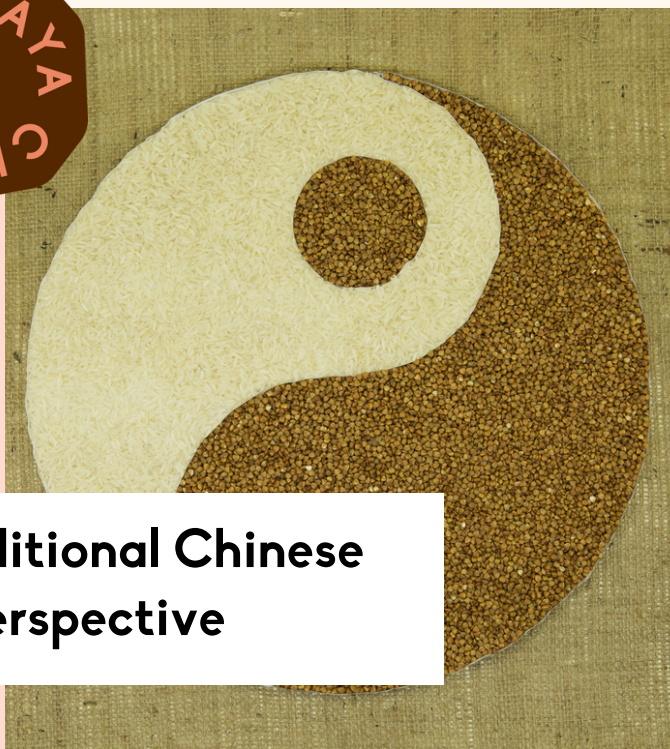


**TAKE THE LEAD. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.**

# Ways to support your menstrual cycle at home

Women's health week 2025

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**From a Traditional Chinese  
Medicine perspective**



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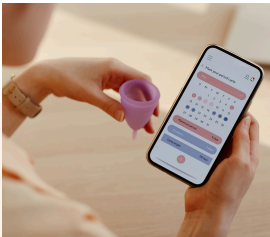
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## Why the period is important

The menstrual period can tell us a lot about the state health in the body, from both a Chinese medicine and Western medicine perspective. Changes can occur to the period throughout the lifespan due to many causes including hormonal imbalances, nervous system dysregulation, malnourishment, stress and poor sleep. Therefore, what we do day to day can have a big impact on our cycles.

Many people will go through life not paying much attention to their period, even if it is causing pain or disruption to their lives. This might be because we have been taught that pain and disruption is a natural part of menstruating. However, Chinese medicine believes that pain and disruptions to periods are signs that something needs addressing in the body. The quality of our menstruation can set us up for how we experience fertility and menopause, so it is important to pay attention!



Common disruptions to periods may include irregular periods, short or long cycles, skipped periods and amenorrhoea. Disruptions in the menstrual cycle can include pain, PMS, discomfort, mood changes, irritability, breast tenderness, fatigue, headaches... the list is endless!

Chinese medicine has a history of over 2,000 years of gynecological practice. It therefore has a large tool kit for assisting people who suffer from painful periods and other menstrual irregularities.

I wanted to share the key things that you can do at home, including self care and lifestyle changes that can help to regulate your period and support a healthier cycle!

# How to eat to support your cycle

In Chinese medicine the temperature of the food and water we consume dramatically affects our uterus and period flow.

One of the single biggest changes you can make to help with painful periods is to drink warm water and avoid icy drinks. Introducing cold into your system regularly through the water you drink can take a big toll on your internal fire, or Yang. In Chinese medicine, your Yang is very important to keep your uterus warm and your period flowing. If you think of your period as a river, introducing cold food and water can cause the river to freeze over. The blood flow may then become irregular, scanty, or painful.

It is also important to eat warm, cooked foods, and avoid cold and raw foods like salads, smoothies and ice cream. Eating as much warm food as you can is better for your digestion and can also help you avoid bloating and digestive discomfort.

Tip: if you're desperate for something like a smoothie, then let it warm up to room temperature before you drink it.



From a Chinese medicine perspective, internal cold is one of the biggest contributors to menstrual difficulties



# What to eat to support your cycle



## Herbal teas

Herbal medicines and food can help support your hormone balance and improve your menstrual flow. You can make simple teas to take throughout your cycle, just steep the herbs in some hot water!

PMS tea - use peppermint or spearmint to support healthy Qi flow

Fatigue and headaches - use goji berry and da zao (Chinese red date), which you can purchase at your local asian grocer, to tonify Yin and blood.

## Herbal soups

You can include herbal medicine in your cooking for added support. To make it easy, I've put together herbs into herbal soup packets along with recipes you can use to make soups and stews to nourish your body over your menstrual cycle. If you are interested you can come and pick them up in clinic!



## Foods to support the blood

In Chinese medicine our menstruation must be supported by blood, which is seen as part of the Yin in our bodies. Therefore it is important to include foods that are tonifying for yin and blood as much as possible in your diet.

Yin rich foods - focus on nuts and seeds, beans and high quality protein. Also include portions of chicken, oats, rice, millet, barley, yoghurt, tofu, oysters, mussels, spirulina, potato, melon, apples, bananas, mung beans, flaxseed oil and almond oil.

Blood rich foods - focus on iron and protein rich foods. Dark leafy greens,, grapes, lotus root, small amounts of meat.



# Self care and lifestyle



As mentioned above, cold is one of the main contributors to menstrual difficulties from a Chinese medicine perspective. It is important to make lifestyle changes to protect the warmth of your uterus. Here are some easy changes you can make that will make a difference!

## Avoid swimming during menstruation

When you are menstruating your meridians are open, and swimming during your period will allow the cold to penetrate deeply to your uterus. Leave swimming to next week and do some gentle yoga or stretching instead.

## Keep your feet, abdomen and lower back warm

When we are bleeding, the meridians are open and this can allow cold to penetrate more deeply than at other times of the month. Therefore, when you are menstruating, take extra care to keep these vulnerable areas warm

## Eat and drink warm food and beverages

As I said above, a smooth menstruation relies on a warm uterus. What you eat and drink makes a big difference to your period, and this is especially true when menstruating.

## Practice stress relieving activities

Mindfulness, breathing, movement and meditation all act directly on the Qi, helping it to move more smoothly and relieving stagnation – when you flow, your period flows.

## Nourish yourself well throughout your period

It is important to eat and rest well throughout your menstrual cycle to ensure you have enough Qi and blood for a healthy flow. This is especially true around your period, when you are losing blood. Focus on eating and resting well at this time to replenish stores of Qi and blood.

# Self massage and acupressure



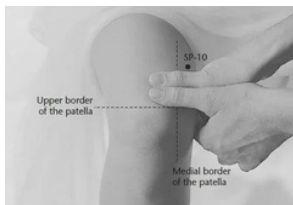
Chinese medicine treats points on the body to encourage smooth flow of blood through the body. This can lead to improved menstrual cycles.

You can treat these points at home to help assist this process and relieve pain during your period.

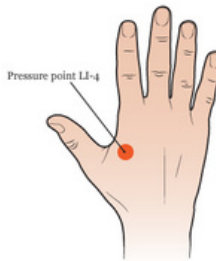
I often teach this to patients to do at home in between treatments for best affect!

## Acupressure:

Apply acupressure to the below points to relieve symptoms and regulate your cycle. It is best to do this regularly, 30-60 circles at a time . For pain, apply the circles in an anti-clockwise direction. It is also helpful to use warmth on these areas. We use the burning of a herb called mugwort on these points in clinic and I often teach patients how to do this at home. Come into clinic to learn to self moxa these points!



Menstrual pain



Headaches and PMS



All menstrual problems

Abdominal massage - massaging your lower back and abdomen regularly will assist in bringing blood and Qi to the area, helping the river of your menstruation to run smoothly. Ensure that you apply the massage on these areas lightly and in a clockwise direction. It can be useful to use a herbal medicine balm to assist. Come and see us in clinic for our menstrual cramp relief balm.



# Record your BBT to chart your menstrual cycle

BBT stands for basal body temperature. It is the most accurate way to track your ovulation. Apps that track your menstruation tell you an estimate of when you will ovulate based on the average menstrual cycle ovulation. However, this isn't actually the same for everyone! Some people naturally have a longer or shorter follicular or luteal phase. This will mean that they ovulate at a different point in their cycle.

Just after we ovulate, our base body temperature increases slightly (around 0.22 to 0.56 C) and stays raised until usually a day or so before we begin to menstruate. Tracking your BBT can confirm whether or not you are ovulating regularly and help you understand the length of your follicular and luteal phases. This can be useful information when managing menstrual concerns such as PMS or painful periods. Many people report that tracking their BBT also helps them to get to know their cycles, giving them a sense of empowerment and self knowledge.

## How to record your BBT

Start taking your temperature on the first day that you wake up with your period. This is day one of your menstrual cycle (even if you actually started bleeding yesterday). You should take your temperature as soon as you wake up, before moving around or talking. Ideally this would be a similar time each morning. Use a thermometer that shows two decimal places to take your temperature, orally is best. Enter the temperature in an ovulation tracker ([download here!](#)), you can modify it to your menstrual cycle and it will produce a line graph showing your ovulation peak. Most period tracking apps also include options for recording BBT and will show you your fertility window .

Once you have done this for three cycles, you will be able to understand if your ovulation is regular, and start to predict when it will be! Your temperature may fluctuate slightly day to day, but ovulation can be seen when there is an obvious spike followed by three consecutive days of raised temperature.



# How can acupuncture and herbal medicine help your menstrual symptoms?

What you do in your daily life is an important factor in contributing to your cycle health. However, if you are managing menstrual conditions such as PCOS, endometriosis, amenorrhoea or other cycle difficulties, it is likely you would benefit from some extra support.

Acupuncture and herbal medicine can assist women to regulate their cycles and manage the challenging symptoms that can arise over the menstrual cycle. Through a holistic approach, acupuncturists focus on both symptom management, and the prevention of issues that can arise later in life when our cycles are not regulated.



We use all of the tools of Chinese medicine at Papaya clinic to promote harmony and balance in the body and improve menstrual cycle function.



**ONLINE BOOKING PORTAL**  
**(FOR ALL CLINICS)**



Want to learn more about ways you  
can manage your menstrual cycle  
naturally? Come and see us in clinic!



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