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## Insufficient Milk Supply / Insufficient Lactation

Breast feeding can be a stressful time for some mothers especially after a C-section where it can take a bit longer for the milk to come through.

Milk flow is often affected by some sort of combination of stress, anxiety, exhaustion, dehydration and/or lack of adequate nutrition. It is ideal to reduce factors that may cause these problems wherever possible and work on resolving any problems with milk flow as soon as possible as the longer they are left the harder it can be to treat.

In my experience acupuncture is highly effective for treating women with insufficient lactation.

### Nutritional guidelines

Drink plenty of water

Eat nutritious, cooked and easily digested foods like rice congee, soups and slow cooked foods.

For adequate milk supply it is important to build qi and blood so follow guidelines and recipes in the *Postpartum Recovery and Rebuilding* article, [www.ana-med.co.nz/articles](http://www.ana-med.co.nz/articles).

The smooth black sesame cereal recipe and papaya fish tail soup are more specific for nursing mothers in the recipe section of this article. The bone stock/broth or seaweed soup and rice congee are also great examples of ensuring the body can get the nutrients it needs.

**Beneficial foods** - alfalfa sprouts, stout, papaya, peanuts, black sesame, aduki beans, fennel tea, carrot, chicken, carp, shrimp, kumara, oat straw tea.

Additional nutrition...

Coconut water (non pasteurized is better but in NZ the drinking coconuts are our only option at this stage that I have seen) mixed with spirulina helps with hydration and building blood.

(Farrell & Erlich, 2012)

Cracked wheat with brown rice eaten regularly.

Boil 10g star anise in water to make soup add a bit of wine and drink.

Aduki juice – simmer 1cup of beans (soak overnight prior to cooking) in 5 cups of water for an hour and drink juice with meals.

(Lu, 2005)

**Foods to be avoided** are pungent ones (including garlic, chilli, pepper, ginger, onions etc), as well as raw and cold foods (Liu, 1998).



## Acupressure points

Acupressure can be very effective so it's worth trying if you are having lactation problems.

If you can get someone to help you out, strong pressure can be used on Jianjing – GB21 which is a good point to help the letdown reflex.

Shanzhong – REN 17 along with massaging the breast towards the nipple while feeding is something you can do on yourself and can help with circulation in the breast.

Shaoze – SI1 is another point you can try on yourself which when used with acupuncture is highly effective in helping with milk flow.

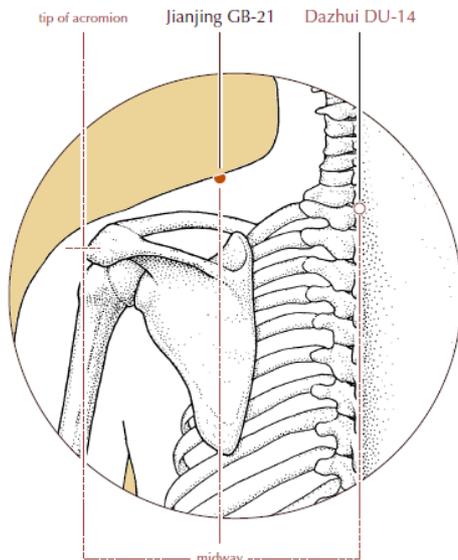
### JIANJING GB-21 Shoulder Well

肩井



#### LOCATION

Midway between Dazhui DU-14 and the tip of the acromion, at the crest of the trapezius muscle.



#### LOCATION NOTE

i. The crest refers to the highest point of the trapezius muscle on the sagittal (anterior-posterior) plane; ii. This point is normally located at the point of maximum tenderness.

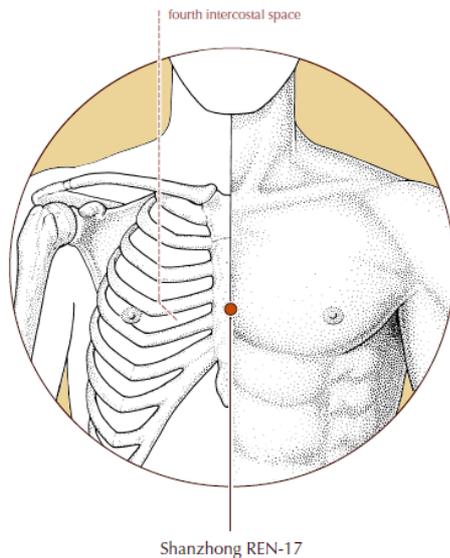
### SHANZHONG REN-17 Chest Centre

膻中



#### LOCATION

On the midline of the sternum, in a depression level with the junction of the fourth intercostal space and the sternum.



#### LOCATION NOTE

i. First locate the costal cartilage of the second rib which is level with the sternal angle, then locate the second intercostal space below it and count down to the fourth space; ii. This point can be located directly between the nipples in men.



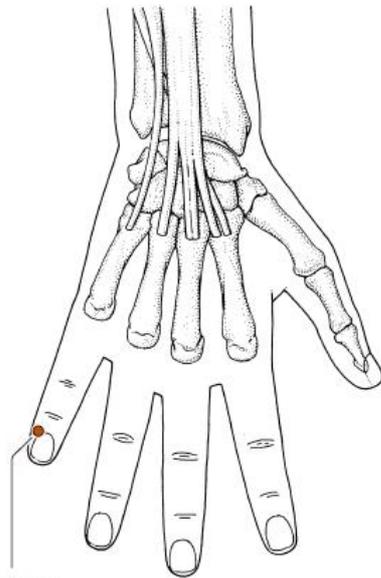
**SHAOZE SI-1**  
Lesser Marsh

少澤



**LOCATION**

On the dorsal aspect of the little finger, at the junction of lines drawn along the ulnar border of the nail and the base of the nail, approximately 0.1 cun from the corner of the nail.



Shaoze SI-1

**NEEDLING**

Perpendicular or oblique insertion directed proximally 0.1 to 0.2 cun, or prick to bleed.

(Deadman, 2000)



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