

Health WellNews

AUTUMN is here...

Traditional Chinese Medicine and Fall



As the seasons shift from summer to fall, so does the Qi (or energy) in the universe as well as within our bodies. Autumn is represented by the metal element, which includes the lung and large intestine meridians. The emotion often associated with the lung meridian is sadness and grief. This is the time of year to let go, to finish projects which you have not yet completed and embrace the coming of a new season.

One easy way to benefit the lung organ is breathing exercises. Practice breathing in through your nose and focus on filling your lungs deep with your breath, down into your abdomen. Hold that breath for a count of five and slowly exhale out of your mouth trying to get all of your breath exhaled from the very bottom of the lungs. You can repeat this several times as well as a few times throughout the day. Not only will this help build your lung Qi, it will also relax and center you. This is important in the midsts of our busy lives. Good sleep habits are also essential for health, wellbeing as well as the lung's Qi. Early to bed and early to rise will help invigorate you and set each day off full steam ahead.

In summertime many people indulge in lots of raw and fresh fruits and vegetables. For our bodies, digesting these raw foods can use up a lot of our Qi, but in the summer the heat of the summer can balance some of this as the raw foods have a more cooling aspect to them. As we transition to autumn, it is also a time to transition our diet and move towards more warming foods. Soups, stews, warm beverages, cooked fruits and vegetables. Fall can be abundant with amazing fresh produce that is seasonally appropriate-- pears, garlic, leeks, beans, apples, onions, ginger and leafy greens.



The lungs are also integral for our Wei Qi, which is our protective Qi, akin to the immune system. As the lungs are connected to the nose and the mouth, it is important to be mindful of this. Using a neti pot can help rinse out the nasal and sinus passages. Using a warm salt water mixture will help reduce your chances of colds and allergies. As the temperature shifts, so should our attire. Keep your body warm and appropriately covered, including a scarf around the neck as needed. It is a great time of year to go for long walks and hikes in nature, but keep yourself well prepared to keep your body strong.

Pear and Apple Soup

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon neutral oil
- 3 tart apples - peeled, cored, and chopped
- 3 pears - peeled, cored and chopped
- 5 cups vegetable broth
- 1/2 teaspoon rubbed sage
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pureed fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Recipe

Heat the milk in a pot on the stove until the temperature reaches 205-210 F (just before it begins to boil). Remove pot from the element and let milk rest and cool until it is warm to the touch.

Add the Greek Yogurt and mix it thoroughly into the warm milk. Cover the mixture and place in oven with just the oven light on. Do not turn on the oven, the oven light will provide a consistent temperature. Let the mixture rest for 8 to 12 hours. The longer the mixture rests, the more tart you're yogurt will taste.

After 8 to 12 hours remove from oven and stir for consistency; the yogurt should be have a thick consistency.

If you prefer a thicker Greek-style yogurt you can strain the yogurt through a colander lined with cheesecloth. Reserve some liquid whey and stir in if yogurt becomes too thick. Discard remaining unused liquid whey. For a thinner yogurt, serve immediately after it is chilled in the fridge.

Consider adding organic strawberries, blueberries, peaches or other fruit you enjoy to increase the flavor of your fresh, homemade yogurt. Enjoy!

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Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Metal Element



Traditional Chinese Medicine dates back thousands of years and has helped people all over the world remain and regain health and well-being. Traditional Chinese Medicine, or TCM, most likely predates written history. But the first writings of this medical system appear in China during the Shang Dynasty in 1766 B.C. The theory behind TCM however, is not just Chinese in origin and is heavily rooted in traditional Eastern philosophy. The concept of the five elements that are now used in TCM probably began with the ancient Chinese calendar where five types of energies were assigned to different days, months and years. These five elements were associated with the solstices and equinoxes in an effort to help farmers plan ahead. The five elements are wood, fire, earth, metal and water.



Metal is the element associated with the season of fall. The metal element is thought to be about connection and purity. During the autumn months, things are winding down and life is preparing for hibernation. Autumn is the time of year when we tend to let go of the things that no longer serve us. Just as the leaves fall from the trees in the autumn months, so too should we let go of the things, physical or mental, that bog us down. Fall is a good time to detox the body or clean out the closets of unwanted items.

Each element in TCM is also closely affiliated with two organs and their energetic meridians. Metal is the element of the lungs and the large intestine. The large intestine functions to “let go” of toxins and waste products our bodies no longer need to function. The lungs enable us to take in the crisp pure air of the autumn months, which helps to nourish and enrich our blood. The lungs and the large intestine work as a team to keep the body healthy. One gets rid of waste, while the other brings in nourishment.

When the metal element is out of balance, we may experience allergies, asthma, wheezing, colds, coughing, grief, sadness, skin rashes, eczema, diarrhea or constipation. All of these can be due to either excesses or deficiencies within the lung and large intestine meridians. One way to counter a breakdown in the system is by eating foods color specific to the two energetic meridians. Things like onions, turnips, cauliflower, egg whites, apples, potatoes and pears are all good examples of white foods that can help boost or tonify the energy of the lung and large intestine meridians.

Deep breathing is also something that can be done daily to help keep the metal element balanced. This practice can help strengthen the lungs and boost immunity in the body. Deep breathing can be somewhat meditative, which can help calm the mind too. When practicing deep breathing, the focus should be on the abdomen. The abdomen should expand when inhaling and it should deflate when exhaling. This is somewhat opposite of what most people do when they breathe. But when watching an infant breathe, it is easy to see this pattern. Deep breathing can be done almost anywhere and it can help tremendously when there is added stress.

Lastly, consider getting acupuncture to balance out the metal element. Acupuncture has been shown to be effective at treating many lung and large intestinal issues. Acupuncture works with the body to balance energy, remove blockages and get things flowing properly throughout the whole system. A few treatments can bring relief from a lifetime of discomfort.

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How to Fight the Common Cold with Traditional Chinese Medicine

Cold and flu season usually occurs during the winter months. But the common cold doesn't follow a schedule. The common cold can happen at any time of the year. It affects nearly three million people in the United States every year. Symptoms can include a runny nose, sneezing, congestion, coughing, sinus pressure, watery eyes, fatigue and muscle aches. The common cold is usually caused by a virus and unfortunately, Western medicine has no real cure for this ailment.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a medical system that approaches Western ailments from a very different angle though. In TCM, wind is one of the six external pathogens that can invade the body and produce symptoms. The external pathogens responsible for the cold are seen as invasions of wind. The body is protected by something known as the Wei Qi (defensive qi, pronounced "way chee"). The Wei Qi is comparable to the immune system in Western medicine and it acts as the first line of defense when the body is under attack from external pathogens. If the Wei Qi is strong, the body is capable of fighting off the cold virus. The Wei Qi keeps the pores of the skin closed and prevents wind from entering. Extreme stress, lack of sleep and a poor diet can all play into how strong the body's Wei Qi truly is and how well it performs.

Chinese botanical medications and certain TCM modalities like acupuncture, cupping and gua sha can all be utilized when the body breaks down and a wind pathogen invades. Chinese herbs have anti-viral and antibacterial properties that help ward off the pathogens. Some herbs also have diaphoretic properties, which induce sweating that expels the pathogens from the system. Wind can also carry other pathogens

with it that can exacerbate the infection. So the cold can present as either a wind-cold or a wind-heat invasion. Obviously, these are treated differently based on the symptoms.

A wind-cold invasion tends to be the more mild of the two and can be treated with acupuncture, gua sha or cupping. This is considered the beginning stages of a cold as there are rarely any heat symptoms present. Because the pathogen is still mostly on the surface of the skin, gua sha or cupping may be the first line of defense. Both gua sha and cupping pull out toxins from the muscles and the blood and bring oxygen-rich blood into those areas decreasing the time that it takes for the body to heal. Acupuncture can also be a good tool to use when fighting a wind-cold attack. Acupuncture stimulates the immune system and helps to balance the hormones, which can shorten the length of time a person may feel ill. The other type of cold is the wind-heat invasion. Wind-heat invasions attack quickly and manifest just like wind-cold invasions, but they also have fevers as one of their primary symptoms. Wind-heat invasions should be treated with acupuncture and herbs only, as gua sha and cupping can sometimes push the pathogen deeper into the tissues extending the length of the cold.

With both types of colds, plenty of rest and water are essential. Mint and chrysanthemum teas are also highly recommended. Spicy, greasy or fried foods should be avoided, as should sugar because these foods can create mucus or exacerbate the condition. And regardless of the type of cold, a licensed acupuncturist will be able to help you kick it in less time than normal.



3 Foods to Fight the Common Cold

1 Chicken Soup

When a cold occurs, the body needs nourishment to fight off the attack. This is why chicken soup is a great remedy for the common cold. Hot liquids and bland foods like chicken soup, will help keep the body hydrated and nourished. With proper nourishment, the body can return to a harmonious balance and the cold will diminish. Chicken soup is full of essential vitamins, nutrients and antioxidants known to speed up the healing process.

2 Ginger

Ginger can be helpful when fighting off the common cold due to its antiviral, anti-inflammatory and expectorant properties. Eating raw ginger or adding it to tea several times a day, can greatly improve cold

symptoms quickly. And to enhance the power of ginger, add some lemon and honey, both powerful herbs in their own right. The anti-inflammatory property in ginger makes it great to help relieve a sore throat. It is recommended to keep ginger handy at all times of the year and use it as a preventive medicine, even when not feeling sick.

3 Garlic

Garlic has been known to be both a great cold remedy and cold preventer. Garlic cloves contain allicin, which produces powerful antioxidants fantastic for fighting off the common cold. A study published by "Advances in Therapy" has shown those who consume garlic regularly get less colds during flu season.

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Halloween in China



Halloween is a holiday primarily celebrated in the West. It has its origin in the ancient Celtic festival known as Samhain, which is pronounced "sah-win". But while Halloween is a much bigger celebration in Western cultures, it is also celebrated in Eastern cultures.

In China, Halloween is known as the Ghost Festival or the Hungry Ghost Festival. The Ghost Festival is a celebration of the departed souls and it is celebrated on the 15th day of the seventh lunar month (July). The souls of the dead are called hungry ghosts because they are searching the planet for recognition, care and affection. Chinese Halloween lasts several days, beginning on July 1 and ending on July 14. The Chinese believe that during this two week period, the gates of the underworld are open and the spirits are looking for a way to re-enter the human world.

The festival, also called Teng Chieh, is a time of honoring and remembering

loved-ones who have passed on. Food and water are usually placed in front of photographs of the departed family members, while lanterns are lit to light the paths of the spirits as they travel the earth on Halloween night. This custom has two purposes. The first, as mentioned, is to remember the dead. The second purpose is to free the spirits of their earthly bonds so they may ascend to heaven. These spirits do not belong to those who were properly buried or cared for, but instead they belong to those who died unnatural deaths, may have not been given a proper burial so that their relatives would have closure or those who were abandoned by their families.

The Chinese days of the dead are also celebrated at other times throughout the year, but the month of July is particularly important. July is known as the Ghost Month or Gui Yue. During this month, ghosts of the deceased are thought to be searching the country for entertainment.

Because of these traveling ghosts, most citizens refrain from partaking in anything they consider "dangerous," such as swimming or being outside alone at night.

As mentioned, there are other times of year when the dead are celebrated including the Qing Ming Festival, which takes place in early April, the Double Nine Festival which takes place in autumn and the Chinese Spring Festival. These days are an integral part of the religion known as Daoism. These celebrations are hundreds of years old and they are days where people either protect themselves from the pranks of the deceased or they honor their dead.

Halloween, as it is celebrated here in the West, has entered Eastern culture though, via foreign teachers and Western emigrants. In cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, Halloween is more commonly acknowledged and celebrated due to the influx of foreigners. Hong Kong is another area where traditional Halloween decorations may be found around October 31st and this is because of places like Disneyland. So while Halloween is celebrated differently and at different times of year, it is still a tradition that is celebrated worldwide.

Happy Halloween! 万圣节快乐! Wansheng Jie Kuaile!

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