

Peak Digestion Linked to Balanced Emotions



For thousands of years, Chinese medicine has taught that emotions have a direct impact on digestion. Free flow of emotions leads to energetic balance and optimal health. Alternatively, emotional and mental disturbance inhibits and stagnates the flow of qi (vital energy), resulting in pain and internal organ dysfunction. Balanced emotional state combined with healthy digestion lies at the root of vitality

according to the ancient Law of the Five Elements. Chinese medicine treatments to restore energetic balance include acupuncture, acupressure, herbal therapy, dietary recommendations, tui na massage and qigong exercises.

In her book, *Insights of a Senior Acupuncturist*, Miriam Lee writes, "When the stomach and spleen, the central jiao, are attacked by emotion, pure qi cannot ascend to the brain and the evil qi, the waste, cannot descend. It will remain stuck in the stomach."

To address this, Lee developed an acupuncture prescription stemming from the four great masters of the Jin-Yuan dynasties that replenishes qi flow throughout the body, boosts stomach and spleen qi, calms liver qi to reduce anger, strengthens the colon to detoxify the body and cleanses kidney qi, enabling oxygen flow to the brain. Furthermore, it balances the yin and yang aspects of the body, balancing the inner world with the outside. This acupuncture prescription is also used for depression, allergies, nervous disorders, weight issues, diabetes, gastritis, irritable bowel syndrome and chronic fatigue. Healthy food choices and lifestyle habits, along with positive relationship choices, are also critical in order to maintain maximum qi flow and balanced emotions.

Source: Shoshanna Katzman, MS, LAc, director of the Red Bank Acupuncture and Wellness Center, in Shrewsbury. For more information, visit Healing4u.com.

Produce Banishes the Blues



New research from New Zealand's University of Otago shows that consuming more whole fruits and vegetables increases peacefulness, happiness and energy in one's daily life. Scientists discovered the strong relationship to be particularly apparent in countering winter blues.

A total of 281 college-age students filled out an online food diary and mood survey for 21 consecutive days. Results showed that eating fruits and vegetables one day led to improvements in positive mood the next day, regardless of other key factors, such as body mass index. Other types of food did not produce the same uplifting effect.

"After further analysis, we demonstrated that young people would need to consume approximately seven to eight total servings of fruits and vegetables per day to notice a meaningful positive change," says Tamlin Conner, Ph.D., with the university's department of psychology. "One serving of fruit or vegetables is approximately the size that could fit in our palm, or half a cup." Study co-author Bonnie White suggests that this can be accomplished by having vegetables comprise half of the plate at each meal and snacking on whole fruit like apples.

The American Psychiatric Association acknowledges that seasonal affective disorder (SAD) affects, at least mildly, as many as 20 percent of Americans.

The Healing Power of Essential Oils

The introduction of essential oils into popular culture and modern medicine has had a profound effect on how individuals view health, vitality and wellness. Therapeutic-grade essential oils can improve overall health and well-being; ease pain, depression and stress; increase energy and stamina; restore a calm and balanced mood; enhance mental focus; and keep the cold or flu at bay.



The concept of using plant oils to address health concerns may seem strange, but many modern pharmaceuticals can be traced back to plant elements. Aromatherapy was used by most ancient civilizations and is reputed to be at least 6,000 years old.

An essential oil is a fluid that is distilled from the leaves, stems, flowers, bark, roots or other elements of a plant. This is usually done by steam or water distillation. Unlike common cooking oils, essential oils do not feel oily. Most are clear, but some oils such as patchouli, orange and lemongrass, are amber or yellow in color.

Today, essential oils can be purchased over the counter for use by individuals and families to enhance health and well-being. For individuals that have never tried essential oils, lavender is a good place to start. Often considered the gateway oil, first-time lavender users enjoy the relaxing and calming effects of this oil so much that they are likely to try other essential oils after using it.

Therapeutic-grade oils are recommended because they are usually pure and undiluted. Always check with a doctor before trying a new healthcare treatment.

Source: DeeAnna Nagel, LPC and co-founder of the *Online Therapy Institute*, maintains a private practice in Atlantic Highlands. For more information, visit JerseyShoreTherapy.com.



THE TOXIC SIDE OF TYLENOL

As the evidence of the harmful effects of Tylenol increases, there is a growing call for it to be removed from the market. Its active ingredient, acetaminophen, once thought to be an effective and safe pain reliever for adults and children, turns out to have dangerous effects.

A related study by University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center researchers leads with the fact that each year, acetaminophen causes more than 100,000 calls to poison control centers, 50,000 emergency room visits, 26,000 hospitalizations and more than 450 deaths from liver failure. The U.S. Acute Liver Failure Study implicates acetaminophen poisoning in nearly half of all cases of acute liver failure in this country. When taken with alcohol or without food, the effects on the liver are multiplied.

Doctor of Naturopathy Michael Murray, of Phoenix, Arizona, reports in *GreenMedInfo.com* that regular use of acetaminophen is linked to a higher likelihood of asthma, infertility and hearing loss, especially in men under 50. Last summer, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a warning linking acetaminophen use to three rare and sometimes fatal skin conditions.

"Can you imagine if the side effects and risks associated with acetaminophen were associated with a dietary supplement?" opines Murray. "It would be yanked from the market immediately."

Mammograms Carry Cancer Risk

There is growing evidence that mammograms, which are the primary screening tool for breast cancer, may cause it. Scientists have long known that radiation causes cancer, and now research published in the *British Journal of Radiobiology* reports that the so-called "low-energy X-rays" used in mammography are four to six times more likely to cause breast cancer than conventional high-energy X-rays because the low-energy variety causes more mutational damage to cells.

Mammograms led to a 30 percent rate of over-diagnosis and overtreatment, according to a study published in the *Cochrane Review*. Researchers wrote in the study, "This means that for every 2,000 women invited for screening throughout 10 years, one will have her life prolonged and 10 healthy women, who would not have been diagnosed if there had not been screening, will be treated unnecessarily. Furthermore, more than 200 women will experience important psychological distress for many months because of false positive findings."

Many women and functional medicine doctors are now choosing non-invasive and radiation-free annual thermograms as a safer alternative. Those at high risk for breast cancer may choose to do periodic MRI screenings, a recommendation supported by research at Britain's University Hospitals Birmingham.



More Bok Choy, Less Ice Cream Boosts Breast Health



Chowing down on cruciferous veggies reduces the risk of recurring breast cancer, say Vanderbilt University researchers, while consuming too many high-fat dairy products produces an opposite effect, according to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

The paper on veggies presented at the American Association for Cancer Research showed that the more cruciferous vegetables a woman ate in the first two years after her breast cancer diagnosis, the lower was her risk of the cancer returning or death from the original cancer. Eating broccoli, cauliflower, bok choy and cabbage worked to reduce the rate of recurring breast cancer by 35 percent and the risk of death in the following nine years by 62 percent.

On the other side of the coin, the NCI study showed that women treated for early stage breast cancer that regularly ate one or more servings of high-fat milk, cheese, yogurt or ice cream increased their risk of dying of breast cancer by 44 percent and of earlier death from all causes by 64 percent.

VITAMIN C HALVES COLDS IN ATHLETES

Taking vitamin C before engaging in physically demanding activities helps keep colds away for people that are heavy exercisers, say Finnish researchers at the University of Helsinki. While their meta-study showed that non-exercisers that took vitamin C daily gained little or no protection from colds, the story for marathoners, competitive skiers and soldiers on subarctic assignments was much different. The study, published in the *Cochrane Review*, found that the 598 heavy exercisers cut their risk of colds in half.

