

SUMMER

Signs and symptoms of a heart and small intestine imbalance according to Chinese medicine:

Emotional

- Anxiety
- Dream disturbed sleep
- Excessive dreams
- Inappropriate laughter
- Lack of joy or humor
- Lack of social warmth
- Mental confusion
- Overly critical
- Over thinking
- Poor self-esteem
- Restlessness
- Sadness

Physical

- Anemia
- Angina
- Digestive troubles
- Dizziness
- Easily startled
- Frozen shoulder
- Hemorrhoids
- Heart problems
- Hot flashes
- Hot, painful joints
- Insomnia
- Low or high blood pressure
- Mouth abscesses
- Pale face
- Palpitations
- Poor circulation
- Poor muscle tone in abdomen
- Red cheeks
- Stiff neck
- Sweating problems
- Tennis elbow
- Urinary problems
- Varicose veins

©2005 Acupuncture Media Works, LLC. All rights reserved. The information contained within the HealthWellNews newsletter is for education purposes only. This newsletter is not a substitute for the advice of a licensed and registered health care provider. Seek prompt attention for emergencies. Consult your health care provider regarding the applicability of any opinions or recommendations with respect to your symptoms or medical condition.

Ahhhh...Summertime!

During the long days of summer, abundant sunshine and warm temperatures nurture the luxuriant growth and full maturation of plants. All around us gardens blossom and bear fruit. One of the ancient writings of Chinese medicine, the *Inner Classic*, suggests that this time of the year expresses the Yang principles—expansion, growth, outward activity, lightness and creativity.

The flowers and fruits of our gardens are bursting in abundance. Everything is maturing and at the high point of growth. This is also the time of year for us to be at a high point of our outdoor activities and recreation. It is important to understand that as the seasons flow within the natural world, they also flow within us.

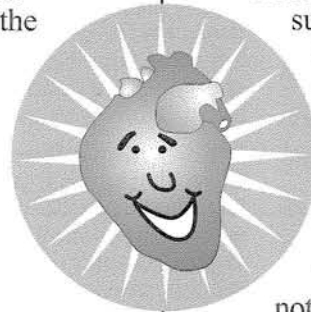
What the Ancients knew about our bodies

In Chinese medical theory, the summer characterizes the energy of the Fire element. The Fire element brings warmth, passion, joy and activity into our lives. When we lack fire, we lack emotional warmth, passion and joy. This leads to inactivity and closing off from the world.

The Fire element is governed by the heart, small intestine, Triple Heater (Triple Burner or Triple Warmer) and Pericardium meridians. The latter two are systems linked to the heart and small intestine and are not actual organs, but carry out specific functions.

Practitioners of acupuncture consider the heart the most important of all organs. It is considered the "ruler, monarch and emperor of the body."¹ The small intestine "is the official in charge of receiving, being filled and transforming."² Together, these organs are paired in a Yin and Yang relationship and have particular functions that may differ from our Western understanding.

During this time of year you may have more physical energy and feel the desire to garden, play sports, go hiking in the woods, or take long walks. Let the sun's energy nourish and reinvigorate you. Rise early, stretch and reach toward the sun. Like the plants in your garden, let the bounty and warmth of the outside world enter and enliven you.



Whether we are aware of it or not, each season can have a profound influence upon our health and well-being. According to the ancient principles of Chinese medicine, our heart and small intestine are most active, alive and accessible to health, healing and development at this time of year. If we do not learn to flow with the changes, as nature does, illness can occur.

Some of the functions of the heart closely resemble those of Western thought. It controls and regulates the flow of blood throughout the body, resulting in healthy tissues, a warm body and an even, regular pulse. The heart also supplies us with vigor, robustness and a strong constitution.

Ancient texts also describe the heart as housing the *Shen*, a very important concept. Shen, according to Chinese medicine, is known as psyche, mind, or spirit. In other words, "it is the residence of the mind." Positive Shen can be seen in the bright, shining, twinkling eyes of healthy people in good spirits and experiencing joy in their lives. When Shen is out of balance, mental activity, consciousness, memory, thinking and sleep can all be affected.

The small intestine is the largest organ in the body. It averages more than fifteen feet in length and about an inch in diameter.

Continued on page 2

Food for Body Spirit

Acupuncture and the Heart Research has shown that acupuncture can improve the health of patients who experience severe heart problems by dramatically reducing the activity in the sympathetic nervous system that regulates heartbeat and blood pressure.

The study conducted through the Los Angeles School of Medicine suggests that acupuncture can be used "successfully with long-range results in improving hypertension, and it may also be beneficial in lowering sympathetic nerve activity."

Overactivation of the sympathetic nervous system is common with patients who suffer from heart problems. Over time, this may cause the heart to work harder, forcing blood to flow through blood vessels that are constricted due to heightened nerve activity.

The study showed that sympathetic nerve activation was significantly reduced in those individuals who received acupuncture care compared to those who only received a placebo. The lead physician in the study, Dr. Middlekauff, suggests, "that more study is needed before acupuncture can be recommended, but acupuncture has been used successfully and with long-range results in improving hypertension, and it may also be beneficial in lowering sympathetic nerve activity."

Middlekauff HR. Acupuncture in the treatment of heart failure. *Cardiol Rev.* 2004 May-Jun;12(3):171-3.

Black Tea and Your Heart A cup of tea can relax, revive and heal the body. The *Treatise on Food* states, "the habit of drinking tea brings vitality and a pleasant state of mind." According to *Shen Nung's Herbal*, "drinking tea can ease one's mind, benefit one's Qi (vital energy), increase one's stamina, and maintain youthful energy."

Today, studies are being conducted in order to validate what ancient sages and physicians have known for thousands of years. There is evidence to show that tea not only strengthens the body, but can also protect your heart.

A study published in the journal of *Preventive Medicine* discovered that when subjects consumed higher quantities of black tea, they had a lower incidence of heart disease and hypertension.

The "study showed that there is a protective association between black tea consumption and coronary heart disease. More data from prospective cohort studies will help to distinguish whether tea drinking has a true biological effect, or whether it serves as a surrogate for a risk profile promoting lower CHD risk."

Studies continue to emerge on the health benefits of tea. Have a cup of tea and toast to your health!

Ekim IA, Alsaif MA, Alduwaihi M, et al. Tea consumption and the prevalence of coronary heart disease in Saudi adults: Results from a Saudi national study. *Preventive Medicine* January 2003;36:64-70.

Stay Healthy in Bed: Eight Rules For Improving Health After Waking Up

Did you know that you can start improving your health before even leaving your bed?

After a deep, restful and relaxed sleep, your mind and muscles gradually begin to wake up. The eight rules introduced here are beneficial for improving and maintaining a healthy life and will help you slowly assimilate into a new day.

- 1. Eyeball Roll** – With your eyes open, slowly roll eyeballs left to right, up and down and in circles to the right, then the left. This can improve the function and strength of the optic nerve, reinforce vision, and prevent eyestrain. Repeat nine times.
- 2. Ear Press** – Place the palms of your hands flat against your ears, and your fingers at the base of your skull. Tap lightly with your pointer finger so you will hear a slight drumming sound. This can resolve fatigue, prevent dizziness, and activate important acupuncture points at the base of your skull. Repeat nine times.
- 3. Belly Breath** – While lying on your back, inhale deeply into your abdomen, a few inches below your navel. Fill your belly and then your chest with your breath. Exhale forcefully, relaxing deeply and letting go of any worries that you have for the day. Repeat nine times.
- 4. Butt Awareness** – Focus your attention around your anus. Tighten and hold the muscles around that area for 10-30 seconds, and then loosen. This can

improve circulation around the anus and prevent prolapse and hemorrhoids. Repeat nine times.

5. Hip Raise – While lying on your back, stretch your arms out over your head and your toes away from you. Press your heels into your mattress, clench your buttocks, and raise your hips slightly off the mattress. Relax and lower your buttocks and hips, and repeat several times. This can stretch your muscles and help strengthen the back.

6. Teeth Bump – Close your lips. Gently bump your teeth together 36 times, while placing your tongue at the roof of your mouth, just behind your upper teeth. Any saliva that is produced from doing this should be swished around your mouth and swallowed in three swallows. This opens up acupuncture meridians along the chest and back, improves blood circulation to the mouth, teeth and gums, and increases saliva that clears the mouth of bacteria.

7. Head Rub – Run your fingertips through your hair 36 times from forehead to neck and ear-to-ear, from temples to crown. This stimulates blood circulation to hair roots, decreases gray hair, promotes shiny hair, and exercises your scalp.

8. Eye Rub – Make your hands into loose fists. Rub starting at the inner corner of your eyes. This can help clear the head, awaken your senses and provide clear vision for a new day.

Try these simple techniques to begin each day. Over time, you may experience a new sense of well-being and freshness when starting your days. Smile, and have a pleasant and peaceful day!

Continued from page 1

Chinese medicine refers to it as "the controller of the reception, transformation and separation of fluids and solids." The small intestine receives food and fluids from the stomach, "transforms" them by separating the "pure" from the "impure," sending the refined, pure essences up to be dispersed throughout the entire body. The impurities are flushed down to your large intestine and bladder to be further refined and then excreted.

Western medicine views the Pericardium as a covering surrounding the heart. This is mirrored in Chinese medicine in that the Pericardium protects the heart from attacks by exterior pathogenic factors, such as high fevers. In the *Spiritual Axis* it says: "The heart is the ruler of the 5 Yin and 6 Yang organs, it is the residence of the mind and it is so tough that no pathogenic factor can take hold on it. If the heart is attacked by a pathogenic factor, the mind suffers, which can lead to death. If the pathogenic factor does not attack the heart, it will be deviated to attack the Pericardium instead."³

The Triple Heater is a bit elusive in its functions. It is not an organ system, but a division of areas within the body. The Triple Heater functions to divide to body into three parts: the Upper Heater includes the heart, lungs, pericardium, throat and head; the Middle Heater includes the stomach, spleen and gallbladder; and the Lower Heater includes the liver, kidneys, intestines and bladder. All three heaters manage and oversee day-to-day functioning of the body, and regulate water passage from the upper, middle and lower Heaters.

1,2,3 Giovanni, M. *The Foundations of Chinese Medicine - A comprehensive text for acupuncturists and herbalists.* Churchill Livingstone, 1993. Pages 71, 114.

Summertime Foods

As the weather grows warmer we often become more active and participate in a variety of outdoor activities. An ideal summer diet is light and filled with fresh foods with high water content, and brightly colored with summer fruits and vegetables.

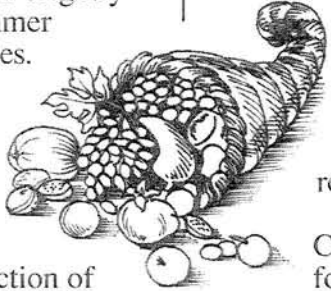
Each organ has a specific flavor that affects it. Foods with a bitter taste stimulate the function of the heart. These include green leafy vegetables such as endive, escarole, lettuce and watercress, coffee, tea and chocolate. These foods can nourish the heart, but consumed in excess do more harm than good.

Raw fruits, fresh salads, cool soups and lightly cooked meals of grains and vegetables are adequate this time of year for healthy, vigorous adults. Sprouted vegetables and grains can be mixed in with a variety of dishes to help maintain a cool body temperature.

You can even add a bit of spicy, pungent or fiery flavors. At first, spicy, fiery foods may raise the body temperature, but ultimately they can draw body heat out to the surface where it can be dispersed. For this purpose you can cook with red and green hot peppers, fresh

ginger, red pepper, black pepper or cayenne. But don't overdo it. Keep your summer spice intake to a minimum.

If you are sautéing foods, use high heat for a short period of time. When simmering or steaming foods, do it as quickly as possible so you can retain the fresh tastes.



Consuming heavy foods on hot days can make you feel sluggish and slow down your digestion. Such foods include eggs, grains, seeds, nuts and meats. As a rule of thumb, eat heavier meals in the morning or evening. This type of summer diet can help you feel lighter in the heat of the day, maintain your energy, and aid in weight loss.

For better digestion and assimilation of nutrients, avoid mixing too many foods together at one sitting. Fruits and juicier foods are best eaten alone or between meals. Summer heat along with too many cold drinks can weaken digestive organs and impair digestion; too much ice cream and iced drinks are best avoided.

Summer invites us to become more active. Just be sure to stay hydrated by consuming enough water, juices and herbal teas.

Foods you can add to a summer diet

BEANS

Green
Sprouted

FRUIT

Apricot
Avocado
Banana
Blackberry
Blueberry
Boysenberry
Cantaloupe
Casaba
Fig
Grapes
Grapefruit
Guava
Lime
Loganberry
Mango
Musk melon
Nectarine
Orange
Papaya
Passion fruit
Pineapple
Peach
Pear
Plum
Raspberry

Strawberry
Tangelo
Tangerine
Watermelon

GRAINS (sprouted)

HERBS

Chickweed
Chicory
Chili pepper
Chives
Cilantro
Dandelion root
Fennel
Green tea
Hawthorn berry
Mint
Parsley
Peppermint
Rosehip
Sassafras

SEEDS (sprouted)

VEGETABLES

Artichoke
Beets

Bokchoy
Cabbage
Carrot
Celery
Chard
Collard greens
Comfrey
Corn
Cucumber
Eggplant
Green peas
Lettuce
Okra
Radish
Rhubarb
Spinach
Sugar peas
Tomato
Watercress
Zucchini

For more information on seasonal eating see The Seasonal Food Guide poster and booklet published by Celestial Arts, Berkeley, CA.

Points Toward Health

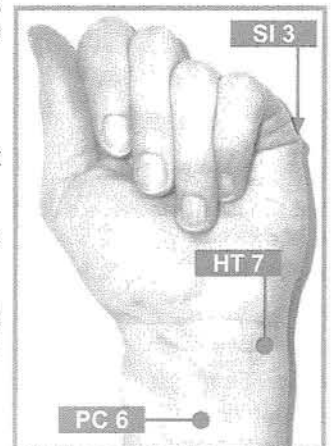
Rubbing acupuncture points with your finger for 30-60 seconds can stimulate and promote the circulation of Qi within your own body, restoring health and well being.

Here is one common acupuncture point to promote health in summer. This point can be located on both feet.

Small Intestine 3 – Located on the outer edge of the hand. Make a light fist and the point can be located at the area where the skin protrudes out, just below the base of the little finger. Excellent point for stiff neck, occipital headaches, and aches and pains in the back and spine.

Heart 7 – On the inside of the wrist crease. Calms the mind, improves memory, alleviates heart palpitations and helps address insomnia. This is an excellent point to reduce anxiety and worry when in stressful situations.

Pericardium 6 – In the middle of the forearm, about 2.5 inches below the wrist crease, in between two tendons. Relieves stress, aids digestion and bloated abdomen and is useful for problems related to the chest area, good for premenstrual depression and irritability, major point for nausea and vomiting.



Cool-Out Summer Salad

6 medium tomatoes	1/2 cup green olives, sliced
2 small cucumbers	1/2 cup red onion, minced
4 radishes, sliced	1/2 cup fresh parsley, minced
2 scallions, minced	3 tbsp. olive oil
1 large dill or sour pickle, minced	1 - 2 tbsp. fresh lemon or lime juice
1 bell pepper, minced	salt and pepper to taste

- Allow salad to marinate for 1 hour.
- Cut tomatoes in half and squeeze out and discard seeds. Then cut into 1/2 inch pieces.
- Toss all ingredients together. Serve cool or room temperature.