

Autumn and TCM

Transition to New Health

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Autumn is a time when kids go back to school, the leaves start changing, and the temperatures start to cool. This is the time of year for close family and friends to gather for the last outside gatherings and good times. During this season there are many things that you can do to prepare your mind, body and spirit for the approaching winter.

Right now the seasons have changed from summer to fall/autumn. This is a very important time of year in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). In TCM there are 5 elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. Each element correlates with a different season. Wood is spring time. Fire is summer time. Earth is the transition between the seasons. Metal is autumn and Water is winter.

Each element has a color, taste, organ pair, emotion, and a yin or yang quality.





Autumn

Autumn's element is metal. The color is white. The taste is spicy. The organ pair is Lung and Large Intestine. The emotion is grief. Metal governs the mind. Metal is yin in quality.

ORGAN PAIR

In TCM each season correlates to an organ pair. There is a yin organ and a yang organ. These organs work together in the body to create a harmonious yin (water) and yang (fire) balance. Right now in the metal phase (autumn), the season belongs to the Lung and Large Intestine organ pair.

THE LUNG

In TCM the lung is a very sensitive organ. It is in charge of inhaling Heaven Qi (air) and exhaling Dirty Qi (carbon dioxide). The Qi (life force energy) should go down. When there is an imbalance it will go up and cause a cough. This is called Rebellious Qi. The lung is the upper most organ and is very susceptible to the external wind and cold. Yes, I am talking about the weather aspect and not germs. The Chinese believe that illness will enter the body from an external factor such as wind and if the body is not in harmony, the person will get sick. The neck is where the wind and cold can enter the body. Make sure that you are dressing correctly for the season, and keep your neck covered when going outside. The common lung ailments are colds, sinus infections, skin problems, allergies, bronchitis, cough, asthma, and other respiratory ailments.

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THE LARGE INTESTINE

The Lung is paired with the Large Intestine. The Large Intestine is in charge of expelling waste from the body. When there is a disharmony in the lungs there will often be a disharmony in the large intestine. For example: If a person has a cough with yellow phlegm and nasal congestion they will often have constipation. This is because these two organs are tied together. The lungs take in Qi and push the qi throughout the body and down to the large intestine. If the qi cannot make it down to the large intestine there is no Qi (energy) to push the bowels. The most common symptoms of an imbalance in the large intestine are constipation and other digestive issues.

EMOTIONS

Autumn is a time for organization, communication, order, reflection, and letting go. When you look outside, all of the trees and plants are losing their leaves and slowly retreating into the ground. Just like earth we also do the same. Our energy starts to retreat and prepare our bodies and mind for winter. The emotion of the lung is grief. During fall it is a good time to deal with any unresolved grief. It is a time to release old negative thoughts and create new positive thoughts and actions.

EMOTIONS CONTINUED

This is a time to evolve and grow. Are you struggling with connecting with your emotions? Acupuncture can be very helpful in helping people get in touch with their emotions and transition. Also it can be helpful to start practicing yoga, meditation, and breathing techniques. Besides emotional growth, it is a good time to complete unfinished projects and organize your house and office.

FOOD THERAPY

Fall is a season that is generally dry, windy and cool. It is time to start eating foods for the season. We are transitioning out of summer where you need to eat cooling food such as watermelon, cucumbers, and salads and are moving into a season where you need to eat warming, nourishing, yin(water) promoting foods to protect your body from the dry, cold, windy weather. Some suggestions of foods are:

 Soups instead of salads, lessen dairy intake, increase Asian pears, grapes, apples, hot oatmeal, tea with raw organic honey, sweet potatoes and yams, rice, navy beans, carrots, any squash, lemons (add some to your water), onion, garlic, and ginger.

CLOSING

Remember to take time for rest and relaxation. Go to bed early and wake up early to enjoy the cool crisp air and silence.