



Chinese Medicine: A Holistic Process of Healing

by Shoshanna Katzman

Chinese medicine is a broad-spectrum approach involving life's physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and energetic components. The primary goal is to establish health through restoration and maintenance of free flowing energy throughout the body. It focuses on resolving the root cause of illness, together with addressing presenting symptoms. As a preventative measure, it improves upon and maintains good health. As a holistic approach to wellness, Chinese medicine views and treats a person as a whole to achieve balance, vibrant energy, peace, and strong will for life and living.

For best results, commitment to lifestyle changes and attitude is a basic requirement. Chinese medicine provides insight as to the reasoning behind this need, specific to each person's body landscape. Results can be quick, other times it requires a longer period for body healing as release of unwanted symptoms depends on many variables. Traditionally, it takes one month of treatment for every year an issue has existed. Patience is a must during the healing process, as each person heals in his or her own way and in one's own time.

Exogenous factors are often a root cause of disease, influences that cause damage from the outside. For example, a cold wind penetrates the body leading to cough, runny nose, chills, and body ache. This is prevented through a strong defense system, protective clothing, and avoiding excessive exposure to wind and cold. An exogenous factor can be both the root cause and an aggravating factor of an energetic imbalance, such

as someone diagnosed with "Excess Spleen Dampness," with abdominal bloating and lethargy caused and at the same time aggravated by dwelling in a cold damp house.

In addition to environmental adjustments, avoiding foods leading to cold and dampness is helpful, meaning less salads, ice in drinks, and sushi. Reduction of sugar, alcohol, caffeine, or gluten is indicated for many individuals. Maintaining proper pH is also important, which means consumption of a healthy balance of acidic and alkalizing foods and drinks. This goes along with keeping yin yang balance, whereby yin foods are more cold and wet and yang foods are more warm and dry. It is important to consult a practitioner who is schooled properly, as each person needs a different nutritional approach based on their particular constitution.

Endogenous factors are also considered to be a root cause of disease, influences that cause damage from the inside. This includes the seven emotions of fear and fright, sadness and grief, elation, anger, and worry. It is normal and healthy for all of these emotions to exist on a regular basis. However, lead to deleterious effects when arising suddenly with great force, or when excessive or insufficient over an extended period of time. They each affect how energy flows and have direct impact on vital organ health. For example, excessive grief and sadness weakens the lung and leads to respiratory issues. And repressed anger injures the energetics of the liver leading to energy depletion, chest congestion, digestive weakness, depression, bitter taste in mouth, and gynecological or

reproductive issues. Chinese medicine treatments help balance emotions by increasing flow of qi (vital energy) and blood, strengthening of endocrine function, boosting of energetic immunity, and balancing of yin and yang.

Shifts in personal interactions may also help establish more even and balanced emotions. This may involve taking distance from negative people, learning to say no when appropriate, and the forming of a non-physical "shield of protection" around oneself. This helps one to stop taking comments from others too personally. Moreover, it helps with staying mindful to not project one's own issues onto another individual. Furthermore, adjustments in self-talk are essential, meaning releasing internal judgement and criticism. Working on self is a valuable lesson, one that becomes a life time of learning about more kind, accepting, and supportive behavior toward self and others. And it is absolutely astounding how small adjustments make big changes within this emotional arena.

These recommendations just "scratch the surface" in terms of the many components of the Chinese medicine holistic paradigm. The important thing to remember is that there are alternative ways to support your path to healing. Whichever direction chosen; be certain it is with a qualified professional that has your whole being as a priority in the care of your health.

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