Eating for the Season

Chinese food therapy as a practice of increasing energy, boosting immunity, and improving mood — all using natural foods instead of medications.

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“Take a little time every day to notice the contents of your mind. This act of noticing, although very simple, is one of the most powerful steps to bringing about change. What you don’t see you cannot change.” Deepak Chopra
What is eating with the Season?

You might be wondering: What does eating with the season mean and why should I do it? How much work will it take for me to be successful and will there be anything I’ll want to eat? These questions and more will be answered in the next few pages.

I am so excited that you are taking this step to improve your health and wellness with the change of seasons. We take our bodies for granted during these times of transition, not fully realizing what changes our bodies are going through. I especially love living here in the Northern Midwest and couldn’t imagine living anywhere else!

As you have probably noticed, the seasons affect us individually in many different ways, such as emotions with seasonal effective disorder, winter blues, cold and flu, cough, allergies and so on. According to Chinese medicine, each season has its own being, temp, illness, emotion (or “excitement”) — all these elements go beyond just the change in season itself. I am sure you have had a love/hate relationship with summer or winter, or someone you know has a tough time with spring or fall. Each season will play a very different role for each of us.

I personally love fall. I feel strong and have a nurturing desire to care for my family with the excited feel of a fresh start. In winter I am happy and cozy, enjoying the hockey season. During spring I am anxious and worry about the yard work, and in summer I don’t sleep well. When summer hits I get uptight, feeling the pressure to get out and enjoy the summer, yet I just want to lie around and do nothing. I think the sun and warmth gives me a lack motivation as all I want to do is spend time with friends, eating good food, playing on the lake and relaxing.
Your experience might bear some similarities to mine, or it might be completely different. Taking the time to become aware of the signals our bodies give us will tell a whole tale about who we really are.

Knowing this about myself is important in keeping me balanced, because if I just let the season rule me I will be a tan (but out of work) nut bucket just hanging out at home, and nothing will get done! I must keep myself in check so I can play out balance in my life. Same goes for my daily diet.

“To keep the body in good health is a duty, otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.” Buddha

You know the line, “You are what you eat”? This statement is so true. But there’s even more to it: **You are what you eat, when you eat it, and how you eat it.** I am not a fad dieter or even always a super clean eater. But here is what I will say: I eat right for my own body and try to help others eat right for theirs in accordance with the season. Understanding that your food is your fuel and that your fuel may not be the same as your spouse, kids, or other family members is so important. The food that fuels us changes for every season.

This graph below allows you to see how very different you are from your loved ones in terms of what your individual body requires:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Body Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn (Aug. 7th - Nov. 6th)</td>
<td>sadness</td>
<td>pungent</td>
<td>lung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter (Nov. 7th - Feb. 3rd)</td>
<td>fear</td>
<td>salty</td>
<td>kidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring (Feb. 4th - May 4th)</td>
<td>anger</td>
<td>sour</td>
<td>sinews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Summer (starting May 5th)</td>
<td>anxiety</td>
<td>bitter</td>
<td>heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Summer (ending Aug. 6th)</td>
<td>worry</td>
<td>sweet</td>
<td>stomach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is Chinese Food Therapy?

If you eat an excess of sweet food in late summer, or salty food in winter, you can damage the meridians that govern over that emotion, season, and body aspect, and cause the balance of your body to be off. Once the balance of your bodies Qi (also known as life energy, pronounced /chee/) is off, it can cause illness or emotional distress. Each meridian and organ has a Yin & Yang aspect, and by eating the proper food you keep the Yin and Yang balanced. Understand that your body is a very sophisticated organism, and paying close attention to what you need is really important.

Chinese food therapy dates back as early as 2000 BCE. Chinese food therapy is a modality of traditional Chinese medicine, also known as Chinese Nutrition therapy. The yin & yang balance of each person determines how food affects their body. Food Therapy has the same actions of Herbal Medicine when treating disease and illness. As stated earlier, each meridian governs over different organ functions, emotions, and body functions. If these meridians become weak or in excess, we come down with a cold or flu, become prone to winter blues or depression, get injured during activity and so on. By eating for the season or eating for the meridian of the season you will decrease the possibility of becoming ill, and improve your mood as well. I will also give you tips on how to improve your immune system, digestion, and mood with a few foods to add and avoid, as well as foods to pair together.

How does the food we eat affect the meridians?

The property of the food energetically goes to the different meridians. For example, if you have a cough and runny nose, in the Traditional Chinese Medical Theory you have an EPI Wind Cold. Wind cold is expelled via warm spicy foods such as warm ginger tea. Ginger is hot and spicy which will warm and dry the lung meridian and strengthen the large intestines meridian to
increase your immune system, giving you the energy and strength to expel or recover from the illness. Keeping the Qi (energy) of the body, mind, and spirit strong and flowing is the key to a balanced and peaceful life.

Chinese food therapy is not just for when you are ill or your emotions are on a roller coaster; food therapy is important for maintaining health as well. Through Acupuncture, Herbal Medicine, Food therapy and many other modalities you can have a life filled with health, happiness, and peace.

The main rules of Traditional Chinese Food Therapy:

1. **Chew your food slowly** — food passes a long way through the esophagus to the stomach; help your body by chewing your food.

2. **When you are UPSET or exhausted or food does not taste good** — **DON’T EAT.** Your body will not absorb the nutrition of the food and you will upset the balance of your Qi.

3. **DO NOT DRINK when eating.** If you must drink after taking a bite of food you are not chewing your food well. Drinking while eating affects your digestion more than you know.

“Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness.” Edward Smith-Stanley
Fall

Autumn is the season associated with the metal element which is governed by the Lung Meridian. According to traditional Chinese medicine, the metal element governs the mind, organization, order, and stability. As autumn arrives, we tend to turn inward toward our work, our families and our homes during this time. During this season we begin to organize and prepare for the winter season ahead and a time to reflect on our lives.

The Lung Meridian governs over our respiratory system, skin, hair, body fluid metabolism, blood circulation, and immune system. Emotionally, this is the season associated with grief and sadness. It is important to keep the mind clear and “let go” of negative emotions, which can impact health during the autumn. The Lung is a Yin meridian and needs to be nourished strongly during this season to keep balance.
Each Meridian has a corresponding paired Meridian. The lungs and large intestine are in charge of respiration, digestion, and elimination. Lung and large intestine imbalances can cause health conditions with respiratory problems, such as asthma, shortness of breath, frequent colds, and sinus infections, as well as constipation and skin problems. Our emotional self can also be affected by these meridians.

During autumn you want to keep these meridians strong and the Qi moving through. To keep these meridians from having imbalances, here is a food therapy tip and acupressure points to support you.

**Foods to increase during autumn:**


During autumn you want to eat fewer cold, uncooked foods. Switch from salads to soups and steamed vegetables. Eat moist foods that will nourish the Yin of your body. These are the top five Yin nourishing foods: pork, duck, pears, egg yolks, and honey.
Here is a wonderful soup for those autumn days

Squash Carrot Ginger Soup:

2 lbs pureed Winter Squash
1 box of Chicken Stock
4 diced Carrots
2 diced sticks of Celery
1 med. Diced Onion
1 tsp. diced Garlic – or to taste
½ cup of Orange Juice
1 tsp. Nutmeg

This soup will warm the Large intestine meridian and nourish the Lung meridian. The reason these foods balance these meridians is because of the properties. The foods and the different tastes are what balance the corresponding meridians.

Lung Meridian:

Help keep your lungs healthy and strong through Acupuncture and herbal medicine. Going to a regular acupuncture treatment in the first few months of a new season is so helpful to making sure you do not toss your body off balance. Here are the 2 main acupressure points for the Lung and Large Intestine Meridian that you can start now to maintain your health. When doing Acupressure, use your pointer finger and apply pressure to the point for 20 sec for 3 times to stimulate the Qi circulation in the meridian. You can press the points many times a day.
Lung 7 - the most important point on the Lung meridian.

Lung 5 – Will help to soothe coughing

Lung 3 – will help to calm mind and relieve crying due to sadness

Page 5

Lung 11 – Will calm sore throat, press firmly with thumb nail for 20 sec 3 times, and repeat 6 times.

Stimulating along the whole meridian is a wonderful idea as well to keep your lungs strong.

Large intestine Meridian is the support for keeping the Lung meridian function strong.
One of the body’s most important points. Will help to alleviate sneezing, headache, cough, stiff neck and much more – LI 4

Helps to cool body during fevers, and strengthen immune system – LI 11

Sinus headache –LI 20, LI4
Winter

Winter is governed by the water element, the Kidney and Bladder meridians, and affects adrenal glands. The Kidney meridian is the most important meridian in Traditional Chinese Medicine as we consider the Kidney Meridian the source of all energy (Qi) within the body. This meridian stores all of the reserve Qi in the body so that it can be used in times of stress and change, or to heal, prevent illness, and age gracefully. During the winter season it is important to nurture and nourish our Kidney Qi. Winter is when we slow down and conserve our energy for spring.

The Kidney meridian governs over ears, bones, urine, hair, brain, marrow and our body’s over all Qi. The emotional aspect the Kidney governs is Fear and Depression, or what we call Winter Blues. When the Kidney Qi is weak we are more susceptible to feeling these emotions. In winter we are more isolated from friends and family here in the North. Keeping your Qi balanced during winter is very important so you can be strong and ready for spring.

The Urinary Bladder Meridian is the corresponding pair to the Kidney meridian, and is the largest meridian covering most of the body. The Urinary Bladder meridian has points along it that connect to all other meridians; therefore, the UB meridian is important to not just the Kidney but all meridians. Bladder is intimately related to the functions and balance of the autonomous nervous system, because the bladder energy meridian runs along each side of the spinal column.

Winter is a time when many people tend to reduce their activity. If that’s true for you, it’s wise to reduce the amount of food you eat. If you eat foods that
are high in calories and fats without BURNING them, the foods will cause heat in your body and will create heat that affects Large Intestine meridian. This will in turn cause inflammation in the Lung meridian which can cause a cold with cough.

During winter you want to keep these meridians strong and the Qi moving through. To keep these meridians from having imbalances, here are food therapy tips and acupressure points to help keep your body balanced. It is important that you keep active during the winter months. This is not only to avoid weight gain, but also to keep your Qi moving through your body, which keeps you healthy.

The winter foods and acupressure points are mainly the same for autumn. Though during the winter you want to make sure you stay active.

**Foods for winter: (same foods for autumn plus these)**

Asparagus – Bamboo Shoots – Black Fungus – Beef – Chinese Yams – Goose – Leeks

Soups and stews – Root vegetables – Beans – Miso and seaweed
**Chicken brown rice vegetable bone soup:**

1 whole med size chicken

64oz of Chicken stock

32 oz water

7 oz dry brown rice

4 dice large carrots

3 stocks of diced celery

9 oz baby sweet peas

9 oz corn

1 bunch of chopped parsley

1 tsp. basil

3 diced cloves of garlic

1 tsp. chopped oregano

Salt and pepper to taste
Kidney Meridian:

There are many great points on the Kidney meridian, however if you massage the inner ankle where you see the cluster of red dots, you can nourish the kidney meridian at the end of the day.

Sweats at night while sleeping: Kd3, Kd 6, LI4 (Pg6), Lv3 (Pg13)
Sore low back: Kd3, Kd6, Kd7, Kd10

Short of breath – Asthma Symptoms: Kd3, Kd6, Kd7, Kd25, LU7, and LU9

**Urinary Bladder Meridian:**

This meridian runs all over your body. The best suggestion is to get a full body massage during the winter at least once a month.
Keeping your back and neck covered during winter will prevent the urinary bladder meridian from having to use too much Qi to warm your body. When your body is cold your energy becomes low and you're less able to fight off invasion. Keep a jacket on and scarf around your neck to keep the Urinary Bladder meridian protected.

Spring

Spring is governed by the Wood which is the Liver/Gallbladder meridian. According to the philosophy of Traditional Chinese medicine, the liver is responsible for the free coursing of Qi throughout the body. The liver controls the tendons, governs the menstrual cycle, and opens into the eyes. If weak, you may experience possible dizziness or migraines. The emotional aspect of spring is irritability or crabbiness. Spring is the time of rebirth, new growth, and warm air. If the energy of our body is stuck in the spring it can cause not only irritability but spring flu, relapse of chronic health conditions, itchy eyes, and many other conditions. Keeping your energy running free through your body is very important during spring. Acupuncture and food therapy will improve the overall health of your liver meridian as well as treat stress, anger and frustration, which are often associated with the spring season.
Exercise in the spring is a great way to keep your Qi free coursing without having the Liver Meridian do all the work. A jog, bike ride, or, and hiking are fabulous ways to get the heart pumping and Qi moving. Breathing in through your nose and exhaling through your mouth is a sure way to keep your lungs strong and Qi moving. Yoga and Tai Chi are also important for mental health during spring.

In the spring, eating foods green in color, fresh leafy greens, sprouts, and immature cereal grasses will help to improve the liver’s overall function and aid in the movement of Qi. This will keep irritability and stress down. Eating and drinking sour tastes will keep liver energy moving.

The Gallbladder meridian governs over decision making. Spring is the season related to the gall bladder, the yang partner of the liver. The time of day associated with gall bladder Qi is 11pm–1am. To keep the balance of the gallbladder meridian try not to drink alcohol at this time. Drinking alcohol late in the evening will affect tomorrow’s decisions. The emotion governed by the gallbladder is anger, so if you are a tad more than irritated, it isn’t just your liver meridian that is off. Visit with your acupuncturist to help rebalance your body before summer.

**Foods and Drinks to increase:**

Put lemon slices in your drinking water
Use vinegar and olive oil for your salad dressing.
Garnish your sandwich with a slice of dill pickle.
Milk thistle helps protect liver cells from incoming toxins and helps the liver (actual organ) to cleanse itself.


Avoid cooler foods or too much fruit until summer. Keep your feet covered outside until it is at least 70 degrees out for over a week. The cooler earth and uncovered feet can lead to spring colds and flus.

During spring you want to keep these meridians strong and the Qi move through. To keep these meridians from having imbalances below are acupressure points to help keep your body balanced.

**Liver Meridian:**
Calm and irritated self: apply pressure to Lv3 and LI 4 (page 6) for 20 sec 3 x

Headache on TOP of head: Lv2 and LI 4 – if head feels HOT put feet in cold water for 30 sec

Rib side aching pain during period or after period: Lv3, Lv 13, Lv 14, and LI4

Genital Itching, leucorrhea, Herpes out break: Lv5

Dizziness after period, overwork, or stress: Lv3, Lv8, LI 4

**Gallbladder Meridian:**

Overthinking, foggy mind: GB 13, Lv3, LI 4

Headache at base of neck: GB20, GB34, LI4

Chronic Migraines: GB36, GB38, LI4,

Temple headaches GB 41, Lv3, LI4

Headache behind eye: GB 44, 41, Lv3, LI4
Summer

Early summer is associated with the Fire element which is governed by the Heart, Pericardium, and Small intestines Meridian and related to the tongue. The Heart is the 'King' of the organs therefor playing a major role in our health. The Heart meridian is at its highest expression of love when balanced; when weak there are mental instabilities. Long-term memory loss, thinking, emotional agitation, lack of intimacy, decreased intelligence, and decreased ideas are all dominated by the function of the Heart meridian. There may be lack of joy (depression) or an excess of joy (maniac condition). Nervous exhaustion, heartburn and insomnia are other indicators of imbalance in this area. The heart governs over sleep, and spirit. The heart organ, if unbalanced, may have physical symptoms such as palpitation, insomnia, excessive dreaming, and dizziness. The heart meridian governs over circulation of the blood and insures proper assimilation of the beginning breakdown of food in the small intestines.

The Small Intestines meridian governs the digestion, elimination of waste, elbow joint, and the shoulder joints. Shoulder pains and stiff necks are common ailments as a result of blockages in the Small Intestine Meridian.
Emotionally the small intestine meridian supports the heart meridian, helping you to understand experiences and have healthy relationships. Mentally it sorts ideas and thoughts to help you make clear choices. If heart fire sinks into small intestine meridian you may have symptoms of a UTI, cloudy urine, mental restlessness, and low back pain.

Early summer is a drier heat that can cause drying of the lungs creating heat in the body, leading to summer cough and sleeping issues. Summer heat can sneak up on you and zap your energy. While you are outdoors, stay cool.

Summer heat can harm not only the fluids in your body but also your spirit. The spirit is stored in the heart. If the spirit is not nourished due to heat your sleep will be disturbed.

Late summer is the Earth Element and Spleen Stomach meridians. The taste of late summer is sweet and governs over digestion, creator of blood and Qi for the body. It governs the mouth and muscles and its negative emotion is anxiety, its positive emotion is empathy. Nourishing ourselves with healthy food will support us in feeling secure and allow us to enjoy life. The Earth element supports nurturing, abundance, centering, and conservation. The Earth is the balance of the yin and yang, the feminine and the masculine principles and strives to bring harmony, grounding and stability. The stomach meridian represents how well one can digest life and enjoy contentment. This helps to absorb our thoughts and mental attitudes about the Earth and helps to determine how our body acts. Late summer (late August), is warmer and more damp with humidity. The symptoms include abdominal pains, vomiting, intestinal spasms, diarrhea, lethargy, aching joints, and heaviness in the chest. Keep the spleen meridian strong and healthy. If it is weak there are digestive issues, anxiety, worry, overthinking, weight gain, and many other symptoms.

During the summer season drink plenty of water and avoid sugar filled drinks and foods. However, watermelon juice and its seeds will replenish you and refresh your taste buds. In the late summer avoid excess cold consumption...
of liquor, sweet, and greasy foods so as not to damage your digestion before autumn. To ensure that you have a fun, enjoyable, well-rested summer, here are food and acupressure suggestions.

(Note: If you are experiencing palpitations, check with your MD. If all is well, see a licensed acupuncturist for your symptoms. If you are having sleep issues, acupuncture and herbal medicine are a natural non-addictive way to restore balance and your sleep with no side effects.)

Foods for early summer to help clear heat:


Late summer (include the above list along with this)


Spices to strengthen Spleen & Stomach Meridian: black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger,

To beat the heat, dehydration, heatstroke and a feeling of lethargy try Congee, a rice based recipe. Congee may be served warm or cool, you may consume 3 to 4 times a week.
**Beat the HEAT Congee:**

Wash rice and mung beans.

Soak the mung beans for about two hours

Boil the mung beans on high for 30 mins until soft. Add rice to the boiling water & boil on medium for about 20 minutes. Turn off the heat and add honey to sweeten, pears, dates, and tofu. Stir the congee while boiling to avoid sticking.

**Insomnia Congee:**

Mulberry Apricot congee:

Mung beans soak for two hours,

6 cups of water bring to boil

2 cups of pomegranate juice

Boil mung beans on high for 30 min (make mung beans are soften)

Rice – add to mung beans and boil at med for 20 min

Mulberry clean cut off stems slice and add for last 5 to 10 mins of cooking

Apricots add last 5 mins or after congee have cooled

Sprinkle brown sugar to taste.
**Help my Tummy:**

Ginger tea (sliced fresh ginger root)

1 cup of warm water

During summer you want to keep these meridians strong and the Qi move through. To keep these meridians from having imbalances her are food therapy tip and acupressure points to help keep your body balanced.

**Heart Meridian:**

![Heart Meridian Image]

- **Insomnia:** Ht7, Kd3, Lv3, Li 4
- **Palpations:** Ht7, Pc6, Pc4,
- **Mental restless:** Ht8 press firmly with thumb nail
- **Mouth ulcers:** Ht6, Ht7, Ht8, Kd6
- **Nausea:** Pc6, St36
Pericardium Meridian

Nausea Pc6 (2 inches from the crease of the wrist)

Small Intestines Meridian:

Stiff Neck: SI 3
Spleen Meridian:

Poor appetite: Sp3, Sp4, St36

Heaviness after eating: Sp4, Sp6, Sp9, St36, Pc6

Fullness in abdomen w/ pain and nausea: Sp6, Sp9, St25, St36, Lv13

Digestive conditions are better treated with Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine.
Stomach Meridian:

All Stomach issues nausea, loose stool, constipation – St25, ST36, and St37
Worry or Overthinking – St36, St40, GB13

Here are foods to help with other conditions:


**Dysmenorrhea (painful periods)**: Brown sugar – Dates – Chicken eggs – Chinese Chives – Rose flower – Orange – Chinese hawthorn


**Insufficient Milk Production (hypogalactia)**: Chicken – Eggs – Pigs trotter – Carp – Peanuts – Mushrooms – Figs – Orange peel – Cantonese Orange – Jasmine


These foods suggestions are for to help your body during the different season and to prevent health issues. Know that there are many other nutritious foods that are needed for a balanced diet. If you are in need of more information on a healthy diet and food planning I have resources on my blog and website for you. Please email me any question, thoughts, or concerns you have to: Tcmwell@yahoo.com

Thank you for enjoying my EBook, for taking the time to learn about what you can do to Eat for the Season, I have a little FREE GIFT for you:

1 complementary STRESS reducing treatment:

You will feel like a 10 – in 20 mins, a Mini vacations to melt away the stress of your day!

For more information visit my website: www.tcmwellnessclinic.com

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Images www.all-about-acupuncture.com

“To insure good health: eat lightly, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness, and maintain an interest in life.” William Londen