

The Qi Times

Newsletter of Lotus House Acupuncture & Wellness Clinic

Spring 2014 edition

Spring Health

Happy Spring! The crisp beautiful days and longer hours of sunlight are inspiring and uplifting. Looking at Nature now you can see the energy moving upward and outward in the plants and trees with buds forming, little green shoots reaching through the soil and bursts of colour blooming in the garden.

Spring is a time in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) where the Qi (energy) that has been stored in our roots, at the bone level in our body, begins making its way upward and outward to the tendon and sinew level in the body. It is the perfect time to stretch and create open spaces for the Qi to flow into.

The Spring season is closely tied to the liver and gallbladder in Chinese Medicine and signs of imbalance may include:

- Seasonal allergies
- Headaches, migraines
- Ear ringing, dizziness
- Easily irritated, frustrated, angry, or impatient
- Swollen or tender breasts, fibrocystic breast disease
- Gallstones, abdominal pain, irritable bowel syndrome
- Twitching eye muscles and calf spasms

This is a very important time to detox the body. At Lotus House we offer a gentle and effective personal cleansing program consisting of dietary guidelines, cupping, herbal tinctures and acupuncture specifically designed to help detox your body this Spring season, especially your liver.

Diet

Here are some great tips for helping your body to be balanced in the Spring season:

1. Increase your intake of green coloured foods. Consume foods that are rich in chlorophyll (including cereal grasses like wheat or barley grass, micro algae like chlorella, parsley, kale, swiss chard, and collard greens in order to accelerate liver rejuvenation.
2. Cook vegetables for a shorter time but at a higher temperature. This way, the food (especially the interior) is cooked only slightly. Try light steaming or minimal simmering. A quick, high-temperature saute method is also recommended.
3. Upon awakening, drink warm water with a slice of lemon to detoxify the liver and gallbladder. Or try 1 teaspoon each of apple cider vinegar and raw honey in one cup of water. Mint tea throughout the day is another excellent remedy for soothing stagnant liver Qi eg.- irritability, frustration, or frequent sighing.

4. Avoid heavy foods which can exacerbate sluggishness in the liver. These include dairy, fried foods, poorly sourced meats and large quantities of nuts (including nut butters).
5. Make sure to increase moderately pungent foods like green onions, garlic, ginger, watercress, mustard greens, turmeric, basil, cardamom, marjoram, cumin, and fennel in your diet. These help to ease the transition into Spring when erratic changes in weather make us susceptible to colds, flus, allergies and acute illness. These foods also have a powerful immune boosting qualities.
6. Eat more fresh foods, sprouted grains and seeds.
7. Increase foods with a slightly bitter quality as these can help your deal with problematic heat and inflammation in the liver. Rye, romaine lettuce, asparagus, amaranth, quinoa, radish leaves, citrus peel, dandelion, chamomile, milk thistle seeds and Oregon grape root all have liver cleansing capabilities. Include these in your diet on a regular basis if you are prone to Springtime allergies characterized by itchy, red eyes, post nasal drip and/or sneezing. These foods will also benefit red, swollen joints.

Lifestyle

Get stretching! If you aren't already practicing yoga, this is a great time of year to start. The combination of stretching with attention of the breath is ideal for balancing the liver/gallbladder in the Spring season

In TCM, windy weather easily brings external pathogens into the body causing the common cold. Even though it is sunny, it is still crisp, cold and windy - don't expose your neck and chest to the elements just because it is sunny out!

Avoid tight restrictive clothing (including tight bras), it is important for the liver qi to flow freely in the body and tight clothing stagnates the liver Qi. Wearing breathable natural materials is best.

Loosen your hair and avoid tight ponytails and brush hair more often.

Clean your house with a deep Spring cleaning, paying special attention to the windows in your home. These represent the eyes of the house and are associated with the Liver. It's a time to look ahead with clear vision and plant meaningful seeds in your life.

May you all be inspired and revitalized this Spring season!

Sarah Gilbert
Registered Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner

Spring Recipes

Dandelion Pumpkin Seed Pesto

Dandelion greens are one of the most nutritious leafy vegetable that you can eat. Readily foraged, dandelion greens are oftentimes the first spring vegetable and make a great spring tonic. They are a great bitter food to support liver and gallbladder health, cleansing and digestion.



The following is a tasty seasonal recipe to enjoy of a nutritious spring pesto made from locally sourced organic dandelion greens (perhaps from your very own backyard) and pumpkin seeds. It's a nutritive pesto perfect for a simple spring pasta, sandwich spread or veggie dip.

Ingredients:

¾ cup hulled unsalted (green) pumpkin seeds
2-3 garlic cloves to taste, minced
¼ cup of freshly grated parmesan cheese
1 big bunch of dandelion greens (about 2 cups loosely packed)
1 tablespoon of lemon juice
½ cup of extra virgin olive oil
½ tsp sea salt

Preheat the oven to 350F. Pour the pumpkin seeds onto a shallow-rimmed baking sheet and roast until just fragrant, about 5 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

Pulse the garlic and pumpkin seeds together in the bowl of a food processor until very finely chopped. Add parmesan cheese, dandelion greens, and lemon juice and process continuously until combined. With the blade running, slowly pour in the olive oil and process until the pesto is smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste.

(Adapted from "The Kitchn" Foodblog www.thekitchn.com).

TCM Seasonal Tea - Gou Qi Berry and Astragalus Infusion:

Gou Qi berries are a wonderful and increasingly popular herb used in Traditional Chinese Medicine to nourish the blood, tonify the liver and kidneys, and benefit the eyes. They make a nutritious snack to be

eaten anytime (like raisins) or to be added to porridges, soups, stews or teas. Astragalus is an important adaptogen herb known to tonify Qi, strengthen lung and spleen energies, and promote production of Qi, blood and body fluids. The following combination is a traditional recipe Huang Qi Gou Qi Zi Tang for a delicious spring tonic tea to strengthen the defensive Qi (immune system) and tonify Qi and blood.



Ingredients:

1 part gou qi berry
1 part astragalus root

To make the infusion, simply boil 1 cup of water to 1 tablespoon of herb. Pour water over the herb(s) and let steep for 10-15 minutes.

Enjoy daily as a delicious spring tea. We carry organic gou qi berries and astragalus root at Lotus House for easy tea preparation.

Submitted by Dr.Urszula Dragowska

Feature Herbal Product

Harmonic Arts Cleansing Kit

To support the natural cleansing action of the body in Spring time and promote liver health, we are carrying Harmonic Arts Cleansing Kits at the clinic this Spring. Comprised of Cleanse Blend Tea (75g), Digestive Elixir (50ml), and Liver Elixir (50ml), the Cleanse Kit is an effective blend of herbs to gently support removing toxins from the body. The cleanse program is best accompanied by following an alkalizing Spring cleanse diet.

Mention this newsletter and receive 10% of Cleanse Kits at Lotus House this Spring season (March 21 - June 20).



Massage

Spring is here and this year I am determined to enjoy every aspect of the season. I remember hearing the tune of the birds change a few weeks back and it made me smile. The excitement is near with the longer days and sign-up information for sport teams dotted along the highway.

Keep in mind with new activities you can limber up and decrease chances of injury with some warm up exercises before sprinting around the bases as well as a real good stretch afterwards, and keep hydrated!

I have my own new exercises to learn this spring as I travel to India for a 15 day course, all on breath. The concept that how we breathe can affect us in pretty much every conceivable way has me traveling to the other side of the world to find out. My hope is to learn more about how my body works so I can better understand my client's.

I'll be breathing back at Lotus House April 15th.

Patrick Visser
Registered Massage Therapist



Physiotherapy

Spring has arrived and the garden is coming alive with the warmer weather. Gardeners are ready to weed, to plant, to lift rocks and move things around. Perhaps you have spent a couple of hours already in the garden and your body is feeling the effects.

We know the saying "Bend your knees and not your back" but it is difficult to follow the advice consistently. It is not just heavy objects that we need to approach carefully in order to protect our discs, joints, muscles and other soft tissues of the back. Frequently, it is when lifting a light object or simply bending over to weed, that people strain their mid or low back or even herniate a disc.

It is the angle of the back that is at play here. It makes sense to us that an object held or manipulated further away from our spine places greater force on our lumbar and sacral area than one lifted close to us.



So what is preventing us from lifting with our legs? Sometimes it's hard to position ourselves correctly in order to lift with the large powerful muscles of the legs. Other times it's just hard to change a habit. But frequently people are missing the necessary flexibility in the hips and knees that would allow them to approach an object squarely and squat to ground level. We need to have good flexibility in our hips and knees to lift or weed correctly. And we require adequate strength in our lower extremities.

Physical Therapy can help improve flexibility and strength especially if pain is limiting mobility. Adopting a practice of Tai Chi, yoga or stretching will eventually Physical Therapy can help improve flexibility and strength especially if pain is limiting mobility. Adopting a practice of Tai Chi, yoga or stretching will eventually increase your overall flexibility and strength. And if these types of exercises are done year round, you will be ready to play in the garden with less risk of back soreness or injury. It will become a pleasure to "bend your knees and not your back" to lift that rock.

Felicity Goldring
Registered Physiotherapist

Osteopathy

It's here at last! It's time to get outdoors and ramp up our physical activity. We can all benefit from the longer daylight hours, but the trick is not to overdo it at first. Keep these tips in mind when you head out the door:

1. **Heat** - Warm muscles are less likely to strain or injure.
2. **Stretch** - Gentle stretching before the activity for 5 minutes and certainly more importantly after the activity for 5 minutes.



3. **Sleep** - Do not short change your sleep. A tired body is a weakened body.
4. **Move** - Try not to remain in a fixed, awkward position for long periods. Set a reminder to move every 20-30 minutes. Muscles fatigue if they are in a fixed position for too long.

I hope this Spring finds you happy and healthy.

Linda Southworth D.Ost(UK)
Registered Osteopath



Announcements & Events

She's Back!

Dr. Urszula Dragowska (Dr.TCM) is returning to practice at Lotus House from her maternity leave as of April 1, 2014. Her son Jakub is six months old already. He's growing fast, eating heartily and laughing lots at his 2.25 year sister Sophia and family. Urszula is excited to return to her passion of practicing acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine, while at the same time being able to be home a lot with her small children in their early growing years. To begin with, Urszula will be working part time on Thursday afternoons, Friday mornings, and alternating Saturdays.



We are happy that acupuncturists Brianna Smart and Satomi Sakata will continue to stay on at Lotus House to share their unique talents and skills. We are looking forward to working together as an integrated team acupuncturists and traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners at the clinic to serve the needs of our community.

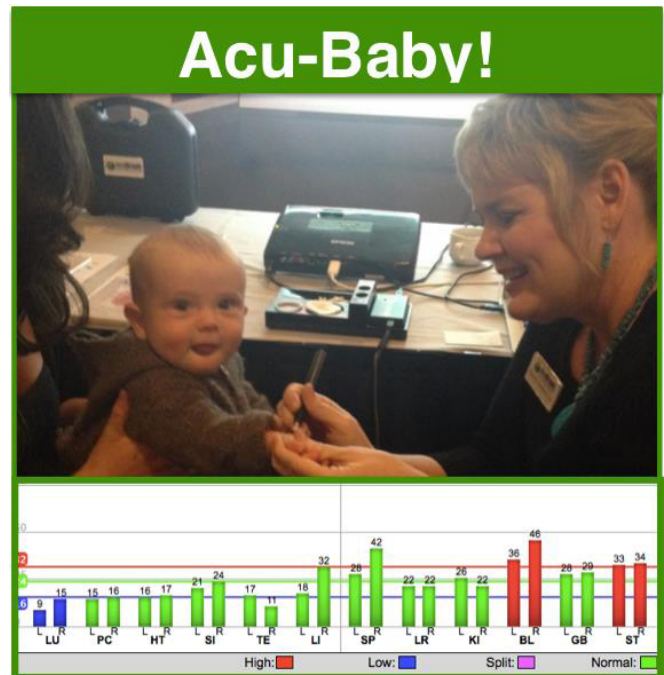
Acugraph:

Featured at the Canadian Oriental Medical Symposium in Vancouver this spring, Urszula and Sarah invested in a unique TCM clinical tool, the Acugraph. Acugraph is a meridian energy reading device that allows us to measure the energy of the 12 meridians by measuring the electrical resistance of the skin at the 12 meridian source points. It is a modern adaptation of an ancient technique of measuring the energy circulating in a channel by burning an incense stick above each of the 12 points and measuring the patients response time.

The information gathered from this investigation helps to give a powerful visual picture of the current energy state of the body and highlight areas of imbalance. We are excited to introduce this new diagnostic tool to our clinic and feel that it will be great adjunct to our treatments with our clients.

Urszula and Sarah will be hosting complimentary acugraph readings for our patients at the clinic on

Saturday, April 26th from 10am - 2pm. You will receive a 20 minute complimentary meridian energy reading, a full printed report, as well as therapeutic recommendations and an auricular treatment.



Jakub having his points measured.

Acugraph readings will be available by appointment only. Spots are limited, please contact reception 604-885-9527 for more details.

Community Acupuncture:

Lotus House is growing their community acupuncture program where acupuncture treatments are given in a supportive group setting at an affordable rate of \$40 (a \$23 rebate from MSP may be available to those on MSP premium assistance).

The main objective of this program is to support patient's access to acupuncture, and to facilitate more frequent visits when needed to effectively treat their condition. The community acupuncture clinic is available on Mondays mornings, Wednesdays afternoons and Fridays mornings by appointment.

About Us

Lotus House Acupuncture & Wellness Clinic is located at:

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