

Eliminating Waste in Practice: Dr. Tan's Eight Magic Points for All Digestive Disorders

By Lisajeanne Potyk, LAc

Most of the patients I see in my clinic suffer from a variety of digestive disorders. They do not effectively process their food. They have diarrhea, heartburn, and acid reflux disease. They're nauseated.

And who would expect any different? In this fast-paced, high-technology culture, we're overrun with time constraints and stressors of all kinds.

People unaware of what a good diet consists of rely on processed fast foods and meats packed with hormones and antibiotics. In the West, we're overprescribed antibiotics and other medications; women are reeling from the side-effects of birth control pills; and we regularly take any of a myriad of anti-inflammatories for the slightest ache. It's no wonder so many people are experiencing internal disharmony. And if all of that wasn't enough, most people either don't know how to, or are afraid to, release their emotions. Opting for a sense of control, they "hold." And they get constipated.

The digestive system is a mirror to how we process our external world on every level. Are we assimilating good nutritional, emotional and spiritual nourishment, and effectively eliminating what is toxic to us? Are we letting go of negative situations and allowing ourselves to be nurtured by positive ones? Without the foundation of a healthy, properly nourished body, we can't find the strength to feed into our emotions. If there's a backlog of undigested emotions, any digestive symptom can manifest. Once balance in the body is established by poor nutrition and digestive functions, we gain the platform to integrate our internal and external worlds.

Traditional Chinese medicine teaches us to properly diagnose and treat our patients using staid, ancient teachings recorded thousands of years ago. People don't change from century to century, but their circumstances do. The environment, food, medications, and stressors affecting our patients are very different

today, and since the disharmonies that cause them are rampant, digestive disorders are also rampant. Diagnosis and treatment according to the TCM model, written in (and for) a different time, can therefore be complicated and confusing.

Now, imagine a group of acupuncture points that could be used to balance every kind of digestive disorder, including irritable bowel syndrome, bloating, ulcerative colitis, indigestion, and more. Imagine that the points are simple, easy to follow, and quite effective. There is no need to take the pulse, no need to consult a textbook, and no need to fumble through myriad causes. Wouldn't that be magic? It is, thanks to Dr. Teh Fu "Richard" Tan.

Dr. Tan has dedicated his life to experimenting with combinations of points, which are used with excellent clinical results, often instantaneously. Isn't that what we, as practitioners, want - to insert our needles, see an immediate change, and know our treatment is working? With the eight magic points, Dr. Tan offers the ability to elicit consistent, positive results.

One could consult any number of the core books written on TCM theory, but isn't the practice of acupuncture - of healing - about how much better the patient feels after being treated? Better to learn the laws of acupuncture, become skilled at them through knowledge and discipline, and then break out into your own successful expression of them.

Dr. Tan's Eight Magic Points

Points on one side: LI 4, SJ 5, Liv 8 (Dr. Tan's liver point), Sp 9

Points on other side: Lu 7, P 6, St 36, GB 34p (Dr. Tan's gallbladder point)

Liver 8 (Dr. Tan's liver point) and GB 34p (Dr. Tan's gallbladder point) are found in locations not traditionally known. According to Dr. Tan, needling these points is more effective. Dr. Tan's liver point is located anterior to Sp 9 on the medial condyle of the tibia, a rich region oddly ignored throughout history. The area can sometimes be very painful to the touch, but it can be more useful than Liver 3 in treating any stagnation in the Liver channel, especially when it is attached to the emotional disorders of resentment and anger.

GB 34p is located posterior to GB 34, just under the head of the fibula, where the tendon attaches. When penetrated, the point radiates electrically down to the foot, just as P 6 goes to the finger. It works better than GB 34, and is more sensitive. If both Liver 8 and GB 34p are tender, it can indicate an emotional component

to the disorder. I regularly use this treatment for digestive ailments, with excellent results.

Case Studies

A 28-year old female came to me with anxiety and constant, burning pain in her epigastric area, something she'd experienced for much of her adult life. She was highly sensitive to many foods and didn't eat much. Most of the medical specialists she consulted gave her the same patent answer: "There's nothing wrong with you; it's all in your head." She was very nervous and skeptical about acupuncture, but she was also desperate.

After the third treatment with the eight magic points, her gastric burning and discomfort began to diminish. I continued seeing her twice a week. A month later, she was eating comfortably, and was fairly calm. She's received so much relief from the eight magic points that even a job transfer hasn't kept her from traveling to continue occasional treatments with me.

I have found the eight magic points useful for patients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiation, as it is a wonderful balancing treatment. A 40-year old female with breast cancer was just finishing her course of radiation when she came to me for acupuncture. She looked literally lifeless. Mostly bedridden, she had become frail, pale and weak. Given her delicate digestion and poor appetite, she wasn't getting the nutrients she needed to recover her strength. I kept the treatment simple, using light needling with the eight magic points. When she returned to me for our second session, a light had already turned on in her eyes. Even her family noticed the dramatic difference in her *qi*. Continuing treatments, she began her recovery from the adverse effects of radiation.

A pregnant woman, 28, experiencing severe vomiting and persistent nausea, came to my clinic for help. I chose to use the eight magic points, but substituted LI 3 for LI 4, which is forbidden during pregnancy. Her symptoms abated immediately. She continued with me throughout her pregnancy, and ultimately had an unusually easy delivery. She is now the mother of a healthy, contented newborn.

The eight magic points performs wonders on people experiencing emotional upset, especially women with hormonal imbalances. A 42-year old female experiencing perimenopausal symptoms came to see me for her emotional distress. Hypersensitive to everything and everyone, she felt deeply depressed and completely controlled by her emotions. She was so anxious that she couldn't eat; she couldn't even lie still on my table for more than 20 minutes without getting antsy. I explored my toolbox of protocols and decided intuitively

to try the eight magic points. At her next treatment session, she raved about how much better she felt. I continued using the eight magic points, which became the antidote for her intense emotional imbalance.

Learning From Dr. Tan

The first six months of my apprenticeship with Dr. Tan consisted of simply observing him in his bustling clinic. I was to ask no questions. He told me, "Once you learn it in your heart, your mind will understand." The Chinese teach by familiarity, which leads to an instinctual knowing (the tiger). Once the ground of knowing is established, the "why" is understood (the wings). The student becomes familiar by watching; masterful and responsive through doing and observing results; and, once they've grown their wings, creative, by developing a style uniquely theirs.

I'm just getting my wings under Dr. Tan, but my clinical practice has long taken flight with the success of these treatments and the tremendous results my patients experience. The beauty of a protocol like this is that, as with magic, we don't have to understand why it works, because we see for ourselves that it works. Consider the eight magic points. See for yourself that it is magic.



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