



Health WellNews

SUMMER is here!

Summer's Bounty:

Diet Tips for Staying Balanced in the 'Great Yang' Season.

The Great Yang season is upon us. Yang energy is bright, fiery and hot like the midday sun. Yang is the counterbalance to Yin. Yin is expressed in the cooling, calming energies of life. Together, Yin & Yang, like night & day, represent the dynamic balance between the opposing, but complementary forces that make up all of existence. These forces are ceaselessly intermingling in a sacred dance of life's cycles. The cycle of the seasons is a perfect demonstration of this balance in motion, and as we turn the corner into summer, we reach a pinnacle in the cycle, the summer solstice. Summer is known as the "Great Yang" season because of this peak in the yang energy: the sun (ultimate yang energy) is closest to the earth and the day (yang time) is the longest at this time of year.

We, as humans, are part of nature, so these forces exist in us just as in our environment. With each changing season, Chinese Medicine offers lifestyle guidance to tune our own energy cycles to the world around us so that we can live in health and harmony.

One of the branches of this ancient medicine and health philosophy is dietetics. There are a number of simple things to consider when adjusting your diet to the energy of the Great Yang season.

In Season Fruits/Veggies/Herbs:

Time to hit the farmer's market! It's vital to interact with your natural environment through the food it offers. Summer is full of fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs that help to keep you hydrated, and to disperse your Qi to match the light, ascending energy of yang. Nature knows best so pay attention to what is growing well in your area as it may be exactly what your body needs to be more aligned with the energy of the season.

Heart and Small Intestine Considerations:

The heart and small intestine are the paired yin and yang organs associated with summertime and the element of fire. The heart houses the mind and its job is to perfuse the body with blood while the small intestine's job is to sort and process the food received from the stomach. Blood tonifying foods like dark leafy greens and lean meat are important to ensure a blood-rich safe haven for the mind to rest, as well as enough blood to carry that energy of consciousness throughout the body. Red foods like cherries, strawberries, goji berries and tomatoes support the fire element and it's no coincidence that these foods are rich in antioxidants credited with cardiovascular benefits. Also, have a heart when considering the important sorting job of the small intestine. We can alleviate stress on this organ by not overloading it with nutrient-deficient, over-processed food.

Keep it fresh!

Timing is Everything:

11am-1pm is heart time according to the 24-hour cycle of energies in our bodies. Lunch time, the time when the energy is strongest in the heart meridian is also a time when our digestive fire is strong, so enjoy a mid-day meal! 1pm-3pm is small intestine time, this is the time to sort and absorb food, rest, and allow your body to process the nutrients.

Presentation of Food:

Be mindful of aesthetics when serving yourself or others food in all seasons, but especially summer, as beauty pleases the heart. What feeling does your food stimulate before you even eat it? Consider garnishing your dishes with a little extra love like a sprinkle of sesame seeds or a fresh edible flower.

Summer Recipe:

While a soup may seem like more winter-appropriate, sipping a warm soup can help the body stay hydrated and also induce gentle perspiration to keep the body cool. You can add slightly cooling (in nature not temperature) foods and herbs to the soup to balance the warm temperature. Here's a simple summer soup to assist the heart in blood circulation and Qi dispersion while helping to eliminate excess heat.

- 6 cups vegetable stock
- 1 cup beets
- 1 cup carrots
- 1 cup corn
- 1 tablespoon roasted sesame oil
- ½ oz carthamus flowers (commonly known as safflower, this is an herb for blood circulation in Chinese Medicine)



Cut the beets and carrots into cubes and stew in the stock for 15 minutes. Cut the corn off the cob and place the carthamus flowers in a sachet. Add the corn, carthamus sachet and sesame oil and simmer for an additional 5 minutes.

Touch of the East Acupuncture
Fort Collins, Colorado
www.touchoftheeast.com
970-444-2284

© 2021 Copyright Acupuncture Media Works, All Rights Reserved. The information contained within the Health WellNews newsletter is only used to educate and inform. This newsletter is not a substitute for the advice of a licensed and registered health care provider. Seek prompt attention for emergencies. Consult a health care provider for specific health concerns, and before starting a diet, cleanse or exercise routine.

Photo Credits: ©iStock.com/UnitoneVector



Health WellNews

SUMMER is here!

The Joy Of Healing: How Summer Fun Heals the Heart

What comes to mind when you think of summer? For me, it stirs up nostalgia of childhood feelings of freedom, knowing that those endless days were all mine to fill with family and friends as we shared the sunshine. While “adulting” doesn’t always leave room for that kind of freedom, the promise of summer still gives us so much to celebrate.

In TCM, summer belongs to the Fire element. It is about expansion, outward expression, activity and joy. The heart is the ruler of this time. It houses the shen, or spirit, and this is the time to let the spirit dance and frolic and feel as free as possible. With the fire element in balance, the heart is happy, the mind is clear and the body maintains health with a blend of movement and stillness, excitement and peace. Summer is nature’s way of healing the heart by providing the ideal setting for all things heart-related!

So get pumped for summer and all the healing it brings via:

SUNSHINE



What better way to bask in the healing power of summer than by soaking up the healing rays of sunshine. Obviously stop before you get burned, but don’t be afraid to feel that shine and let it in. When UVB rays hit human skin, they help to produce Vitamin D3, which reduces risk of heart disease, stroke, and hypertension. Those same

UVB rays cause the skin to release beta-endorphins which promote natural pain-relief and a sense of well-being. Sunlight also helps the body to release nitrogen oxides, which opens up arterial flow and have anti-inflammatory effects. The exposure to sunlight is also required to set our natural circadian rhythms which regulate our sleep and wake

cycles. For those of us who experience cold winters, the warmth of sunshine is one of the most welcome feelings and one of the best ways to support our fire element.

ACTIVITY



The energy of summer in Chinese medicine is considered very yang in nature. Fire is the element of extreme yang, and has a radiating, dispersing power. Think of the lively dance of fire burning. This is the time to move, get our heart pumping, and blood circulating.

This is time for focusing on cardiovascular health! Summer makes this a much more inviting task with outdoor sports, swimming, hiking, or simply a walk on a warm summer night. And don’t forget to dance.. never forget to dance.

BEAUTY OF THE SEASON



Taking care of the heart in Chinese Medicine includes making the spirit feel at home in the heart and the spirit craves beauty. Look at how the earth changes in summer. Flowers bloom, colors come alive, birds sing; there is art and music everywhere. This is a time for aesthetics and we all have our own taste. Get out and enjoy whatever stimulates your mind and heals your heart. Admire nature’s sunset paintings, smell the sweet perfume of the flowers, and let your spirit sing with the

sounds of the season. Celebrate your own creative expression along with the energy of the season.

COMMUNITY



The sound that belongs to the heart according to TCM is laughter and the emotion is joy. It’s no wonder that joy feels best when shared. It’s also no wonder that researchers have found that the quality of family relationships and social connection is a strong factor in heart disease prevention. So, as summer provides the warm inviting opportunities to get together, treasure your family and friends (and pets!) and find ways to connect, laugh and share your joy!

So, what are you doing this Summer? We’d like to know.

One thing that I may suggest, would be to get yourself back in here for an acupuncture summer-time tune-up! That’s one of the easiest ways that we can help manage your health and well-being. Give us a call today to schedule up your tune-up.

Touch of the East Acupuncture
Fort Collins, Colorado
www.touchoftheeast.com
970-444-2284

© 2021 Copyright Acupuncture Media Works, All Rights Reserved. The information contained within the Health WellNews newsletter is only used to educate and inform. This newsletter is not a substitute for the advice of a licensed and registered health care provider. Seek prompt attention for emergencies. Consult a health care provider for specific health concerns, and before starting a diet, cleanse or exercise routine.

Photo Credits: ©iStock.com/UnitoneVector



Health WellNews

SUMMER is here!

Summer Self-Care: Pressure Points to Keep Your Fire in Check

In Chinese Medicine, each season is associated with one of the five elements and specific organ systems, and those organ systems have their own pathways of energy and information. **Summer is associated with the fire element and the Heart and Small Intestine organs.** The Role of the heart is to house the mind and circulate the blood (that also carries consciousness) throughout the body. The small intestine has the job of sorting and processing the food broken down by the stomach. It also contributes to the clarity of consciousness by energetically separating the pure from the impure. The pathways that enable Qi and information to go to and from these organs travel along the arms.

Summer is unique in that it has 2 additional organ systems that play supporting roles in the balance and maintenance of the fire element in the body. These are the Pericardium and the Triple Burner. Not considered traditional organs in western medicine, the pericardium is the protective membrane that surrounds and protects the heart. The Triple Burner, while lacking a western medical analogous structure, is more a functional concept that helps to define the body in terms of 3 spaces (the upper, middle and lower 'burner') while integrating the organs within those spaces. Both the Pericardium and Triple Burner organ systems are involved in the regulation and circulation of warmth in the body and have pathways along the arms as well.

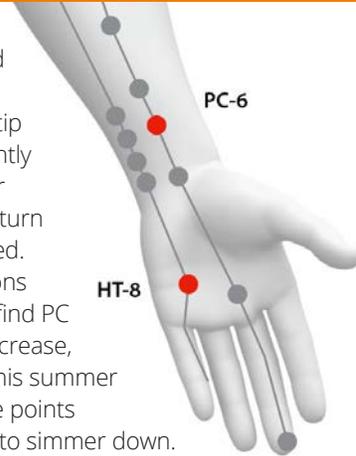
While there are other channels that run along the arms (namely the lung and large intestine meridians, associated with the metal element and Autumn), having all 4 fire element channels coursing through the arms is more than enough reason to focus some attention on this part of our body in the summer.

Before we talk about specific pressure points to manage your personal fire energy, remember that simply stretching and moving the arms is an easy way to awaken and energize these channels for seasonal health! Stretch your hands all the way to the tips of the fingers (where the channels begin, end and connect). Stretch your arms and body to feel the stretch throughout your chest, back and shoulder joint, activating your small intestine and triple burner channels. Get on the floor and relax in a star shaped stretch and make sure to feel the opening of energy in your armpits where the heart and pericardium channels travel through.

We can think of the fire element as the energy correlated with consciousness and warmth (among other things). The fire element requires maintenance to keep it in balance just like a fire that must be fed but also controlled. During the summer months, the fire element is naturally nourished by sunshine, activity, community, and the joy of the season. But there are times when we can get overwhelmed by any of these in excess.

IMPORTANT ACUPRESSURE POINTS TO KNOW

If you're ever feeling over-heated or over-stimulated are **Heart 8 (HT 8)** and **Pericardium 6 (PC 6)**. To locate HT 8, make a loose fist and where your pinky tip touches your palm is the spot. Dig in gently to cool your jets. PC 6 is a great point for anxiety and feeling like you just need to turn down the volume on life and get centered. Make a fist, squeeze, and notice 2 tendons along the center of your forearm. You'll find PC 6 about 3 finger spaces below the wrist crease, between those tendons. Fuel your fire this summer and let it burn but remember these points when you need a moment to simmer down.



Touch of the East Acupuncture
Fort Collins, Colorado
www.touchoftheeast.com
970-444-2284

© 2021 Copyright Acupuncture Media Works, All Rights Reserved. The information contained within the Health WellNews newsletter is only used to educate and inform. This newsletter is not a substitute for the advice of a licensed and registered health care provider. Seek prompt attention for emergencies. Consult a health care provider for specific health concerns, and before starting a diet, cleanse or exercise routine.

Photo Credits: ©iStock.com/UnitoneVector, kieferpix, Marina Khromova



Health WellNews

SUMMER is here!

Glide Into the Fall: Easing Transitions with the Earth Element

We all are very familiar with Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter but why does Chinese Medicine include a fifth season and where does it fit on the calendar? According to TCM theory, the fifth season is actually that important time between the seasons, where we 'return to center' so we can 'pivot'. About 2-3 weeks before the beginning of each season is a time of transition.

Each season correlates with an elemental energy. Spring belongs to the wood element, Summer to fire, Fall to metal and Winter to water. The transitional time between the seasons rightfully belongs to the earth element as this is the time when the seasonally dominant energy returns to the earth to be transformed into the next seasonal energy.

The Earth Element is generated and managed in the body by the spleen and stomach. These organs are in the business of metamorphosis. As digestive organs (according to TCM), they transport and transform the food we eat into nutrition to build our blood and nourish our cells. The spleen governs the muscles, and is important in the free movement of the body. The associated orifice is the mouth and spleen Qi manifests in the lips. The Spleen is also known for housing the intellect (yi) and is involved with the thinking aspect of spirit. The color of the earth element is yellow, and the taste is sweet.

The Chinese Lunar Calendar sets the start of the seasons earlier than our Gregorian calendar, so if we are **following the seasons according to Chinese Medicine we can anticipate the start of Fall this year around Aug 7th. The period about 18 days prior to that date (beginning around mid-July) is called late summer,** and this is the time to pay special attention to the energy of transition.

The benefit of nourishing our earth element during this time is to gain balance and stability for periods of change. The earth element represents our wide center stance from which we can safely assess the next move (picture the slow smooth movements of tai chi). The importance of core stability rings true whether we are talking about physical activity or more subtle energy dynamics.

DIY TIPS TO SUPPORT YOUR EARTH ELEMENT

1) Diet:

Avoid damp cold food such as ice cream as it can put a burden on the spleen that prefers warm, dry conditions. Eat breakfast between 7-9am which is stomach time according to the Qi clock. From 9-11am is spleen time. Some gentle activity is ok but as the spleen converts food to Qi, try to take it easy so you do not disrupt digestion. Avoid processed sugar while enjoying the natural balance of sweetness from the earth with foods like apples, carrots, dates, and sweet potatoes.

2) Release Worry-Patterns:

The spleen houses the intellect and is responsible for thought but can be weighed down by overthinking. This will slow its ability to transform our food. We can all think of times when worry led to unpleasant digestive experiences.

So, find ways to shift patterns of over-thinking and worry.

(Cue the serenity prayer...)

3) Yellow:

Stimulate earth energy with its color and brighten up someone's day by wearing more yellow. Notice the yellow colors in nature, stop and absorb their frequency. And eat yellow foods: bananas, yellow peppers, lemons etc.

4) Earthing:

You know what to do. Connect direct! Get those bare feet on the ground (pesticide-free please).

Now get some Vitamin-E on those earthy lips and pucker up: you'll be ready to give Fall a sweet kiss hello.

Touch of the East Acupuncture
Fort Collins, Colorado
www.touchoftheeast.com
970-444-2284

© 2021 Copyright Acupuncture Media Works, All Rights Reserved. The information contained within the Health WellNews newsletter is only used to educate and inform. This newsletter is not a substitute for the advice of a licensed and registered health care provider. Seek prompt attention for emergencies. Consult a health care provider for specific health concerns, and before starting a diet, cleanse or exercise routine.

Photo Credits: ©iStock.com/UnitoneVector, MarkgrafAve