

Wellness Bulletin

Springtime is upon us. Though technically Spring begins on March 20th, at 5:48 a.m., here in the Valley temperatures are on the rise, the winds are here and the plants are flowering.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine-Five Element Theory, Springtime belongs to wood. The liver and the entire liver system including the gall-bladder belong to wood as well and have a profound impact to our overall health and wellness. To begin our discovery of this process, let's journey back in time 20,000 years or more...

Congratulations! You just survived another winter. You have gone through all of your stores and provisions you worked so hard to accumulate beginning in Spring time of last year. During the winter, you stayed inside and warm most of the time. Hopefully, you enjoyed the break from the previous years' hard work. Your body, naturally, put on some fat and held on to as much as it could in case something did not work out and you actually had to go outside and gather food. Your blood vessels have been constricting (especially the capillaries) to conserve body heat and energy, and you have been bundled in your skins and furs to support this process of staying warm.

As the temperature increases, you begin to shed the extra layers both inside and outside that your wonderfully efficient body has built for you in these last months. It is a good thing you have them too because food is scarce. The animals are all holed up birthing their young and there are no crops or plant sustenance to speak of other than a bunch of flowers and some citrus fruits, maybe a few tubers if you are smart enough to remember where they were last year. Provisions, well, we ate them! Or, they have started to spoil because we do not have a fridge and it is getting warmer each day. So, your body in all of its genius has programmed you for a good Spring Cleaning! Yea!

The brain of the body (i.e. the primary regulator of processes and governor of functions) is the liver. The Liver also acts like a customs checkpoint examining everything that it comes in contact with and deciding whether it can enter the country or not. During the winter it set a few things to the side that may have been questionably acceptable in their immigrant status, but, in a pinch they would do. Well, it's now time to separate the wheat from the chaff so we can go plant some wheat and hopefully not get to chaffed in the process. In other words, let's get moving because inevitably we have another winter to deal with and you know that **proper planning and preparation prevents poor performance.**

Flash forward to today. Same body, same biorhythm, different culture, different mindset that is not in tune or aware at all of the bodies' natural alignment with the environment. You have just spent a couple of months binging on holiday food, flues, colds, not a lot of exercise, oh and let's not forgot the stress of the holidays and shopping. Did you rest over Christmas and New Years? Are you coming out of this Winter ready for Spring? Your body is. Now let's get your head in the game too.

This Spring locally we have seen at least two major flu/ bronchitis epidemics; a rash of stomach flu and intestinal infections; and a rash of rashes as well. If you look at your five element diagram (found in Master Leone's book on the five elements) you will see that the lungs and large intestine, as well as the skin belong to metal. You will also see that the stomach and the spleen belong to earth. Notice that they are next to each other on the chart.

The following is called the root and branch method. The branches represent the symptoms and the root represents the cause. In this instance the earth and metal are showing symptoms (branches). The cause (root) is right across the circle as if we made a triangle pointing to it using earth and metal as our base. You guessed it! It is wood, hence the liver and the liver system.

The liver has begun to extradite the toxins and stores of winter so that you can be at maximum efficiency for the Summer and Fall (upcoming bulletins will assist you to stay in tune and not get sick at these times as well). And the lucky winners of the toxic waste dump are...the lungs! And...The large intestine! Uh-oh, were you

not prepared for this? Let me guess, you kept on eating and partying and even may have experienced somewhat of a traffic jam. Now your earth element is effected too (this means your stomach). Whoa, let's back up a little bit here and look exactly what has happened and what we can do to align with and take advantage of our body's brilliance.

The liver starts moving Chi and sending signals for its spring cleaning. The circulatory system starts to open up and more space is created in the blood which was weakened during the winter and has been a little more stagnant than usual. Also with the rise in temperature we start wearing the shorts and short sleeves and forget about the onslaught of the wind. The pores open up and as the liver shudders, its affect on the body are like a wind blowing through the trees of a forest. At the same time the wind carries allergens and pathogens into the pores of the skin and into the lungs which are already weakened by the toxins the liver is dumping into them.

Did I mention that the liver uses the skin to process toxins as well? Remember that sugar zit you got the night before prom? A good vegetable juice fast here would easily assist a healthy person to not take on sickness, illness, or disease during this time. Therein is the problem. Most people are not healthy. A good juice fast would make them sick. To compound the issue, since this has NEVER been done, you may as well take your tooth brush, some paper towels, and a bottle of 409 and go clean the inside of the Palo Verde Nuclear reactor. By the way, it's warm in there so be sure to wear your shorts and tank top (more about this later).

Most Americans are over fed and do not have a culture that will support a good 36 hour vegetable juice fast blitz every 14-21 days during this time so they just get sick instead. The immune system kicks into overdrive, and then it kicks into overdrive again and again and again. Like a boxer in the ring against Mohammed Ali, you just keep getting hit again and again. Viral, bacterial, mold, parasite infections set up in the body and do their thing. Remember, it is Spring time for them as well. They might not get this chance again for a whole year. Allergens are flying around in the air. Air quality is down as people get out and drive more

and more. Continuing to take in food will stagnate the chi and hampers the body's ability to strengthen an already weakened system. Disaster is inevitable. Our only alternative is to stay inside and hide from the world (A.K.A. depression). There is nothing like a good Spring time bout with how crappy life is to start the year. All kidding aside, let's get some solution focus going before this happens to you AGAIN!

WOOD:

Support the Liver! Give it room to work. Back off the heavy food and support it by eating smaller meals throughout the day. Make a fist. That is the size of your stomach. Try to limit your meals to that same or less volume of food at each meal. Eat every 4-5 hours instead of the usual every 3 hours.

Begin the day with a nice big fruit salad. Use at least four different kinds of organic fruit and if possible use organic fruits grown locally. Besides being rich in vitamins and minerals, many fruits contain a flavinoid called quercetin. Quercetin is found naturally in apple skin, berries, red grapes, kiwis (again in the skin) pears, red onions, and capers. Quercetin has been proven to cross react with pollens and can reduce allergic reactions and inflammation in the lungs. Save your protein meals for midday.

Orange foods help also. Rich in carotenoids they can help with b-vitamin assimilation and boost the immune system. These foods include apricots, carrots, pumpkin, yams, spinach, kale, butternut squash, and collard greens. Keeping some dried apricots with some raw unsalted cashews or almonds makes a good snack.

For your last meal of the day, have a green salad. Add some tomatoes, celery, broccoli, carrots, and other vegetables. Drink 1-2 liters of water flavored lightly with lime juice each day over the course of the day (especially before you come in and train). Lemon and lime juice is very good for the cleansing process of the liver. If you are suffering from gallbladder problems drink some watered down apple juice often as well. Apple juice is high in pectin. Pectin can soften stones and substances passed from the liver making them more tractable as they travel

through your body. Eat good natural fats with Omega-3 essential fatty acids. Flaxseed, salmon, avocados, unsalted raw almonds and cashews are good as well. This can give your ducts a little more flexibility and zip.

Just before bed try a tonic made from 4 ounces of liquid gelatin, 4 ounces of aloe vera juice, and 2 tablespoons of chlorophyll. Another very refreshing drink during this time can be some soda water with lime juice and chlorophyll. Just be prepared for the greenness. Chlorophyll interacts with the mitochondria in the cells. Mitochondria are like the boy scouts of the cell keeping all cell parts happy and productive.

METAL:

Support the lungs. Use Air Aide to keep the lungs open and the blood oxygenated. Take 2-4 Millenium CF each day to ward off Cold and Flu pathogens before they set up shop. Take 2-4 Epstin each day to reinforce and prepare the body for the allergen onslaught.

Spice it up. Hot spices tend to thin the mucus secretions and clear nasal passages. Ginger is a natural anti-histamine and decongestant. Cayenne pepper can help kick out parasites from the lungs and digestive tract. Add a pinch to your green drinks or lime water for an interesting taste adventure. Of course, there is everyone's favorite, the jalapeno. Mix some salsa with some crushed avocados for a great guacamole to have as a snack with some corn chips. Be sure to sprinkle the avocados with a bit of lime to keep them from browning too fast.

Support the large intestine. A healthy active colon can decrease food sensitivity which lightens the burden on the immune system and may reduce the impact of allergens in the lungs. Drink plenty of water. Soften the blow of imbalances caused by an increase of toxicity in the body. Eat plain unsweetened yogurt with system friendly bacteria such as acidophilus and bifidus. These active cultures can restore the balance of bacteria in the gastro-intestinal tract. Add some granola, fresh fruit and a little vanilla flavored rice dream to create a nutritious and delicious snack.

Support your skin. Don't rush to get into your shorts and tank top. Dress warm enough to maintain a slight consistent sweat. In addition to protecting the skin against the wind and all the things that are carried upon it, you should prepare your skin for the heat of the Summer which is soon to arrive. This will also help your liver clear toxins more quickly. Take a hot, steamy bath or shower 2-3 times a day. Keep the skin moisturized and the lungs hydrated. 99% pure Aloe Vera gel can help rejuvenate and regenerate the skin.

EARTH:

Support the Stomach. Eat less. Back off the heavy food and support it by eating smaller meals throughout the day. Make a fist. That is the size of your stomach. Try to limit your meals to a fist size or less in volume at each meal. Eat every 4-5 hours instead of the usual every 3 hours.

Avoid grease (fast foods), high sodium content foods, all refined sugars and processed foods (no wheat, no sugar), and drink plenty of water.

Know the foods you are allergic to. After eating observe if your pulse quickens or body temperature is raised. Note what you have eaten and see if there are some consistent reactives. Some water, aloe vera juice and chlorophyll can have a very soothing effect on an upset stomach.

Allergens and Pathogens:

The word allergy is used to describe an immune system response such as non-specific hypersensitivity or intolerances that are producing undesirable health effects in response to environmental exposures. In other words, an allergen is a neutral substance that your body does not like and wants to get rid of.

A pathogen is a hostile invader that wants to use your body as a host organism to multiply and spread.

Allergens tend to weaken the immune system and open up the body to a hostile takeover by pathogens. The more the pathogens work their invasive magic the more sensitivity we develop to allergens.

Imagine that your immune system is a truck. It can haul a 1000 pound load. Normally, pathogens comprise only a 450 pound load and are an easy haul. Your liver throws off another 400 pounds of toxic waste and then the wind blows in 50 pounds of pollen, 125 pounds of dust. Then the mulberry flowers give you a gift of another 237 pounds of stuff and the air quality goes down giving you another 312 pounds. You drink out of a water fountain and immediately get another 382 pounds and suddenly you're at 1843 pounds. This is called the TOTAL LOAD THEORY. The regular trash (pathogens) gets left behind while the body deals with the allergens. It becomes a pathogen party.

Inside of this theory we deal with two arenas; avoidance strategies vs. de-sensitization. Avoidance would be to avoid exceeding your 1000 pound limit by avoiding known allergens. Just say no to the glass of milk (and yes to the lime juice and water). Milk is generally a mildly reactive substance that produces mucus and should probably be avoided during this time. In other words, lighten the load. What are some other substances you could avoid?

The other strategy would be to increase our load bearing capacities to 2000 pounds and easily haul the load. This is called de-sensitization. Often, this process happens by getting pollen or allergy shots, starting in winter to build up tolerances that will handle the upcoming spring.

Another common choice would be to stuff it all in the truck anyway and hope we make it. Suppression techniques include antihistamines, breathing treatments, and the worst of them all, steroids. Many prescriptions steroids are more toxic than street heroine. Ouch! These should be last resorts for use when all other options have failed or in an emergency situation.

In the mean time, try some of the above recommendations. Keep a journal or diary of what works. Knowledge is knowing what is going on, wisdom is seeing it coming. Chronicle your illnesses over the course of several years and see if you can unlock the pattern of their timing. By doing this you will gain the wisdom necessary to facilitate prevention.

References

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