



**PANCREATITIS AND CHOLECYSTITIS: THE SUPPORTIVE ROLE OF  
TRADITIONAL MEDICINE**

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**Introduction:** Pancreatitis and cholecystitis are among the most common inflammatory diseases of the digestive system. Acute and chronic inflammation of the pancreas and gallbladder often results from gallstones, alcohol intake, infections, metabolic disorders, and dietary factors. While modern evidence-based medicine remains the primary approach to treatment, many cultures have historically used traditional (folk) remedies to alleviate symptoms, reduce inflammation, and support recovery.

This article discusses scientifically supported and culturally relevant traditional therapies that may serve as adjunctive treatments, but not replacements for medical care.

**Keywords:** pancreatitis, cholecystitis, herbal medicine, folk remedies, inflammation, digestive health.

**Discussion and Results.**

Pancreatitis and cholecystitis are inflammatory diseases of the pancreas and gallbladder, and they are commonly encountered in gastrointestinal practice. Pancreatitis develops when pancreatic enzymes become activated prematurely and begin to digest the pancreas itself, causing inflammation, tissue damage, and severe abdominal pain[1,2]. Cholecystitis occurs when the gallbladder becomes inflamed, usually because of gallstone obstruction or bile stasis, which leads to swelling, infection, and digestive disturbances. Although these conditions require modern medical treatment as the primary approach, traditional folk medicine has played an important role in many cultures as a supportive method to ease symptoms, reduce inflammation, and strengthen the digestive system. It is important to emphasize that folk remedies can supplement but never replace evidence-based treatment, especially during acute attacks[3,4,5].

Pancreatitis and cholecystitis share several risk factors, including high-fat diets, alcohol consumption, gallstones, infections, metabolic disorders, and stress. In many societies, especially in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and East Asia, traditional healing practices have been used alongside medical treatments[6]. Folk medicine generally focuses on regulating digestion, reducing inflammation, relieving spasms, improving bile flow, and supporting the body's natural healing mechanisms.

For pancreatitis, gentle herbal remedies are traditionally used to soothe the mucosa and calm the digestive tract. Chamomile tea is one of the most widely used remedies because of its anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic properties, which help reduce discomfort and nausea. Peppermint infusion is also used to relax smooth muscles and improve digestion. Oat decoction has long been valued in traditional medicine for its protective coating effect on the stomach and duodenum, and it may help regulate pancreatic enzyme activity. Flaxseed mucilage, rich in omega-3 fatty acids, is also used in chronic pancreatitis to reduce inflammation and improve gut health, although it should not be used during acute episodes[7].

For cholecystitis, traditional medicine often focuses on improving bile flow and reducing inflammation. Turmeric, which contains curcumin, is known for its natural anti-inflammatory



effects and ability to stimulate bile production, although it should be avoided when gallstones are obstructing the bile ducts. Milk thistle is used in many cultures to support liver and gallbladder function, improve bile composition, and protect cells from oxidative stress. Warm natural mineral water with low acidity and no carbonation is a traditional therapy that helps improve bile drainage and relieve spasms[8,9]. Dill and fennel seeds are commonly used in various folk traditions to reduce bloating and soften gallbladder spasms.

Traditional dietary recommendations play an important role in the supportive treatment of both pancreatitis and cholecystitis. For pancreatitis, folk medicine often suggests soft, easily digestible foods such as liquid rice porridge, boiled vegetables, baked apples, and non-acidic fruit drinks. These foods reduce the workload on the pancreas and allow the digestive system to rest[10]. For cholecystitis, traditional guidelines emphasize low-fat meals, steamed vegetables, soups, and frequent small meals throughout the day. These dietary adjustments closely align with modern medical dietary therapy and help prevent gallbladder overloading.

Traditional lifestyle practices also contribute to symptom relief. Warm compresses applied to the upper abdomen are commonly used to relax muscles and reduce discomfort in cholecystitis, although they should not be used when fever or infection is present. Gentle walking after meals, a widely practiced folk tradition, has been shown to scientifically improve bile flow and reduce the likelihood of gallstone formation. Controlled breathing techniques, practiced in various Eastern healing systems, may help reduce stress-related digestive symptoms.

Despite the potential benefits of traditional remedies, it is essential to recognize their limitations. Pancreatitis and cholecystitis can become life-threatening conditions requiring urgent medical intervention. Antibiotics, intravenous fluids, hospitalization, enzyme replacement therapy, and sometimes surgery are necessary components of treatment. Folk medicine cannot dissolve gallstones, cure infections, or stop acute pancreatic inflammation, but when used during recovery phases or chronic conditions under medical supervision, traditional approaches can contribute to improved comfort, reduced inflammation, and overall digestive health.

**In conclusion**, while pancreatitis and cholecystitis require modern medical treatment as the foundation of care, traditional folk medicine can provide supportive benefits that help ease symptoms and promote recovery. Herbal teas, anti-inflammatory plants, dietary adjustments, warm compresses, and lifestyle practices rooted in cultural traditions may complement clinical management when applied safely. Integrating validated folk remedies with evidence-based medicine creates a more holistic approach to digestive health, but all traditional treatments must be used carefully and under the guidance of a healthcare professional to avoid complications.

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