

# Patient Help Sheet

## Chest Pain

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"The first wealth is health." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

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### Patient Help Sheet – Chest / Breast Pain

Chest pain is not something to be taken lightly, as many times it can be a precursor to something more serious like a heart attack. Therefore it is always recommended a person suffering from chest pain be checked out by a doctor, especially when that pain appears out of nowhere. Chest/breast pain can be an indication of many other problems too. For instance, anxiety, grief, depression, poor diet, external factors like a cold, accumulation of breast milk or even fatigue can all be factors when a person is experiencing chest/breast pain.

As long as the chest/breast pain is not cardiac related, Traditional Chinese Medicine can be a helpful tool for treating the pain. Acupuncture is one of the modalities used by TCM practitioners to help alleviate pain. Acupuncture helps the body heal itself by releasing endorphins, which are natural painkillers. Acupuncture also helps to dislodge or drain areas of stagnation commonly associated with pain. Think of a cyst. This is a type of stagnation in TCM and acupuncture can help break up these areas of stagnation and restore proper flow of both blood and lymph to the affected areas.

Chest/breast pain can involve many different organs and energetic pathways. The heart, lungs and stomach can all be affected. Therefore, the TCM practitioner must be able to determine the proper diagnosis before treating each patient. Chest colds are treated much differently than a person suffering from chronic grief over the loss of a loved one. Since chest pain can be a result of an excess condition or a deficiency, the treatments will be very different. The TCM practitioner may suggest certain foods, exercises or overall lifestyle changes that will help the patient heal over time.

### Foods

**Ginger** – This slightly spicy root has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, which can help soothe an upset stomach that may be causing chest pain and acid reflux.

**Cucumber** – Cooling and draining in nature, this food helps to cleanse the lungs of mucus and phlegm, which can help relieve chest congestion and pain.

**Kale** – Full of vitamins, this leafy vegetable can cleanse the body of toxins that may be causing pain.

**Melons** – Due to the cooling nature of most melons, they are great for draining excess heat in the chest area.

### Lifestyle

Excessive stress, anxiety and worry are all contributors to chest/breast pain. One way to combat these negative emotions is through the use of meditation. Meditation can be very beneficial when practiced regularly.

Avoiding the excessive consumption of dairy products, sweets, greasy foods, deep-fried foods, spicy foods and alcohol can also help greatly in the prevention of chest pain and breast pain.

Lastly, doing regular chest opening type stretches will help prevent and decrease any pectoral pain and re-establish proper blood flow into the area.



### Acupressure Points

**Heart 7** – Located on the outer side of the wrist crease, in the depression between the two tendons. This point is indicated for all heart diseases and syndromes, heart palpitations and angina pectoris. It is also indicated for emotional and psychological issues sometimes associated with chest pain.

**Pericardium 7** – Located in the middle of the wrist crease between the two tendons. This point is extremely useful for treating angina pectoris aka chest pain. This point is also good for treating gastric pain, which can contribute to chest pain.

**Ren 17** – This point is located in the middle of the chest, directly between the nipples. This point is used to treat pectoral muscle pain, coughs caused by chest congestion and mastitis.

**Liver 3** – Located on the top of the foot, in the depression where the big toe and second toe meet. This point calms emotions, soothes digestive issues and also regulates palpitations of the heart.

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