

LIVER Congestion- and the Importance of how to clear the liver

Liver congestion and hormone dysfunction are more closely linked than you think, and may potentially cause a list of female reproductive health problems. Liver congestion itself also lies at the heart of many chronic illnesses, and is regularly overlooked as the primary block to weight loss.

A snapshot of how the liver works

The liver is responsible for filtering out all the toxic materials we breathe, swallow or absorb through our skin. A bit like a sewage plant when you think about it. It puts aside the good stuff like nutrients we need for energy and metabolism, then inactivates and excretes the bad stuff (toxins and metabolic waste) via the bowels, skin, lungs and kidneys.

The liver's job is also to:

- Convert carbohydrates, fats and proteins to nutrients and energy.
- Produce bile, which helps the liver eliminate fat-soluble toxins and excrete excess metabolic waste such as hormones. Bile also enhances the absorption of other fat-soluble materials such as ---Vitamins A, D, E and K.
- Remove harmful substances such as dangerous chemicals, pathogens such as bacteria, drugs (such as alcohol).
- Store Iron and other vitamins.
- Store sugars (in the form of glycogen) for use later on.
- Produce serum proteins that act as hormone carriers.
- Produce sex hormones such as testosterone and estrogen.
- Regulate sex hormone levels generally.
- Produce of gamma globulin, a substance required for immunity.
- Filter and store the blood, as well as regulate blood clotting.
- Balance electrolytes.

Liver congestion

As it sounds, liver congestion occurs when the liver becomes “backed up” with toxins, some of which are avoidable and some of which are not in today's modern lifestyle.

Signs of liver congestion include:

- Inhibited nutrient absorption – Congestion may inhibit the liver's nutrient absorption capacity.
- Fatigue and exhaustion – The liver is most active as we sleep. If it is toxic sleep disturbances may occur, particularly between 1-3am.
- Skin problems –When the liver is unable to adequately purify the blood, it may release toxins through the skin causing conditions such as acne, eczema and dermatitis. The affects of liver congestion on hormone balance may also exert a negative secondary effect on the skin.

- Food sensitivities and other allergies – The build-up of toxins in the liver may trigger immune responses in the form of sensitivities, intolerances or allergies.
- Brain fog – When the liver is congested, excess ammonia builds up, arises to the head and causes an increased lack of focus.
- High levels of histamine – Reactions to histamine and/or histamine intolerance may occur when the liver is congested and unable to breakdown excess histamine via detoxification pathways. Common symptoms of histamine intolerance include anxiety, insomnia, migraines, hypertension, fatigue, flushing and nasal congestion.
- Emotional imbalance – According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, when the liver is stressed or congested anger, depression and/or irritability are more likely to arise.

Liver congestion and your hormones

When the liver is congested, it is also unable to do its job of creating and excreting hormones efficiently. Estrogen excess in particular wreaks havoc by causing a deficiency in progesterone and a consequential list of female health issues including Breast cancer that has been linked to estrogen excess in studies.

Estrogen dominance caused by liver congestion causes the adrenal glands to produce more cortisol, the hormone related to stress. This depletes the adrenal glands and may lead to adrenal fatigue/ exhaustion/ burnout. From here it is a chicken and egg scenario.

Adrenal fatigue affects the body's ability to produce adequate levels of cortisol, which requires Progesterone for production.

The hormonal cascade from here becomes one big balancing act. Liver congestion causes the build up of estrogen in the body, and a consequent progesterone deficiency. To add to the problem, stressed out adrenal glands also deplete progesterone levels with their increased need for cortisol production.

The more progesterone used to produce cortisol, the less there is to balance estrogen hence creating greater Estrogen dominance and a tougher job for the liver.

Toxins live in fat

A congested liver prevents you from reaching your ideal weight by storing toxins it can't handle into the fat tissue, whose function is less vital when compared to that of the muscles, ligaments and nerves. This is known as the process of Bioaccumulation.

The more toxins that accumulate in the liver, the more congested it becomes, resulting in an increased need for their storage. And more fat will result as a means to store them. And so the cycle goes on.

For this reason, more than most have success with weight loss when they focus their efforts on detoxing vs the traditional combination of kilojoule restriction and exercise.

Balance your hormones and lost fat by detoxifying your liver: [Here are a few tips to try!](#)

1. Start the day with a big glass of warm water with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice.
2. Consider taking bitters. They stimulate digestion, assist with the filtration of blood impurities and assist nutrient absorption.
3. Avoid constipation at all costs and aim to go to the bathroom daily. When the bowel becomes back up, toxins have the chance to accumulate and are reabsorbed through the large bowel wall – creating only more work for the liver. Eat a balanced diet, drink 2L of water a day at the minimum, increase exercise that gets the abdomen moving and as a last resort.
4. Eat liver cleansing foods such cruciferous vegetables, dark green leafy vegetables, garlic, grapefruit, apples, avocados.
5. Integrate liver and bile cleansers like Beets or Milk Thistle (not if you have low ferritin.) Beets are the #1 liver cleanser. Use them any way you can. Beet Super Food Powder is easy to use.
7. Buy organic food when you can. Always spend your money on organic, pastured animal products before organic fruit and vegetables. For those on a budget it is also good to follow the Dirty Dozen principles when shopping.
8. Reduce toxic chemical exposure to synthetic the synthetic chemicals/ additives/ preservatives found in foods, make up, plastics and cleaning agents.
9. Go easy on alcohol. Drink clear spirits in place of wine/beer/liquor when you can. Drink a big glass of water for every drink that goes down and have 4-5 days off alcohol a week (at the minimum!).
10. Relax! Stress not only aggravates the liver, but depletes the adrenal glands and in some may cause constipation. Breathe, meditate, go for a walk or do anything that simply makes you happy.

BEETs are incredible for liver, bile, gallbladder and kidney health.