

# Sasha

## Herbal Case Study Group 1

### Guidelines & Instructions

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- We'll meet at 8 pm ET on Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss this case. Please see [my website here](#) for instructions about how to sign up for the session.
- After reading through the case below, answer the following questions:
  - o What do you think of Sasha's energetics? Is she hot/cold, damp/dry, etc?
  - o What seems to be working well for her physiologically? Where could she use support?
  - o Do you understand the basic pathophysiology underlying the symptoms she's experiencing? Do a bit of research on your own.
  - o What herbal actions would be appropriate for her? Which three are the most important?
  - o Create at least one herbal formula for Sasha. Include dosing instructions and figure out how much it would cost to take this formula (per day, week or month). Also include a quick rationale for each herb you've chosen.
  - o What concerns do you have about your formula or Sasha's case in general? Questions?
- OPTIONAL: type your formula so that you can cut/paste it into Spreecast's comment box in order to share and get feedback

### Case Overview

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Sasha is a 31 year old female who stands 5'5" and weighs approximately 135 lb. Her mother is African American and her father is Caucasian. She currently lives in a small apartment and makes her living with a mish-mash of jobs, including teaching yoga and dance, working as a massage therapist, and occasionally bartending. She is currently dating but is not in a serious relationship. She's a gregarious and outgoing person with a wry sense of humor and a fire-y temper.

She has come to see you because her gynecologist has recommended surgery to address her fibroids within the next month or two. She has a consultation with the surgeon next week. Her primary goal for your work together is to feel stronger going into surgery and also to work on her irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Sasha has two fibroids - one is ~1.5 cm and the other is ~6 cm. One year ago she only had one small fibroid (~1/4 cm). Based on her symptoms, her GYN recommends surgery as the best option to treat the fibroids and still preserve her fertility, which is important to her. The other option is hysterectomy. She knows that something needs to be done, and she is also distrustful of the medical community and wants to build herself up before undertaking surgical removal of the fibroids.

Sasha's cycles are regular, occurring every 29 days. She has experienced very heavy menstrual bleeding since the age of 25, which has worsened over time. Currently menses lasts 7 days and is heaviest on days 2-5. During heavy flow days, she often wears Depends overnight and still leaks out of them, and needs to change a super tampon + the largest pad available every 20-30 minutes during the day. She feels sick and experiences spastic dysmenorrhea for the first 5 days of the cycle, during which time she takes Tylenol or occasionally Vicodin to help with the pain as she cannot afford to take time off of work. She also has diarrhea during menses, for the entire 7 days. "Every period is a nightmare." Experiences some PMS, with the primary symptoms of irritability and depression for about a week before menses begins. Her mother had a hysterectomy due to fibroids and heavy bleeding.

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Her primary exercise is her work, and she is very active throughout the day. She reports being too tired for extra cardiovascular activity when she gets home but does go for 10-15 minute walks 2-3 times/week. She usually gets about 8 hours of sleep per night, which she feels is not enough. If she could, she reports that sleeping 12-14 hours per night is what feels best to her but that is not always possible with her work schedule, which varies from day to day. She calls herself “energetic” and says that she cannot sleep without Trazodone (50 mg), which she takes nightly. Without it she has a hard time falling asleep and wakes at 3 am unable to fall back asleep.

Sasha does not like to cook and eats out for most meals. She reports that eating has always been hard for her since so many foods bother her stomach (give her diarrhea or make her feel nauseous). She reports being tired of eating and tired of worrying about how food will affect her. Her meals are erratic and she squeezes them in when she can between jobs. She often skips breakfast, opting instead for a black coffee or green tea. She has a pastry or bagel about once per week for breakfast. For lunch she usually eats out - a sandwich or salad from a deli - or nibbles on nuts. Dinner is pieced together - she may eat out with friends, she may just snack or eat prepared/frozen meals at home. She avoids all dairy, red meat, spicy foods and fried foods. Breads and carbohydrates are “safe” foods for her that don’t upset her digestion or cause diarrhea.

Spices bother her stomach (cause gas and bloating + diarrhea), as does anything greasy and anything with onions/garlic. She does best with bland foods and gets sick to her stomach very easily. As noted above, client experiences watery diarrhea throughout her menses. She has always had lactose intolerance and has been diagnosed with IBS-D (diarrhea-predominant IBS). She has been hospitalized 3 times for dehydration based on diarrhea, and ruled out ongoing infection and Crohn’s disease/ulcerative colitis.

Although she feels tired all the time, both her GYN and primary care doctors routinely test her for anemia due to her heavy bleeding and find that she is not anemic. Her blood pressure is 120/80, which is typical for her. She is sensitive to strong smells, including most perfumes, cleaning products and lavender essential oil. Sasha reports that she feels mostly satisfied with her life but that she feels worried about her fibroids and weary about always feeling ill. Money and organization are the two biggest stressors in her life.

Sasha’s tongue is dark red, thick and dry with a thin white coat. She states that teas are difficult for her to take and tinctures are probably better.

## Current Meds & Supplements

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- RainbowLite Multivitamin 3 tablets/day (only remembers once or twice a week)
- Emergen-C - 2 packets/d a few times/week
- Probiotic - 1 capsule most mornings (couldn’t remember brand)
- Megazymes digestive enzymes - takes 2 before most meals, helps “a lot” in keeping stomach settled during meals
- Plus Trazodone & Vicodin as mentioned above