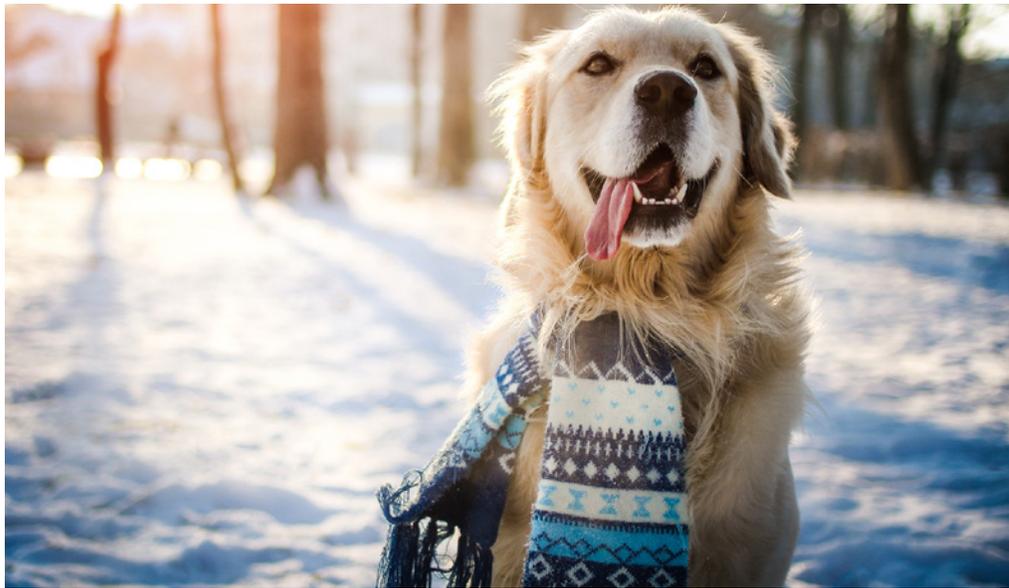


Health WellNews

WINTER has arrived...

Strengthen Your Immune System with TCM

It's that time of year again...the weather is getting colder, the leaves have fallen off the trees and people are beginning to trickle into the office with autumn colds and allergies. As an acupuncturist, I have to say I rarely get sick. I have lots of tools and tricks in my bag to stay healthy during cold season, and I'm happy to share some of them with you!



You know how your mom always made you wear a scarf when you were a kid, telling you that you'd catch a cold if you didn't? I used to think she was just saying that, but as it turns out, there was something to it after all! In the world of Chinese medicine, there is an area at the back of the neck which can absorb wind and cold, allowing it to permeate into your system and creating an ideal situation to catch an actual cold. By keeping this area warm and covered, you are putting up a shield between yourself and this invading wind, increasing your chances of avoiding colds.

Since we acupuncturists view cold as an entity that can migrate into your system, adding warm foods into your diet can help to balance out that cold, keeping you healthy or speeding up your recovery once a cold has set in. Eating chicken soup to ward off illness isn't just a fallacy; the temperature of the soup is helpful, but there are also lots of "warm" ingredients within the soup. Every food has an energetic quality, and warm spicy foods balance out excess cold in the system. Most good chicken soup has garlic, pepper and other spices that are considered "warm" in TCM.

Adding spicy foods into your diet when cold season hits is a way to protect yourself from succumbing to the sniffles. Whenever I begin to feel a cold coming on, I sauté slices of ginger with a little butter or oil, and add it to a tea made with lemon, honey, cinnamon, clove and a dash of cayenne. I let the ginger soften as I drink the tea, and then eat the ginger. This never fails to get me feeling healthy again, if I drink it before the cold settles into my system. It's also delicious!

Staying warm and eating the right foods are two ways to stay healthy, and another is acupuncture. If you don't have access to your acupuncturist, the next best thing is to utilize some acupressure points to crank up your immune system. If you slide your finger down the side of your thumb, you will hit a bone just below the wrist crease. Keep sliding down about an inch or so, and press hard while feeling for a tender spot. This is Lung 7, which is a powerful point to build up the energy of the lung, which boosts the immunity. Another great immunity point is Stomach 36. This point is located approximately four fingers down from the bottom of the knee cap, along the outer boundary of the shin bone. This point boosts the energy of the entire body, so massaging it will help to keep your "Wei Qi" up. This Wei Qi is your defensive energy, which creates a barrier between yourself and pathogens that cause harm. In Western terminology, it would be the equivalent of the immune system. Pressing on both of these points will allow you to tap into the positive effects of acupuncture, minus the needles.

Meridian Point For Winter

Stomach 36 can easily be said to be the number one acupuncture point in the body. This point is named Zu San Li in Chinese, which can be translated to mean leg three measure. This name describes its location below the knee on the outer side of the shin bone. Other alternative names for this influential point are Lower Sea of Qi, Ghost Evil and Lower Mound.



Although it is located on the leg, this point is the command point of the abdomen. Because of this function, Stomach 36 can be used for all digestive problems, including constipation, food stagnation, stomach pain, diarrhea, indigestion, vomiting, hiccups and gastroenteritis.

The spleen and stomach organs in Chinese medicine are the source of post-natal Qi, this Qi, which is acquired after we are born. Because of this, Stomach 36 is a very tonifying and energy-building point. It can help with weakness and dizziness, as well as promoting longevity, especially when combined with moxibustion (the burning of the herb moxa on acupuncture points). Wei Qi is the defensive Qi in the body and can be linked to the immune system and Stomach 36 can help build Wei Qi to defend against illness.

Locally, Stomach 36 can be used for edema and swelling in the leg, pain in the leg, atrophy of the lower limbs, varicose veins and just promoting good circulation. Stomach 36 helps pass urinary and gall stones, promotes lactation, reduces hypertension and helps with difficult urination and incontinence.

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Health WellNews

WINTER has arrived...

Exploring the 24 Hour Qi Clock

Most people are familiar with the terms diurnal and nocturnal. Diurnal means active during the daytime, while nocturnal means active during the nighttime. Together the two make up a 24-hour cycle known as a day. But, in Traditional Chinese Medicine, this 24-hour cycle is viewed as much more than just a day in the life. The 24 hours of the day are viewed as increments of time and every two-hour section is associated with a specific energetic meridian that runs through the body. This is known as the Qi clock.

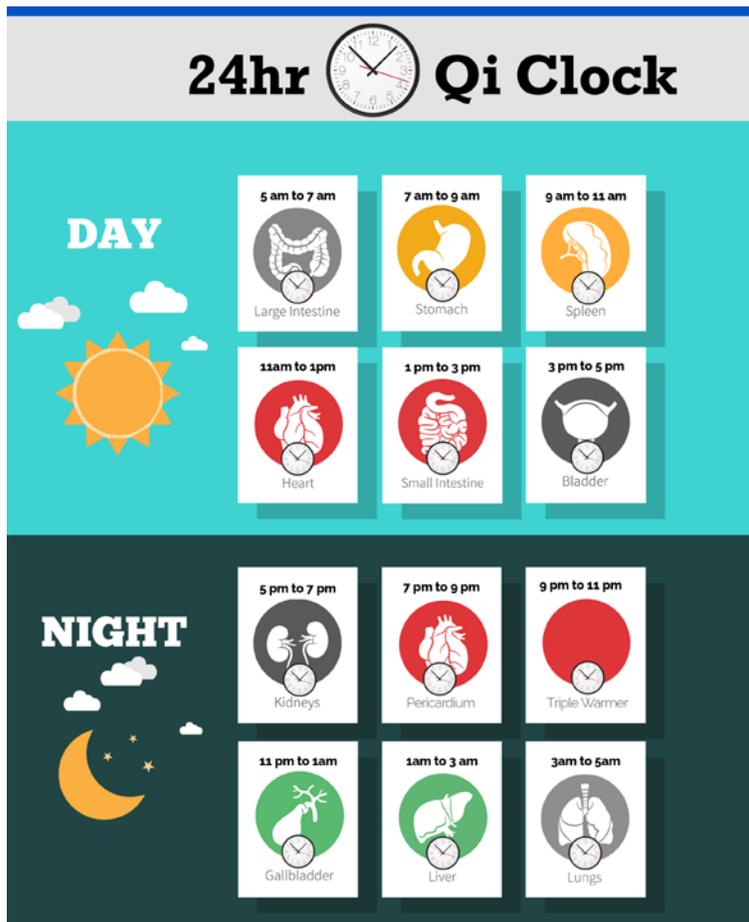
Do you wake up every night or every morning about the same time? Have you ever wondered why? Some people call that an internal clock. In Chinese medicine, this gives a much deeper look into how the body functions though. Chinese medical theory divides the body based upon the 12 energetic meridians. Each of the meridians is assigned a two-hour time slot. For example, the liver meridian is associated with the hours of 1 a.m. to 3 a.m. If you wake up during this time frame, then there is an issue with your liver meridian. So knowing this information can be very important to an acupuncturist/Chinese medicine practitioner.

During a 24-hour period, your energy or Qi (pronounced “chee”) moves through the organ systems in two-hour intervals. Qi draws inward to help restore the body between the hours of 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. The liver cleanses the blood and performs other functions, such as getting the blood ready to travel outward into the rest of the body. Over the next 12 hours, Qi cycles through the organs that assimilate, digest and eliminate food through the body or our diurnal organs. By mid-afternoon, the body begins to slow down again in preparation for the nocturnal phase. The nocturnal phase is all about restoring and maintaining. So when one organ system is at its peak, its counterpart, on the opposite side of the clock is at its lowest point. An example is 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., which are the hours of the stomach. This is when the stomach is at its peak and also why it is recommended to eat a big breakfast. On the opposite side of the clock lies the pericardium, which is associated with the pituitary, hypothalamus and reproductive organs. The pericardium is at its weakest point between the hours of 7 a.m. and 9 a.m.

Here's a brief summary of the 24 hour Qi cycle:

- 3 a.m. to 5 a.m. is Lung time
- 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. is Large Intestine time
- 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. is Stomach time
- 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. is Spleen time
- 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. is Heart time
- 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. is Small Intestine time
- 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. is Urinary Bladder time
- 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. is Kidney time
- 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. is Pericardium time
- 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. is Triple Burner time
(associated with the thyroid and adrenals)
- 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. is Gall Bladder time
- 1 a.m. to 3 a.m. is Liver time

So if you have recurring problems at the same time every day, then there is a good chance that the organ/meridian associated with that time is in distress. This is why Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners ask so many questions and also why they look at the body as a whole instead of just one particular organ. By understanding that every organ/energetic meridian has a maintenance schedule to keep daily, you can then treat your body properly so you achieve the ultimate health and well-being and acupuncture can help you achieve that goal. Acupuncturists treat the body based on things like your symptomology, your pulses, your tongue and the 24-hour Qi clock indications you exhibit. The goal is to bring the body back into balance and knowing when the meridians are at their peaks and valleys is a great place to begin.



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Health WellNews

WINTER has arrived...

Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Season of Winter

The ancient Chinese developed a system of medicine thousands of years ago and that system is still used around the world today. This system incorporates more than just medicine though. Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners also educate their patients on how the seasons affect the body and ways to stay healthy. This will ultimately lead to a long, healthy life.

Traditional Chinese Medicine teaches that humans should live in harmony with the seasons. According to TCM there are five seasons – winter, spring, summer, late summer and fall. Each season has many associations that help us change our habits allowing for a more balanced mind and body. When these systems were being developed, people were living in harmony with nature. People rose with the sun, ate what was available during the different seasons and they were much more aware of their natural environment. What to wear, when to wake up, when to go to sleep and what activities to engage in were all dependent on the weather and the environment. Because of this, people were capable of staying healthy throughout the year and their immune and organ systems were strong enough to ward off disease.

In this system, the season of winter is a time of repair and rejuvenation. Winter is associated with the kidneys, which hold the body's fundamental energies. Harmonizing with the seasons will help the body stay healthy and prepared for each succeeding season. Rest is important for revitalizing the kidneys and this is why some animals hibernate during the winter months. Winter is also a really good time to turn inward and do some reflection. This is why practices like tai chi, qi gong and yoga can be very beneficial during the

winter season. These practices help us connect to our inner selves, while supporting the kidney energy. These practices help relax the mind and calm our emotions.

Winter is also associated with ears in this system. Our ability to hear is related to the health of our kidneys. The stillness of the winter months allows us to hear the world more clearly and forces us to slow down. The bones are also associated with winter, which means that it is important to tonify and heal any orthopedic problems during these months.

There are many foods that are beneficial to eat during the winter season. These foods should be the ones that naturally grow during this season. Food items like squash, potatoes, root vegetables, winter greens, cabbage, carrots, apples, pears and mushrooms are all examples of things that should be incorporated into the daily diet during the winter months. Also warming foods such as soups and bone broth are highly recommended. There are foods that specifically target and nourish the kidneys too. These foods include black beans, kidney beans, lamb, walnuts, chicken, dark leafy greens and black sesame seeds. It is recommended to cook items for longer periods of time, on lower heat and with less water, as the food should be warming as well as nourishing.

When we align ourselves with the natural processes of life and the seasons, our bodies will adjust and perform optimally, just as they are intended to. This is how we are supposed to live and can quite possibly be why there is so much more disease now than in the past. So to be the healthiest you possible, learning to take cues from the seasons might just be the best suggestion ever.



3 Indicators You Need a Tune-Up

Here is a list of three signs indicating you should immediately come in for an acupuncture tune-up. Both your body and mind will thank you for getting tuned up as soon as possible.

1 Chronic Back and Neck Pain

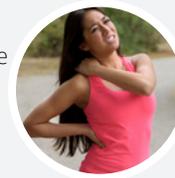
If you experience chronic back and neck pain, it is highly recommended to come in and receive acupuncture. Back pain is one of the leading reasons people seek out acupuncture. So if your neck or back are bothering you, it is time you sought out acupuncture.

2 Trouble Sleeping

Acupuncture is a great cure for those who have trouble sleeping. If you experience restlessness, tiredness or overall fatigue you should try acupuncture. Acupuncture improves the body's functions and promotes overall health due to the needling of specific acupuncture points on the body. Try acupuncture to improve the sleep problems you are currently experiencing.

3 Digestive Problems

A healthy digestive system is important to living an active, healthy and worry-free lifestyle. In order to maintain a high-functioning digestive system it is important that the whole body has a smooth and consistent flow of energy. Acupuncture will help regulate this and promote a smooth flow throughout the entire body, in turn alleviating the symptoms of poor digestive function.



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Health WellNews

WINTER has arrived...

Acupuncture Points You Should Try This Winter

When the weather becomes cold, the snowflakes begin to fall and the days grow shorter, the signs that winter has finally arrived. For many, winter means retreating to warmer areas of the world and taking that long awaited vacation. However, many others don't have the luxury of taking a break or they live in areas where the weather can be brutal. Regardless of where one lives, there are numerous ways to stay healthy during the cold winter months.



Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine can provide wellness throughout the season of winter. And if you are unable to actually get treatments by a licensed acupuncturist, you can still get the benefits of several different acupressure points. There are points that boost immunity, help stop a cough, reduce a fever and increase overall longevity. Applying pressure to these various points is a great way to stay healthy and well.

One of the best immune-boosting points is known as Large Intestine 11. It is located on the large intestine energetic pathway that runs up the arm and ends near the nose. Large intestine 11 can be located by flexing the arm. The point is located at the lateral or outer end of the crease created by the bending of the arm. Applying pressure to this point can reduce a fever, boost overall immunity and decrease inflammation.



Please consult with a qualified acupuncturist before pressing any acupressure point

Lung 7 is another point located on the arm that will help during the winter months. Lung 7 is located on the medial (inner) side of the arm, about one and a half inches from the wrist crease, on the bony protuberance known as the styloid process. This point is great for relieving a runny nose, body aches, chills, fever, sneezing, coughing and a sore throat. It can also be pressed to boost the energy of the lung energetic meridian to help prevent getting sick.

The next point is known as the longevity point in TCM. Stomach 36 is located on the lateral side of the lower leg, about four finger-breadths from the lower border of the patella or kneecap. This point is considered an overall energy and immune-boosting point. It can help with digestive issues, such as diarrhea, which are sometimes associated with a cold or the flu.

Spleen 6 is another excellent point to utilize. This point is located on the medial (inner) side of the lower leg, approximately four finger-breadths above the top edge of the malleolus or ankle bone. This point is

specifically used to tonify or boost the digestive system. As science has discovered, most of our immunity begins in the gut. So having a healthy gut, means having a strong immune system.

Lastly, is a point located between the eyebrows known as Yin Tang. This point is wonderful for relieving sinus pressure, helping with watery eyes and decreasing stress, which may allow for better sleep. And everybody knows quality sleep is vital when fighting a cold or trying to prevent one.

Utilization of these various points throughout the winter months can help everybody stay healthy and avoid the common cold or the flu. So get to pressing and here's to your health!

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