Ask a Licensed Practitioner:

Would you like answers to your medical questions from a traditional Chinese Medicine perspective?

Send our practitioners your questions! Yo San Clinic has four licensed practitioners on staff available to see patients 6 days a week. Their specialties include: pain, orthopedics, gynecology, urology, internal medicine and facial rejuvenation. For biographical information, please click here.

If you would like your question answered by a specific practitioner, please specify that in your request. Send your inquiries to: clinicmanager@yosan.edu

We look forward to hearing from you!

Welcome Spring Salad

Ingredients:
1 small bunch of Kale
1 cup of seaweed
1/2 cup of cooked amaranth
1/2 grapefruit

Dressing:
1/2 Cup Apple Cider Vinegar
1/2 Lime
1 tsp Honey
A small handful of fennel leaves

Spring welcomes with it new growth, new beginnings, and reinvigoration of yang energy. Spring invites the motivating force of the liver to move us into and
through the season. On the flip side of new activities and new energy are more demands and potentially more stress. This simple recipe can help soothe and move the qi of the liver to ensure spring invites productivity rather than stress.

Start by creating the dressing. Apple cider vinegar is great qi mover. Mix in the lime and the warming fennel. Add a tsp of honey to harmonize the liver. Mix well.

Take a small bunch of kale and mix it in a bowl with seaweed. Pour the dressing onto the kale and seaweed and rub it into the leaves. Softening the leaves with vinegar rub will make it easier to digest. Once the kale is more flexible than firm, add a cup of amaranth and half of a grapefruit, diced. Toss and mix to your liking and enjoy. The balanced temperature of this dish will protect the spleen and stomach's warmth while not agitating the liver. If your spleen needs a boost you can saute the kale and seaweed in the dressing and add other spleen tonifying foods such as cooked yams or squash.

Happy spring!

### Spring Time

**By Sherra Cunningham**

Thousands of years ago Chinese Medicine theorists developed ideas about human physiology, disease patterns and treatment by observing and experiencing Nature. One important model called the Five Element theory views physiological processes as reflections of the larger ecological processes of nature. Each element (Water, Wood, Fire, Earth and Metal) possesses qi or energy which is associated with everything from stages of development and seasons of the year to colors, temperatures, flavors.
actions, tissues, organs and emotions. (Maciocia, p26). Everything is moving in continuous cycles acting on each other in various capacities to either support or disrupt the balance that sustains life.

The goal of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is to recognize these patterns and to utilize the available energy to create a balanced state in patients. Acupuncture, herbs, nutrition, exercise and lifestyle advice are important tools TCM practitioners use to do this. It is a holistic approach which focuses on each unique individual while paying attention to the environment the patient creates and inhabits both physically and emotionally.

“One of the most typical aspects of Chinese medicine is the common resonance among phenomena in nature and in the human body.”(Maciocia, p25). Spring has begun in the Western hemisphere. The Earth is alive with young flexible plants growing upward and outward bending easily to spring winds. Earth energy is regenerating from the dark quiet resting Yin of winter into the bright Yang movement and action of spring and summer. Five Element theory associates this season with the Wood element.

Organ correspondences to Wood are the Liver, Gallbladder and eyes. The tissues associated with the Wood element are the sinews/tendons. Liver blood is nourishing, it feeds the body and keeps it supple. Blood moistens tendons and eyes for clear vision and movement. Spring action requires suppleness, clear vision and smooth movement.

Qi is a Chinese word used for energy. According to Five Element theory the renewal activity of springtime stimulates liver qi to reach a highpoint. Liver qi, like spring growing action, moves upward and outward. Ancient Chinese theorists were remarkably accurate in describing liver function. According to their principles the liver stores the blood and “controls the smooth flow of qi in all directions.” This smooth flow assists all the other organs and helps them to channel their qi in the correct directions.” (Maciocia, p56). Current physiology describes the liver as a major filter for venous and arterial blood. Smooth flow is required in order to perform the continuous process of removing toxins, including fat, and returning clean nutrient rich blood back into circulation.

Modern science confirms that the liver is a major source of qi because it makes and stores an important form of energy called Glycogen. This polysaccharide is a form of energy made from extra Glucose in the blood. While small
amounts of Glycogen are stored in other parts of the body, the majority is stored in the liver. Only the Glycogen stored in the liver can be used by the other organs, including the Central nervous system when energy is needed. (Wikipedia).

The body depends on liver harmony. An excess or stagnated liver is a disharmony TCM practitioners often treat. Symptoms include distention anywhere under the ribs and above the stomach. Feelings of depression, irritability, moodiness and anger are prevalent. Hands may be cold and a feeling of a lump in the throat is common. For women periods are irregular and PMS irritability with breast distention are typical complaints. Overeating, stress, various medications such as Acetaminophen, alcohol, a diet high in fatty, greasy, over processed and sugary foods can overload the liver with toxins and cause it to become sluggish and stagnated.

Modern nutritional science has shown that green does indeed have special significance to liver function. Chlorophyll, the phytochemical that produces the green pigment in vegetation decreases toxin loads in the liver by binding with them and removing them from the blood and the organ. It can be obtained from “green leafy vegetables (broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, lettuce, swiss chard, kale, mustard greens and spinach), algae (Chlorella and Spirulina), wheat grass, and numerous herbs (alfalfa, damiana, nettle, dandelion and parsley).” (Healthline). Eating these foods on a daily basis is beneficial to reducing liver stagnation and also nourishes the liver blood.

The Wood element is associated with the sour flavor, but eating too many foods with a sour taste can weaken a deficient liver. To soften and harmonize the liver, Chinese herbalism often combines sour herbs with sweeter herbs because the sweet taste nourishes the liver. (Maciocia, p39). As previously mentioned, current science has confirmed that Glucose or sugar is used by the liver to produce Glycogen, one of the body’s most important energy sources. Krispy Kremes and Coca Cola were not the types of sweet foods ancient theorists were promoting. The sweet, starchy young produce of springtime, such as beets, carrots, grains, legumes and seeds are the complex carbohydrates that most efficiently nourish the Liver blood. (Pitchford, p317). Nutrient rich blood is important to healthy body function in many ways.

Deficient liver blood can’t nourish the body. “When blood returns to the Liver with the body at rest. it
contributes to restoring the person’s energy; when it flows to the muscles and sinews during exercise, it nourishes and moistens the muscles and sinews to enable them to perform during exercise.” (Maciocia, p118). Symptoms of deficient liver blood include dryness especially of the hair, nails and eyes. For women the menses may be scanty or absent. The body and lips are pale and muscles are weak. Sinews/tendons become dry and tear and vision is blurred. A person may have feelings of depression or aimlessness. (Maciocia, p521).

Folic acid or Folate is a B vitamin found in many spring foods. Some of the richest natural sources of Folic Acid include green vegetables such as “asparagus, spinach, brussel sprouts, broccoli, beans, as well as liver and orange juice.” (Dr. Briffa). Folic acid is key to the development of red blood cells or erythrocytes. According to several studies a deficiency of this vitamin can increase the risk of depression and dementia. (Newsmax). The B vitamin folic acid is “considered by some researchers as the quintessential nutrient in the correction of myopia (nearsightedness)”. (Pitchford, p326). This nutrient is heat sensitive and most prominent in raw food. While TCM does not recommend completely raw food diets due to the high energy required to digest raw meals; quick sautés, light steaming and minimal simmering are ideal ways to eat spring vegetables to preserve vital nutrients. (Pitchford, p318).

Spring is the perfect time to move body, wakening it as the Earth wakes from the resting energy of winter. Brisk walks and sideways twisting motions stimulate the liver to promote healthy blood circulation and reduce stress. Stress reduction allows for relaxation and restores blood to the liver thus improving energy levels. Eating light meals reduces the amount of energy needed to clean the blood and when vegetables are cooked lightly, important heat sensitive nutrients are preserved, which benefit the liver in a myriad of ways. To further reduce toxic loads in the blood which can be added by eating pesticides and chemicals, it is helpful to consume unprocessed and organic foods because they are free of these toxins.

“As two strings vibrate in unison, we vibrate with Nature.” When we are aware of the natural processes occurring in our environment, we gain insight into the wisdom Nature shares. The earliest Chinese medicine theorists did not have the technology we have today to
study the body, yet many of their theories, based only on observation and experience, hold up thousands of years later. Your TCM practitioner is aware that the complexities of the human body evolved in direct relationship with a dynamic and ever changing natural environment. By considering and utilizing all the energy at work, treatment for each patient becomes more powerful in its ability to restore harmony and good health.


Meet our intern

Yo San Clinic has an exceptional and diverse intern team. With various professional and educational backgrounds, our Traditional Chinese Medicine students bring a variety of experience, knowledge and care. In our monthly newsletter, we will introduce you to our new interns and tell you a little bit about what makes them exceptional healers.

Gabby Sigala Orozco:
Gabby Sigala Orozco is not only an intern, but also one of the front desk receptionists in the clinic. Gabby is a native Spanish speaking intern who grew up in the borders of Orange and Los Angeles Counties. She went to Humboldt State University where she studied Mathematics and Theatre Arts. Before completing her dual degrees, Gabby took time off from school and began to work for the National Park Service in Crater Lake, Oregon.

Gabby enjoys giving back to communities and volunteering her time. After working for the park service Gabby served a summer volunteering her services in Rhinebeck, New York at Omega. For the past several years she has been involved in summer reading programs, as well as tutoring 3rd-6th
What brought Gabby to acupuncture was a back injury in 2003 in which she could not move her head left to right and vice versa. Frustrated with her limited range of motion and prescription of rest and ibuprofen, she sought out Acupuncture. Within just three treatments she was able to regain full range of motion which enabled her to recover completely and made her a believer in Acupuncture.

Gabby enjoys the application of ear acupuncture. Though very simple, she is a firm believer in its effectiveness. Ear acupuncture uses the principle that whole body is imaged in the ear. One can manage various types of pain by using points in the ear instead of resorting to over the counter prescriptions that can damage the stomach or liver. The best part is the body releases endorphins and does all the work.

While Gabby enjoys working on many kinds of patients she would like to serve the Latino communities of her neighborhoods and continue to volunteer her time to children. She believes that the best kind of healing comes in serving your community with love and laughter.

When Gabby is not volunteering or in the clinic she enjoys hot air balooning with her park service friends in the Eastern Sierra Nevada mountains. Gabby enjoys camping and spending time in nature throughout the Pacific Coast line of California, Oregon, and Washington.

To book an appointment with Gabby, call us at (310) 577-3006.

Meet our Doctoral Candidate
Gayatri Chopra Heesen, MSOM, L.Ac.

A native of New Delhi, India, Gayatri Chopra Heesen, MSOM, LAc., is a Licensed Acupuncturist with a Masters of Science in Oriental Medicine from Santa Barbara College of Oriental Medicine. She has had a private practice in Santa Barbara for the last 13 years. Her work stems from a deep desire to help people overcome physical as well as emotional challenges to improve their health and well-being.

After moving to Santa Barbara 27 years ago, Gayatri Chopra Heesen worked with adults with special needs for 9 years, before discovering her true passion as an acupuncturist. Upon completion of her Masters degree, and after starting
her private practice, Gayatri Chopra Heesen was invited to join the teaching faculty at Santa Barbara College of Oriental Medicine, her alma mater, where she taught for 3 years. Gayatri Chopra Heesen is currently enrolled in the Doctoral program at Yo San University, Los Angeles, specializing in healthy aging and longevity. She lives in Santa Barbara with her son.

To book an appointment with Gayatri, call us at (310) 577-3006.

Clinic Hours
Yo San Clinic is Open 7 Days a Week!
Monday through Friday - 8 am to 9 pm
Saturday - 8:30 am to 5:30 pm
Sunday - 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm

Healthy Aging Clinic & Fertility Clinic
Sunday - 8:30 am to 1:30 pm