

Qi Made Easy

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As an acupuncturist for more than 15 years, I have seen that there are many layers to every patient's case. That can make treatment complicated. As a result, compliance with that treatment can be difficult for the patient and a frustration for the health care practitioner. In these cases, I have learned that remembering the basics provides an effective way to approach treatment.

That means simplifying the protocols for patients, beginning with the food they eat. What could be more fundamental to a patient's health? Eating healthy foods helps increase a person's *qi*, or flow of energy. Promoting a simple approach to healthy eating makes our job as acupuncturists easier and more effective for the patient.

When acupuncture was first developed, people lived and ate closer to nature. It was easy to eat nourishing food. In fact, food often served as medicine. As Hippocrates said, "[Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.](#)"

Today, by contrast, processed foods and those containing large amounts of hydrogenated oils, high fructose corn syrup and dyes have contributed to devitalized foods that often make up a large part of the American diet. Eating so much devitalized food can lead to devitalized *qi*. Many health experts have cited that the increased presence of processed foods discourages healthful eating and clearly has been linked to a host of chronic diseases and health conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Even those who eat well often cannot get the nutrients they need for optimal health.

Making Qi Simple

The question is, how can we practitioners help people get more of the best foods and less of the processed foods and, at the same time, make it easy for them to do so. Adding functional food powders to the diet is one way people can simply and effectively improve their nutrition and their *qi*. I recommend use of concentrated food powder supplements in my practice and use them at home as well. They offer a simple and effective way for people to add fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, lean protein, healthy fats like omega 3's, and other "super food" nutrients to their diet.

My three-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Julianna, loves recipes I have created using natural food formula supplements. The SuperFood-Banana shake is one example of a healthy, enjoyable and easy-to-make solution; a drink that appeals to children in particular. I have found that use of the food powder supplements resonates with many of the families "on the go" with whom I have spoken in the course of my work. No difficult formulations, calculations or combining of different foods are required. These "superfood" solutions (ready-to-go, complete nutrition in a simple package) are inviting and well-accepted in today's fast-paced families.

Other ways your patients can help themselves to eat healthier on the go include:

Keeping a food log for two weeks. This proven method helps them see what they actually eat and drink. I add a column for time of day, circumstances, and how they feel, so they can see when they

eat due to stress or boredom.

Making a preprinted grocery list. You can teach them to stick to a list and to go shopping when they're not hungry. Most people buy similar items each week, so it's fastest to print the list, put it on the refrigerator and circle items as they run out.

Developing a monthly menu planner. With this, 10-15 healthy dinners and lunches are chosen and then rotated throughout the month. A few nights can be reserved for "sandwich night" and going out to dinner. This way, people can plan their cooking ahead, add what they need to the preprinted grocery list, and cook and freeze in batches. A little planning ahead not only results in healthier meals, but in less stress and time deciding on meals and cooking.

Case Example

One of the most profound cases I've seen is an incredible change in one of my patients, Janet. Nerve pain, arthritis, several surgeries, unhealthy eating habits, and high stress had led to years of pain, high blood pressure, unhappiness, insomnia and a plethora of medications.

In one week of reducing sugar and adding concentrated food supplements, she reduced the pain level in her arthritic hips from a 10 to a 2, reduced her blood pressure medication by one-third, increased her energy and had more mental clarity than she'd had in years. She's also more motivated to keep building good habits now that she has a taste of what good health feels like. Before, she was too tired to exercise. Now she's excited to exercise and eat healthy foods.

Focusing on food first and using concentrated foods as a jump start have made everything else I do as a practitioner more successful, for Janet as well as all my other patients.

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