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WHAT'S NEW

Hope you're enjoying the abundant harvest days of autumn! It's such a great time to take advantage of all the good local food the season has to offer.

This fall will be the beginning of a new short lecture series! Victor Dubin (local yoga instructor and owner of the Om Room School of Yoga, 300 Natural Bridges Road, Santa Cruz, 831-429-YOGA) and I will be doing talks on staying healthy through each season. I will be discussing how to stay well with herbs and acupuncture, diet and lifestyle. Victor will be demonstrating yoga positions to enhance immune function and for health issues common to each season. Our first talk will be on Saturday, November 10th at the Om Room. Contact me for more information. Hope to see you there!

As I mentioned in the spring newsletter, I have been learning more about endocrinology and how to get accurate information about hormone levels. Saliva testing is an excellent method of accurately testing hormone and glandular function. Several of my clients have completed this test, and the results have been very enlightening. The adrenal glands and blood sugar are the current themes in many results.

The adrenal glands, which produce cortisol, have a normal daily rhythm. Cortisol levels are highest in the morning and become low at night. Cortisol functions to help the body handle stress, keep blood sugar levels normal, mobilize fat for energy production, stimulate protein catabolism, and also acts as an anti-inflammatory.

When cortisol is abnormally high several things can happen. An overall cortisol rhythm imbalance, insulin resistance, thyroid function imbalance, lowered immune function, weight gain and premature gut, brain, immune and bone cell death can occur. Additionally, unbalanced cortisol levels can cause a decrease in DHEA, which is of particular interest to my fertility clients. DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) is a precursor hormone to estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone, and is necessary to moderate the balance of hormones in your body. Insufficient DHEA contributes to fatigue, infertility, bone loss, loss of muscle mass, depression, aching joints, decreased sex drive, and impaired immune function.

As I'm sure you've now realized having our adrenal glands secrete balanced and timely levels of cortisol is basically the foundation of many of our bodily functions. This is consistent with a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) view. The adrenals lie directly on top of our kidneys. The Kidneys in TCM are also considered the foundation of our body's functioning. They represent conception, maturation, reproduction and aging. The stronger our kidney "qi" the more balanced these processes flow.

Specifically for the fall and winter seasons, kidney qi provides the basis for the strength of the qi that protects the body against colds and flu. Hopefully, this autumn newsletter will give you some useful information to keep your "protective qi" healthy and provide some relief if you do catch a cold or flu this season.

Stay Well!!

- Carmen

SHONISHIN DAYS

Cold and flu season has arrived. This is the time of year to be prepared and be preventative. There are little signs and symptoms that your child may demonstrate that give you an early warning he or she may be getting a cold. Some signs to recognize before symptoms arise are irritability, tiredness, sleeping more and change in appetite.

There are herbs you may begin administering immediately which are very safe. Your child may still catch that cold, but the symptoms will be far less severe and probably won't progress into anything more serious.

It's also important to get your child's immune system ready for the season. This is where acupuncture treatments and/or stimulation of the meridians (*Shonishin*) play a role. Regular treatments, whether your child is sick or not, will help boost up the protective qi so your child is better equipped to handle all those little germs they get exposed to.

For the child who seems to be getting sick quite often, treatments every week to every other week are recommended. To keep a child's already strong

immune system protected, once a month treatments would be of great benefit.

Remember “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”! Schedule an appointment for you child today!

ALL ABOUT AUTUMN

Autumn represents the metal element and is associated with the Lungs and Large Intestine. It is a time of harvest and gathering together. We prepare and eat foods that keep us warm, start collecting or bringing out warmer clothing, and plan indoor projects or quiet time. This gathering also occurs in nature. Plants and animals are contracting and moving energy and nutrients inward and downward into root systems and places of hibernation.

Fall is also considered a time of dryness. Any type of dry condition a person might have is usually associated with the lungs. Dry symptoms might include dry skin anywhere on the body, dry throat, thirst and itchy skin. There are foods which help to counter dry weather and dry symptoms. Using a little salt (I recommend Himalayan or French Celtic Sea Salt) with cooking helps to moisten dryness as well as eating the following moistening foods:

- spinach
- apple, pear, persimmon, loquat
- seaweed
- barley and millet
- mushrooms (black and white)
- almond, pine nuts, peanuts, sesame seed
- honey, barley malt, rice syrup
- milk and dairy products (keep in mind that dairy is more appropriate for those who have frailty or weak conditions)
- eggs
- clam, crab, oyster, mussel, herring
- pork

Foods that are spicy or warming, aromatic and bitter should be used with caution if you are experiencing a dry condition, for they are drying to the body.

THE LUNGS: IN BALANCE AND DISEASE

The function of the lungs in TCM is to receive nourishing oxygen and combine that with the vital energy or qi of healthy food. This becomes protective qi or “wei qi”, as it’s termed in TCM, and is distributed through the body by the lungs. The spreading of protective qi by the lungs creates a barrier against

bacteria and viruses. It also helps to moisten the mucus membranes to keep them healthy and strong.

KEEPING LUNGS BALANCED

Emotionally, the lungs are related with grief. Any unresolved grief may cause the lungs to contract or “hold on”, which prevents the spreading of protective qi throughout the body and causes the lungs to be congested with mucus or fluid. Therefore, processing this emotion in whatever way is most effective, will prevent any imbalance and help to strengthen the lungs.

Preventatively, the lungs can be kept strong through regular exercise, getting regular acupuncture treatments to keep the body balanced, and by eating a healthy and protective diet that is appropriate for the fall season.

Warming pungent foods such as hot peppers and chilies, onions, garlic, turnip, ginger, and horseradish are excellent to be cooking with this time of year. They function to help disperse energy and mucus that may be stagnant in the lungs. On the contrary, if there are any signs of heat in the lungs (yellow mucus, feeling hot, thirst, sore throat, dryness or night sweats) cooling pungents should be used like cabbage, radish, daikon radish and white peppercorn.

Foods rich in beta-carotene provide excellent protection for the lungs. Examples of these foods are dark green and orange/yellow vegetables - winter squashes, broccoli, carrots, parsley, kale mustard greens, watercress, wheat or barley grass, and various algae. Green foods are so important in our daily nutrition because the chlorophyll in them inhibits viruses, help us to digest protein and fat, and ultimately keeps the lungs and intestines clean. As you can see, all of this bolsters our immune system, which gives us better protection throughout the cold and flu season.

Remember having one or two colds a year is not considered unhealthy. Our bodies need to clean themselves from toxins, and this is one way to achieve that. If you happen to contract a cold, herbs and acupuncture are an excellent way to shorten the illness. A treatment with a prescription of herbs and or supplements can help your immune system fight off the cold without the side effects of antibiotics or other medications (which ultimately compromise immunity). Acupuncture also helps to reduce the severity of symptoms so you remain comfortable, and prevents the illness from progressing into something more serious and chronic.

MORE TIPS FOR FALL

Some little things to remember for the season - always keep a sweatshirt or scarf handy. You never want to get a chill from being underdressed. We say the "wind" can enter in through the back of the neck and can cause a cold. Wear a scarf or hooded sweatshirt to keep the back of the neck protected. If you do catch a chill, disperse it immediately by taking a hot shower or bath or drink some ginger tea (an example of pungent) or a warming drink.

Chinese formulas such as Gan Mao Ling and Yin Qiao can be used for early stage cold/flu. Yin Qiao is more appropriate for strong sore throat and heat signs (feeling warm, sore throat, thirst). Gan Mao Ling is more neutral; where strong heat or cold signs are not obvious.

Keep your immune system strong through proper diet, exercise, emotional well being, rest, preventative herbs/supplements and acupuncture!

SEASONAL HERBAL FORMULA SPECIALS

10% off Gan Mao Ling and Yin Qiao with mention of newsletter.

OFFICE HOURS

My current office hours are Monday and Wednesday 4:00PM to 8:00PM. Occasionally I may be able to take appointments as early as 3:30PM and may stay as late as 8:30PM.

You may contact me at any time with questions or for scheduling appointments at 831/359-6286. I'm also available at my clinic on Monday and Wednesday afternoons at 831/454-9641.

Please be aware of my 24 hour cancellation policy. I will be charging 50% of treatment cost if cancellations are not made 24 hours in advance. Please use my cell number to make cancellations 831-359-6286. Thanks!

Happy Halloween!!!

Please call or email me if you don't want to receive this newsletter (carmenmcintyre@baymoon.com).