

Integrative Chinese Medicine

A New System for Diagnosis and Treatment

Treating Malabsorption and Malnourishment Disorders with Western Herbs

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Malabsorption Part 1

Introduction

Part 1.a
Malabsorption
Conventional medicine

Malabsorption: Conventional medicine

Definition

- malabsorption refers to reduced absorption of nutrients through the gastrointestinal tract
- malabsorption can result in malnutrition, eg. involving weight loss or anemia

Associated disorders

Malabsorption can be associated with one or more of a variety of possible causes, including:

- parasites
- (acute) diarrhea
- Whipple's disease
- small intestine bacterial overgrowth (SIBO)

- inflammatory bowel disease
- radiotherapy
- drug side-effects
- lactose intolerance
- cows milk intolerance
- celiac disease
- cystic fibrosis
- chronic pancreatitis
- biliary disorders

Malabsorption: Conventional medicine

Symptoms

These vary in type and severity with the associated disorder(s) or causes, but may include:

- avoiding specific foods
- diarrhea
- abdominal distension and discomfort, flatulence
- weight loss
- malnutrition- general or specific
- anemia
- osteopenia
- exhaustion, physical and/or mental
- growth retardation, delayed puberty
- amenorrhea, infertility
- reduced resistance, recurring infections

Malabsorption: Conventional medicine

Potentially inducing drugs

These include the following:

- antacids
- PPIs, eg. omeprazole
- laxatives
- biguanide hypoglycemics, eg. metformin
- para amino salicylic acid
- antibiotics
- corticosteroids
- colchicine

Malabsorption: Conventional medicine

Risks

These include:

- specific foods
- poor diet
- stress
- alcohol
- specific drugs
- caffeine
- laxative abuse
- antibiotic therapy

Treatment: lifestyle

- see 'Risk' list opposite
- optimize nutrition

Treatment: conventional medicine

Treatment is directed to treating cause/associated disorder.

Malabsorption: Conventional medicine

Dysbiosis and malabsorption

- dysbiosis, disturbance of the balance of the different bacterial species in the intestines, is one factor that can result in malabsorption and resulting malnutrition
- dysbiosis can also contribute to metabolic syndrome, which can be associated with malabsorption disorders

Mechanism

- dysbiosis can interfere with the normal digestion of food
- certain harmful bacteria produce toxins, causing inflammation of the gut lining, interfering with nutrient absorption

Dysbiosis: alternative treatment

- **optimize nutrition**
- **prebiotics** eg. non-digestible fiber compounds claimed to help the beneficial colon bacteria
- **probiotics** eg. live micro-organisms claimed to help beneficial colon bacteria
- **herbs** with constituents reported in research to reduce dysbiosis and benefit beneficial bacteria, eg. Berberis (berberine), Curcuma (curcumin), Scutellaria bai. (baicalin)

Part 1.b
Malabsorption
4 Imbalances & Differential Questions

Malabsorption: Integrative Chinese medicine

Diagnosis and Treatment

4 Imbalances

- malabsorption can be organized in terms of Deficiency, Stagnation, Disturbance, and Excess

Chinese organ syndromes

- malabsorption can then be further organized in terms of the Chinese organ syndromes

Differential Questions

- a special system of Differential Questions is presented to make it easier and faster to find the Chinese organ syndrome(s) responsible for the disorder

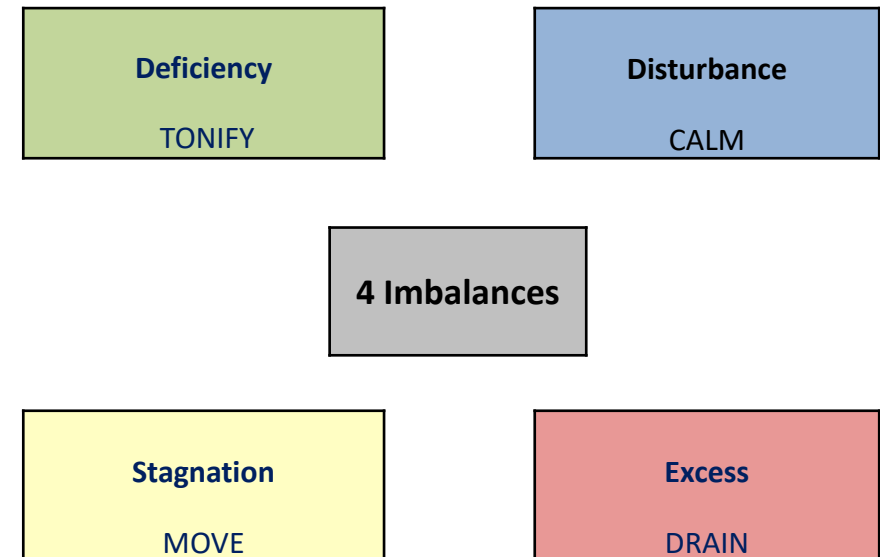
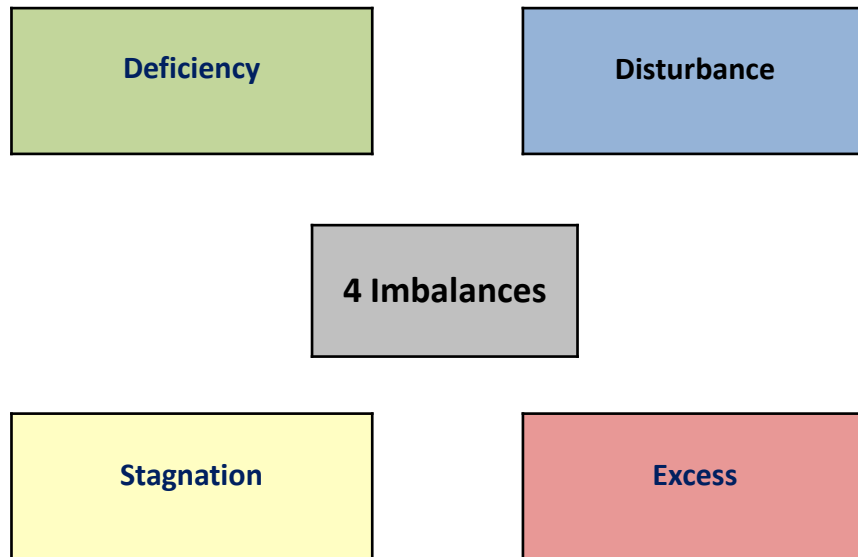
But!

The way that the malabsorption situation is diagnosed and treated will vary with:

- **specific cause** whether cause is:
 - Deficiency eg. lack of an enzyme
 - Excess eg. infection or inflammation
 - Disturbance eg. stress
- **specific result** usually Deficiency, eg. exhaustion, but with different manifestations, eg. anemia, delayed puberty, infertility, or osteoporosis

4 Imbalance system

We can say that there are four basic things that can go wrong with the energy of the body:



Deficiency

TONIFY

- do you have chronic exhaustion?
- are you diagnosed with any form of malnutrition, eg. anemia?

Disturbance

CALM

- is your problem worse with emotional disturbance, eg. anxiety, fear, or worry?

4 Imbalances

Malabsorption

Stagnation

MOVE

- is your problem worse with emotional constraint, eg. depression or suppressed anger?
- do you have abdominal distension, discomfort, or pain?

Excess

DRAIN

- are you diagnosed with any intestinal inflammatory disorder?
- do you have sensations of fullness or heat, or diarrhea with foul smell?

Malabsorption: Differential Questions Chinese Organ Syndromes

Spleen, Intestines	SP Qi Def	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have reduced appetite, loose stool, tiredness or exhaustion, or digestive symptoms worse with increasing exhaustion?
	IN Qi Def	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have reduced appetite, diarrhea, exhaustion, repeated infections, malnutrition, maybe anemia, or weight loss, did symptoms may follow repeated antibiotic treatment?
	SP Yang Def	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have watery loose stools maybe with undigested food in stool, cold abdomen, exhaustion with desire to lie down after eating?
	SP Blood Def	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have anemia related to low iron and low protein diet, or to malabsorption; or muscle weakness or atrophy, or reduced appetite and loose stool ?
	IN Qi Dist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have changing bowel patterns; abdominal distension, discomfort, or pain; and do symptoms fluctuate according to levels of emotional disturbance?
	SI Worms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have you been diagnosed with any intestinal parasite infection?
	LI Damp Heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have abdominal pain, diarrhea with foul smell, mucus and blood in stools, heavy sensations, or heat sensations?
Kidney	KI Jing Def	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> did you have delayed reproductive development; or amenorrhea, infertility, or osteoporosis linked to malnourishment?
	KI Qi Def	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have any of the following linked to a malabsorption disorder: exhaustion, weak lower back, weak will, reduced concentration?
Liver	LR invades Spleen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have abdominal distension, abdominal discomfort; constipation, diarrhea or an alternation between the two, worse with depression and frustration?
Heart	HT Spirit Disturbance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have palpitations, anxiety, panic sensations, or sleep disturbance?
(Lung)	Defensive Qi Def	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you have reduced resistance to infections in any system or area of the body, and recurring or lingering infections?

Malabsorption Part 2

Herbs

Part 2.a
Malabsorption
Herbs: Research

Herbs and dysbiosis

Various herbs have studies on effectiveness for dysbiosis and related disorders, eg:

- Berberis esp. berberine
- Curcuma esp. curcumin
- Lycium
- Scutellaria bai. esp. baicalin

Active references

We have emailed you a document with **active** research references on this topic.

- **click** on any one of the references to open it in PubMed

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

- then put it through DeepL Translate to translate it into German

<https://www.deepl.com/translator>

Part 2.b
Malabsorption
Herbs: ICM

Malabsorption Herbs Deficiency

Herb	Temperature	SP Qi Def	IN Qi Def	SP Yang Def	SP Blood Def	Defens. Qi Def	KI Qi Def	KI Jing Def	Yin Def	UT Qi Def		
Sweet stimulant tonics												
Panax gin. red	warm	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐					
Panax gin. white	neutral-warm	☐	☐			☐	☐					
Panax qui.	neutral-cool	☐	☐			☐	☐		☐			
Astragalus	sl. warm	☐				☐						
Angelica sin.	warm	☐			☐							
Glycyrrhiza baked	neutral-warm	☐	☐	☐			☐					
Glycyrrhiza	neutral-cool	☐	☐			☐	☐					
Sweet nutritive and/or anti-inflammatory tonics												
Avena	neutral-cool	☐	☐									
Lycium	neutral	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐	☐				
Molasses	neutral	☐			☐							
Ophiopogon	cool								☐			
Serenoa	neutral	☐						☐				
Uterus tonic and regulator												
Chamaelirium	neutral	☐					☐	☐		☐		
Astringent KI tonic												
Schisandra	warm						☐					

Malabsorption Herbs

Herb	Temperature	Deficiency						Stagnation				
		SP Qi Def	IN Qi Def	SP Yang Def	SP Blood Def			LR invades IN				
Circulatory stimulants (hot)												
Zingiber (dried)	hot	☐		☐		☐			☐			
Circulatory stimulants (warm)												
Angelica arc.	warm	☐		☐								
Myrica	warm	☐	☐	☐								
Aromatic tonics, carminatives												
Acorus	warm	☐										
Angelica arc.	warm	☐		☐								
Curcuma rhizome	warm	☐	☐	☐								
Mentha pip.	warm-cool	☐						☐				
Rosmarinus	warm	☐		☐				☐				
Trigonella	warm	☐	☐	☐								
Bitter tonics												
Achillea	warm-cool	☐	☐									
Gentiana lut.	neutral-cool	☐			☐	☐		☐				
Astringents (and anti-inflammatories) see also Achillea, Myrica												
Agrimonia	neutral	☐	☐		☐							
Hydrastis	cool		☐									
Plantago	cool		☐									
Urtica	neutral		☐									

Malabsorption Herbs

Herb	Temperature	Disturbance					Excess					
		HT Spirit Dist	IN Qi Dist				LI Damp Heat infect.	LI Damp Heat inflamm.				
Anxiolytics												
Anemone	cold	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Humulus	sl. warm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lavandula	sl. warm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Anxiolytics (mild)												
Passiflora	neutral-cool	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Anti-inflammatories												
Berberis	cool						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Hydrastis	cool						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Scutellaria baicalensis	cold						<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Malabsorption Part 3

Herb Combinations

Part 3.a
Malabsorption
Herb choice

Malabsorption: Herb choice

Herb action

Tonics

- if Deficiency is either the cause of the malabsorption, or its result- malnutrition and exhaustion- then tonics are required
- tonics may be, for example:
 - bitter digestive tonics, eg. *Gentiana*
 - aromatic antidepressant tonics, eg. *Rosmarinus*
 - sweet immune system tonics, eg. *Astragalus*
 - sweet nutritive tonics, eg. *Lycium*

Antimicrobials

- eg. against bacterial pathogens, eg. *Berberis*

Anti-inflammatories

- herbs to reduce intestinal inflammation, eg. *Glycyrrhiza*

Anti-dysbiosis

- herbs to normalize the balance of gut bacteria, eg. *Berberis*, *Curcuma*, *Scutellaria bai*.

Astringents

- herbs to reduce diarrhea and bleeding, and to reduce intestinal hyper-permeability, eg. *Agrimonia*, *Hydrastis*, and *Myrica*

Anxiolytics

- herbs to reduce the effect of anxiety on malabsorption disorders, eg. *Lavandula*

Uterine regulators

- herbs for reproductive disorders derived from malabsorption, eg. delayed reproductive development, amenorrhea, or infertility; eg. *Chamaelirium*

Part 3.b.
Malabsorption
Combination Comparison Tables

Malabsorption Herb Combinations

Gentiana 7		Gentiana 1 Mod.		Chamaelirium 2 Mod.		Berberis 11		Gentiana 10	
digestive weakness + malabsorption sensation of not getting nourishment from food, weight loss, exhaustion, loose stools		digestive weakness + anemia exhaustion, emaciation, flatulence and colic		amenorrhea + malabsorption anemia, exhaustion, maybe delayed reproductive development		malabsorption + diarrhea infection or dysbiosis + inflammation		malabsorption + diarrhea + anxiety abdominal distension & discomfort, depression	
SP Qi Def + IN Qi Def		SP Qi Def + SP Blood Def		KI Qi Def + KI Jing Def + LR Blood Def		SP Qi Def + IN Qi Def + Retained Pathogen		SP Qi Def + IN Qi Def + IN Qi Dist + HT Spirit Dist	
Gentiana	1	Gentiana	1	Chamaelirium	2	Berberis	1	Gentiana	1
		Artemisia abs.	1			Hydrastis	1	Agrimonia	1
Agrimonia	1			Panax gin. (white)	1	Scutellaria bai.	1		
Hydrastis	1	Acorus	1	Glycyrrhiza	1			Humulus	1
Myrica	1	Elettaria	0.5			Agrimonia	1	Lavandula	1
				Angelica sin.	1	Plantago	1		
Trigonella	1	Angelica sin.	1	Lycium	decoct.	Urtica	1	Rosmarinus	1
		Lycium	decoct.	Serenoa	1			Mentha pip.	0.5
Glycyrrhiza	1	Molasses	5ml inf.			Curcuma	1	Trigonella	1
Avena 1:2	1			Zingiber (dried)	0.5-1	Trigonella	1		
								Glycyrrhiza	1

Gentiana 7	
digestive weakness + malabsorption	
sensation of not getting nourishment from food, weight loss, exhaustion, loose stools	
SP Qi Def + IN Qi Def	
Gentiana	1
Agrimonia	1
Hydrastis	1
Myrica	1
Trigonella	1
Glycyrrhiza	1
Avena 1:2	1

Gentiana 1 Mod.	
digestive weakness + anemia	
exhaustion, emaciation, flatulence and colic	
SP Qi Def + SP Blood Def	
Gentiana	1
Artemisia abs.	1
Acorus	1
Elettaria	0.5
Angelica sin.	1
Lycium	decoct.
Molasses	5ml inf.

Chamaelirium 2 Mod.	
amenorrhea + malabsorption	
anemia, exhaustion, maybe delayed reproductive development	
KI Qi Def + KI Jing Def + LR Blood Def	
Chamaelirium	2
Panax gin. (white)	1
Glycyrrhiza	1
Angelica sin.	1
Lycium	decoct.
Serenoa	1
Zingiber (dried)	0.5-1

Berberis 11	
malabsorption + diarrhea	
infection or dysbiosis + inflammation	
SP Qi Def + IN Qi Def + Retained Pathogen	
Berberis	1
Hydrastis	1
Scutellaria bai.	1
Agrimonia	1
Plantago	1
Urtica	1
Curcuma	1
Trigonella	1

Gentiana 10	
malabsorption + diarrhea + anxiety abdominal distension & discomfort, depression	
SP Qi Def + IN Qi Def + IN Qi Dist + HT Spirit Dist	
Gentiana	1
Agrimonia	1
Humulus	1
Lavandula	1
Rosmarinus	1
Mentha pip.	0.5
Trigonella	1
Glycyrrhiza	1