Menorrhagia - Introduction, Definition, Causes, Symptoms and Treatments

I. Introduction

As we mentioned in previous articles menstruation is the shedding of the uterine lining. It is normal to the reproductive system of women and happens on a regular basis. Normal menstruation happens around 3 to 7 days. During the monthly menstrual cycle, female sex hormones prepare the uterus to support a pregnancy. If pregnancy happens, menstruation will be suspended until giving birth of a child, abortion, or miscarriage. Otherwise the uterine lining sheds and menstrual blood, tissues, fluid and mucus leave the body through the vagina caused by natural reaction in the female reproductive system from low levels of certain growth hormones.

II. Definition

As we mention in the previous article, the last stage of the menstrual cycle is the shedding of an endometrial lining's blood vessels. Normally, the process of blood forming clots occurs (coagulation) to limit and repair the damaged blood vessel resulting in a stoppage of blood flow. Menorrhagia is an abnormally heavy and prolonged menstrual period with excessive menstrual bleeding lasting longer than 7 days or blood loss exceeding 80 ml caused by abnormal blood clotting, disruption of normal hormonal regulation of periods, or disorders of the endometrial lining of the uterus.

Since normal menstrual cycle about 28 days in duration, with bleeding lasting an average of total blood loss less than 80 mL, women with menorrhagia over the menstruation may have blood loss greater than the body's iron reserves and reproduced by the body leading to anemia.

III. Causes

1. Stress

Women who cannot adjust to events in life that are stressful, or seem to be stressful in their mind causes hormone imbalance resulting in overproduction of either estrogen or progesterone.

2. Hormone imbalance

For whatever reason, heavy blood flow may also occur for most women.

3. Vitamin K deficiency

Vitamin K is blood coagulation. Normally produced by bacteria in the intestine, women with intestine diseases may not produce enough vitamin K to stop the heavy flowing of blood during menstruation.

4. Anemia

Women with the type of anemia having red blood cells breaking down faster than normal people, may also have heavy flowing of blood during menstruation caused by regular blood flow and breaking off of red blood cells thereby, reducing the coagulation function.

5. Perimenopause

Women in the perimenopause normally have higher levels of estrogen levels and lower levels of progesterone because ovulation is less consistent.

IV. Symptoms

1. Spotting or bleeding between menstrual periods

2. Excessive menstrual bleeding

3. Heavy period

4. Symptoms of anemia (caused by loss of iron in the blood)

5. Constant pain in the lower abdomen during menstrual period

6. Irregular menstrual periods

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V. Treatments

A. With Foods

1. Lettuce

Flavonoids are plant pigments responsible for the color of flowers, fruits, and sometimes leaves. Study shows that flavonoids supply us with natural, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidants having great effect on menorrhagia excess pain and on the heaviness of the period.

2. Flax oil

Flax contains high amounts of omega 3 fatty acid and lignans. It also is a powerful antioxidant. Besides working together with vitamin K in helping the circulation of blood and providing blood clotted vessels, it also helps to reducing pain caused by menorrhagia.

3. Broccoli

Broccoli contains high amounts of iron, and vitamin C and K that not only helps to relief the pain caused by menorrhagia, but also provides iron, the
A mineral that is needed to prevent heavy blood loss special for women with anemia. Vitamin K also increases blood clotting the damage blood vessels.

4. Kelp
Kelp are large seaweeds. It grows in underwater forests in clear, shallow oceans. It is rich in iodine and alkali that helps to balance hormones caused by thyroid glands resulting in heavy flow of blood during menstruation as well as containing incredibly high trace minerals and vitamins to feed and nourish the endocrine glands.

5. Carrot
Carrots contain high amounts of vitamin A as well as antioxidants, alpha carotene, and beta carotene. Vitamin A is required for normal reproductive function, and development of ovaries and placenta that is vital for women's menstrual cycle. It's antioxidants also help to reduce menstrual pain caused by menorrhagia.

6. Fermented soybeans
Fermented soybeans are made from soybean. It contains large amounts of vitamin K which is involved in the formation of calcium-binding groups in proteins as well as helping blood clots caused by heavy blood flow during menstruation.

B. Nutritional supplements
1. Iron
Iron is essential for women suffering from menorrhagia. Since excessive bleeding causes the loss of iron causing iron deficiency, without enough iron our body cannot reproduce red blood cells to replace those lost in bleeding resulting in symptoms of paller, weakness, fatigue as well as increasing the risk of inflammation.

2. B complex
B complex is a liver tonic vitamin. It helps the liver to convert the bad estrogen, xanooestrogen into weaker and less dangerous forms and converts omega 6 oils into a form that can be used by the body to produce the good type prostaglandins instead of dinoprostone resulting in reduced bleeding during menstruation.

3. Cod liver oil
Cod liver oil contains high amounts of omega 3 fatty acids that control heavy bleeding during periods. Since red meat and dairy products contain arachidonic acid without balancing intake of omega 3 fatty acid, this causes the over production of dinoprostone leading to increased blood flow, and reducing blood-clotting ability.

4. Zinc
Besides having an important role in treating enlarged prostate in men's health, this mineral is vital for the healthy functioning of the reproductive system in women as well as maintaining hormone balancing.

5. Flavonoid
Flavonoid is a powerful antioxidant activity. It helps to protect small blood vessels from damage resulting in protecting against the blood loss of menorrhagia during menstruation.

6. Vitamin A
Vitamin A is an antioxidant. It works together with iron and copper to help enhance the production of red blood cells. Vitamin A deficiency has been found in women with menorrhagia.

7. Vitamin C
Besides being an antioxidant that helps our body to fight against free radicals from building up and help the digestive system's metabolism to reduce menstrual pain, it also helps excessive blood flow during menstruation as a result of strengthening small blood vessels known as capillaries.

C. With Herbs
1. Ashoka (Saraca indica)
Ashoka is a sacred plant and has a religious importance. It is reported to have a stimulating effect on the endometrium and ovarian tissue. It's use in treatment of excessive uterine bleeding, dysmenorrhoea, depression, bleeding hemorrhoid, and uterine fibroid. It is considered a uterine sedative and tonic for women in India.
2. Amalaki
Amalaki has been used over 5000 years in India medication. Amlaki contains high amounts of Vitamin C, bioflavonoids, flavonoids, polyphenols, and Alpha and beta carotene that not only helps to strengthen our immune system’s fighting against the forming of free radicals, it also helps to inhibit cyclo-oxygenase and lipoxygenase enzymes that cause menstrual cramps and heavy blood flow.

3. Manjishta
Manjishta is a climbing plant found in the Himalayas and hill stations in India. It has been used to treat hepatic obstructions. Root paste removes freckles, and discoloration of the skin, blood circulation and purification, cancer and diarrhea. Manjishta has the same properties like ginger, it helps to reduce menstrual cramps as well as regulating blood flow during menstruation.

4. Shatavari
Shatavari is a climbing plant which grows in low jungle areas throughout India and is an ayurvedic medicine for women. It has been used in India to treat infertility, decreased libido, threatened miscarriage, menopause and nourishing the female reproductive system.

5. Gokshura
Gokshura is a perennial herb with many spreading slender branches. It contains high amounts of calcium. Traditionally, gokshura has been used in Chinese medicine to treat headaches, vertigo, dizziness and heavy blood flow in menstruation due to ascendant liver yang and wind heat.

6. Fo-ti root
Fo-Ti Root is native to China. It has been used in Chinese medicine to treat premature aging, weakness, regulating vaginal discharge, angina pectoris and promoting hair grow and increasing men’s libido.

7. Cayenne
Cayenne is a dark-green annual or short-lived perennial plant. Cayenne contains capsaicin that has been shown to promote the release of substance P from sensory neurons, a neuropeptide involved in the sensation of pain, stops blood flow, and is popularly used by Chinese practitioners in treating heavy blood flow during menstruation.

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D. With Chinese Herbs
1. Cayenne pepper
Cayenne pepper helps to improve the circulatory system that feeds the necessary nutrition to the cell structure of the arteries, veins and capillaries that helps to make small blood vessels in the uterine elastic, thereby reducing the excessive blood flow during menstruation. It also has a property that enhances digestive system metabolism as well as relaxing muscles resulting in reduced menstrual cramps.

2. Raspberry tea
Raspberry tea contains astringent, a substance that tends to shrink or constrict body tissues. It also has properties that help to stop excessive bleeding and calm cramps during heavy menstrual period.

3. Angelica root
Chinese Angelica is a sturdy perennial plant that is native to China and Japan. It has been used for over 5000 years in traditional Chinese medicine in treating an overall tonic for the reproductive system as well as balancing hormones and it is also used to relieve the discomforts of premenstrual syndrome, dysmenorrhea and amenorrhea. It is well known as female ginseng.

4. Radix Notoginseng
Also known as tian san qi or tien chi ginseng. It has been used in China for centuries in treating excessive bleeding. It is widely used in Asia for angina to help lower cholesterol and triglycerides, and to expand coronary arteries in order to promote blood circulation and prevent blood clots thereby helping to control excessive menstrual bleeding or menorrhagia. It also is a powerful antioxidant that helps to reduce inflammation thus reducing pain caused by menstruation disorders.

5. Ajuga forrestii diels
It is used for traumatic swelling, bruising or for blood disorders. It is also used to inhibit internal bleeding due to trauma, surgery, or cerebral
hemorrhage as well as helping traumatic bleeding during menstrual bleeding and relieving pains.

6. Rhizoma dioscoreae nipponicae
Rhizoma dioscoreae nipponicae is among the most famous Chinese traditional medicines specially used to improve blood circulation, stop internal bleeding, painful obstruction and gynaecological blood diseases.

7. Rhizome Dioscoreae
Rhizome is a wheat plant. It contains thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, and small amounts of vitamin A that helps to reduce inflammation resulting in a reduced menstrual cramps. Taken Internally, it can stop internal bleeding such as bleeding ulcers, blood in urine or stool, and menorrhagia.

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