

Nourishing Your Source of Life

by Shoshanna Katzman



Upon looking through the lens of Chinese medicine wisdom we learn that maintaining balance and harmony of the spleen organ system is key to digestive health. The spleen which is traditionally said to include the pancreas contains a set of multifaceted functions comprised of physical, energetic, psychological, and spiritual components. Quite different from the Western medical model which views vital organs as merely physical units.

The Chinese medicine view of the spleen as the primary organ of digestion and “minister of the granary” means that it rules transformation and transportation of food and drink. Energetic substances are extracted from the food and drink and eventually synthesized and transformed into blood and qi (vital energy). From here, it is distributed as a form of nourishment throughout the body.

The spleen is thus revered as the “source of life” and “root of postnatal qi”.

Spleen health and healing is achieved by rectifying imbalance through restoring qi flow throughout its organ system and associated meridian (energetic) pathway. The ancient paradigm of Chinese medicine relies on modalities such as acupuncture, Chinese herbology, Chinese dietary therapy, Tuina massage, and exercises such as Taiji and Qigong to restore and maintain harmonious structure and function of this and other vital organ systems of the body. This is primarily accomplished through releasing energetic blockages and/or building energy where deficient.



The more recent term “gut-brain connection” has forever been at the root of Chinese medicine diagnosis and treatment as digestive issues have always viewed emotional imbalance as an underlying root cause of digestive issues.

A “healthy and happy spleen” is sustained through ingesting nutritious food and drink in proper amounts. Avoid eating too many cold raw foods such as salads as they contribute to a “damp spleen” condition. Too many cold drinks – especially those containing ice – damage the spleen as do greasy and overly sweet foods. Instead, choose a diet predominantly comprised of warming foods and drinks such as soups, stews, and broths. They are easier to digest so the spleen loves them!

At mealtime, keep in mind that overeating overworks the spleen. In the same token, bombarding the spleen with too much

information overworks its energies. This includes watching too much television or working excessively on the computer.

Drinking fluids (such as water) at least a half hour before or after meals is better for the spleen rather than during a meal.

Set aside time for meals and make them a mindful experience. Focus on the color, texture, and tastes of food as you prepare to consume them. Keep in mind that they will soon transition into “food qi” that will nourish your mind, body, and spirit. And be sure to chew food slowly and completely as it aids the spleen digestive function and allows food to be more easily absorbed. Remember that yellow or orange foods such as squash and sweet potatoes nourish the spleen according to the Five Elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, water, wood) which correlates it with stability of the earth and the color yellow. Naturally sweet vegetables like cooked onions, carrots,

and parsnips benefit the spleen as do glutinous rice and lean chicken meat.

This most certainly provides you with some “food for thought” and several ways of ensuring that your spleen is balanced – providing you with an abundant source of life. Always remember that making small changes in daily life and food choices have big implications for maximizing your health and healing. There is no better time than now to begin maximizing the energetics of your spleen!



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Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. has been director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center (www.healing4u.com) for 35 years in Shrewsbury, NJ providing acupuncture, Chinese herbal consultation along with Taiji and Qigong private and group classes. She is the author of “Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy”, co-author of “Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness” and “Center of Power: Life Mastery through Taiji” a comprehensive online curriculum (www.yourcenterofpower.com). For more information call or text 732.758.1800.

News Briefs



Learn the Magical Movements of Taiji (Tai Chi)



Two Rivers Academy of Taiji & Qigong is pleased to announce a new Beginner Taiji Class offered weekly by Shoshanna Katzman on Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30am. Classes are held at Red Bank Acupuncture Center in Shrewsbury.

Taiji is a gentle, yet powerful Chinese way of movement that teaches

one to live in harmony with nature. It is a meditation through movement, practiced with full body relaxation and focused mental concentration.

This ancient exercise is excellent for stress reduction and invigorates flow of qi (vital energy) and blood throughout the body. With its circular movements, rhythmic breathing, and flowing postures, Taiji allows the full potential within each person to blossom. It was developed in China over 4,000 years ago and practiced widely today to promote physical fitness, vibrant health, and longevity.

Through daily practice, Taiji reconnects the mind to the body, the conscious to the subconscious, and the individual to their environment. It's flowing patterns of movements are best performed slowly while integrating the physical and energetic aspects of being.

Shoshanna Katzman, M.S., L.Ac. has practiced Guang Ping Yang Style Taiji for fifty years and teaches the form in its original style. For more information call/text 732.758.1800 or visit yourcenterofpower.com to discover Shoshanna's comprehensive Taiji curriculum.

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