

# Autumn, Acupuncture and TCM



The weather is cool and crisp. The sun is beginning to set earlier. The leaves are turning vivid hues of red, orange, and yellow.

Fall has arrived, and now is the time to harvest the bounty that grew during the summer so we can store up for the cold winter ahead. It is a time to organize, work hard, and finish projects that you began in spring and summer.

One of the most beautiful aspects of traditional Chinese medicine is as a tool to live harmoniously with the seasons.

Ancient Chinese physicians observed the natural cycles of the seasons and recorded the best everyday practices for staying healthy and harmonizing our own energy with that of our environment.

*"In the three months of autumn all things in nature reach their full maturity. The grains ripen and harvesting occurs. The heavenly energy cools, as does the weather. The wind begins to stir. This is the changing or pivoting point when the yang, or active, phase turns into its opposite, the yin, or passive, phase. One should retire with the sunset and arise with the dawn. Just as the weather in autumn turns harsh, so does the emotional climate. It is therefore important to remain calm and peaceful, refraining from depression so that one can make the transition to winter smoothly. This is the time to gather one's spirit and energy, be more focused, and not allow desires to run wild. One must keep the lung energy free full, clean, and quiet. This means practicing breathing exercises to enhance lung Qi. Also, one should refrain from smoking and grief, the emotion of lung. This will prevent the kidney or digestive problems in the winter. If this natural order is violated, damage will occur to the lungs, resulting in diarrhea with undigested food in the winter. This compromises the body's ability to store in winter."* -

**Huangdi Neijing Suwen**

- **Element: Metal**
- **Color: White**
- **Nature: Yin**

- **Organs: Lung and Large Intestine**
- **Taste: Spicy**
- **Emotion: Grief**

## **A Time of Reflection**

Fall is the season associated with the metal element. According to traditional Chinese medicine, the metal element governs the mind, organization, order, and stability. We tend to be more reflective, turning inward to our work, our families and our homes during this time. It is a time to organize and prepare for the winter season ahead and a time to reflect on our lives.

Emotionally, this is the season associated with grief and sadness. It is important to keep the mind clear and “let go” of negative emotions, which can impact health more strongly during the fall.

## **Lungs and Large Intestine**

Fall corresponds to the lungs, skin, and large intestine. The lungs and large intestine are in charge of respiration, digestion, and elimination. Common symptoms associated with lung and large intestine imbalances are respiratory problems, such as asthma, shortness of breath, frequent colds, and sinus infections, as well as constipation and skin problems.

The body is particularly susceptible to wind and cold during the fall. Dryness can cause symptoms of coughing, dry nose, sore throat, dry skin, dry hair and scalp, dry mouth and cracked lips, and hard and dry stools. Adding more nourishing yin foods to your diet can promote body fluid, soothe the lungs and protect you from dryness.

## **Eating with the season**

In the fall, eat fewer cold, uncooked foods — such as salads — and more warm, cooked foods. Switch from salads to soups and steamed vegetables such as winter squash, winter peas, broccoli, sweet potatoes, and yams. Incorporate yellow and red foods into your meals. Start your day with hot oatmeal.

## **Here are some more warm and nourishing foods and herbs to add to your fall diet:**

Apple, Banana, Beets, Bell pepper, Bokchoy, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Cinnamon, Cranberry, Figs, Garlic,

Ginger, Grapes, Horseradish, Leeks, Pears, Persimmons, Plums, Pomegranate, Pumpkin, Red cabbage, Rosemary, Sage, Spinach, Thyme, Whole grains, Wild rice, Winter squash, Yam

## **Protecting Your Lung Qi**

**Lung 7** is one of the most powerful points on the lung meridian points. It is a popular acupuncture point to use for stopping a persistent cough and relieving a sore throat. Besides treating those symptoms, LU 7 is often used to treat conditions related to the head and neck, such as headaches, migraines, stiff neck, facial paralysis, and toothache.

LU 7 is considered to be the "*command point*" of the head and neck and is also used to improve circulation in the brain and stimulate memory.

This acupuncture point is located above the wrist on the inside of the arm. To find this point, interlock your thumb and index finger of one hand with those of the other, the point lies on the edge of the index finger, in a depression between the sinew and the bone.

Stimulate this point on both hands with the tip of your index finger for approximately 30 seconds or until your cough subsides.