

2007 Summer Newsletter

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A Chinese Medicine perspective on summer...

Summer corresponds to the element of fire and also the organs and meridians of the heart, pericardium, and the small intestines. In Chinese medicine the heart is thought to be the "nest" of our consciousness. When healthy, the qi ("chi") of the heart shines through the eyes, the mind is clear and untroubled, complexion is clear, and intuition is strong. The heart is vulnerable to heat, which causes agitation, restlessness, or mania. The heart can also be affected by phlegm, which clouds the senses and creates confusion, disorientation, and dissociative disorders. The pericardium is the tissue around the heart. It protects the heart from strain, stress, heat, and the other organs of the body. Acupuncture points on the pericardium can be used to treat insomnia, nausea (including morning sickness), irritability, and fullness of the chest. The small intestine is responsible for filtering what comes into the body. On a psychological level, the points are useful when a person is having trouble sorting out relevant and irrelevant, valid and spurious data, and when making a decision. The summer is related to the element of fire, the color red, bitter flavors, and the emotion joy. It corresponds to midday and its energetic is expanding.

Heat...

With summer comes heat. Heat is one of the major pathogenic patterns, and is one of the most fundamental ways in which Chinese medicine evaluates an individual and and classifies herbs' and acupuncture points' effects on the body. While the body needs yang energy, which is warm in nature, and while one of the jobs of qi is to warm and protect the body, there is a point where things get too hot. Symptoms could be a feeling of heat, a desire to avoid heat and seek cold (air conditioning, ice water, ice cream), high blood pressure, constipation, inflammations, fever, red face, red eyes, nosebleeds, chronic bad breath, rashes, skin eruptions and sores, or just being in Texas. Your acupuncturist will also look for these traditional signs: red tongue, yellow coating on the tongue, full and rapid pulse.

Heat can attack individual organs and systems.

- in the Heart: difficulty focusing, insomnia, palpitations, irritability
- in the Liver: irritability, frustration, irregular menses, exacerbates PMS
- in the Stomach: excessive appetite, acid reflux, chronic bad breath
- in the Intestines: constipation, or diarrhea, hemorrhoids
- in the Lungs: fevers, dry cough, painful sore throat, yellow to green thick congestion,
- in the Bladder: UTI's, cystitis, burning urination, urgency

- in the Blood: hemorrhage, scarlet tongue, skin rashes, red skin eruptions

Heat can come from too much warming food or stimulants, from overwork/stress/anxiety, from alcohol, exposure to heat, stagnation or blocked qi, or from an over reaction to exposure to cold (environmental or dietary). With the Texas summer coming, it is extremely important to stay hydrated. In addition to drinking plenty of water, it is also important to keep electrolytes in your body, which allow you to hold onto the water you drink. While sports drinks like Gatorade, Powerade, etc. have electrolytes; they are also loaded with sugar. For the same benefit, fresh squeezed lemonade or limeade, R.J. Knudsen's Recharge or Alcer's EmergenC are tasty and have the benefit of restoring electrolytes without excessive amounts of sugar. (As an alternative to sugar when making lemon or limeade, use 1 tbl. of pure maple syrup per 8oz of water; it metabolizes more slowly and contains some trace minerals.) Traditionally, Asian medicine recommends eating melons, local and seasonal fruits (peaches!!), and lots of steamed vegetables while avoiding oily, heavy, greasy food, and food that is warming in nature. In general, cook lightly and add some spice to foods. When sautéing, cook with a high heat for a short time; use less salt, and more water. As always, these recommendations are generic, contact one of us for dietary recommendations more specific to your needs. Below are some foods that help to clear heat: Fruits: apple, banana, pear, persimmon, melons, tomatoes*, and citrus Vegetables: lettuce, radish, cucumber, celery, asparagus, swiss chard, spinach, summer squash, cabbage, bok choy, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet corn, zucchini, sprouts, eggplant* Legumes: soy milk (but this can cause dampness!), soy sprouts, tofu, tempeh, mung beans, and mung bean sprouts Grains: wild rice, blue corn, millet, barley, wheat, amaranth Herbs: peppermint, dandelion, honeysuckle flowers, nettles, red clover blossoms, lemon balm, cilantro, marjoram. Seaweeds, spirulina, yogurt, wheat, and barley grass also clear heat. Rice, rye, corn, peas, lentils, and beans also will not add heat to the system. By cooking lightly, and using water instead of oil (steaming, blanching, and water sautéing), we preserve the cooling quality of foods. On top of that, foods that have been prepared by fermenting (miso), marinating (cerviche), and sprouting (. . . sprouts) also maintain their cooling properties. To treat chronic heat, choose meals made of more fruits and vegetable and less meat. Foods that create heat in the body include fats, meats, alcohol, coffee, and spicy food. While some vegetables have a slightly warm nature, they do not need to be avoided. However, eating baked or deep fried food will increase the heat in the body. *About nightshades... If you have rheumatoid arthritis, MS, or another autoimmune condition, you should probably avoid all foods from the nightshade family. The nightshades aggravate auto-immune conditions. The "worst of the bunch" seem to be potatoes, tomatoes, and eggplants, followed by bell and spicy peppers. It can be quite a trick to remove potatoes and tomatoes from a standard American diet (potato starch is pervasive, but not as bad a corn...).

Cleansing... Summer is not a bad time to do a cleanse, especially before it gets too hot (in the 110's).

If you are inclined to do a cleanse, I highly recommend reading "The New Detox Diet" by Haas, and don't hesitate to talk to us about it. Cleansing helps to balance out the excessive nature of the typical American diet, clearing out the buildup from overeating, choosing poor foods, and poor digestion.

With June showers...comes high mold counts...

As these rains we have been having come to an end, it is quite probable that mold counts will spike, aggravating allergies with them. Here are some things you can do to help yourself: 1) get some aromatic teas from the grocery store (mint, nettles, or any type of sinus/allergy relief), these will help keep the sinuses open, 2) reduce and eliminate white flower, sugar, and oily or greasy foods, these bring on internal dampness, leaving you more vulnerable to congestion and the symptoms of allergies, 3) add a nasal irrigation practice to your routine (such as a neti pot, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jala_net_i), and 4) come get some acupuncture, of course!

Do you know someone who could benefit from acupuncture?

Our business depends on and grows by referrals. If you know someone who could benefit from our services, please let them know about us. We are often asked if acupuncture can treat a specific condition; for your reference, here is a short list of the types of disorders that acupuncture can treat: gynecological disorders; allergies; emotional disorders; urogenital disorders; gastrointestinal, respiratory, neurological and musculo-skeletal disorders. We also treat preventively, reducing the effects of stress and the severity of chronic conditions.

Reduced Initial Evaluation and Treatment at the Austin Longevity Center ...The chiropractors that I work with at Austin Longevity Center are offering half off an initial chiropractic evaluation and treatment to all of my patients, until July 7th. I can't recommend Drs. Todd and Laura enough. They are conscientious, and care immensely about their patients, and in addition to the physical/structural work, they offer nutritional and supplemental counseling as well. You can read more about them at www.austinlongevity.com. Call their office at 448-0900.

Change of Schedule: 8 on / 3 off...

I am going to do an experiment with my clinic schedule. Rather than working the standard 5 days on/ 2 days off kind of week, I'm going to shift to a cycle of 8 days at clinic, 3 day off schedule. This will result in my being available some weekends at the Westgate office (though I will sometimes be out during the week). Upcoming, I'll be there this Saturday, July 7th and also on July 22nd.

Insurance stuff, who I'm in network with now ...

I am now in network with Blue Cross/ Blue Shield, Cigna, and PHCS / Multiplan, and now finally after a long wait, United Health Care. I am in the process of becoming in network with First Health/ Coventry. If your insurer is not one of these, but covers acupuncture, we can bill them...but it will be as an "out of network" provider and there may be a deductible that must be met before coverage will

begin. If you don't know if your insurance covers acupuncture, give us a call, and we can find out for you.

Upcoming Farmer's Market days ...

We had to cancel our Wednesday trip to the market at the Triangle due to inclement weather (hard to do acupuncture in the rain and wind...). We're going to try again on Wednesday July 18th, and barring inclement weather, we'll be out there. Here's our planned trips to the downtown market over the next several Saturdays July 14th & 21st, Aug 4th & 18th, and September 1st. Hope to see you out there.

Do you know about the "last minute" list?...

Once or twice a week, we send out an email letting folks know of any last minute openings we have in our schedule. These appointments are filled on a first call, first severed basis, and are sliding scale/ pay-as-you-can.

What would you like to hear about?

I've been brainstorming lists of topics for future newsletters, but I am particularly interested in knowing what you would like to hear about. Send me an email and let me know, I'll work to get your questions answered and curiosities satisfied in future emails.