

## Staying Healthy with Chinese Medicine

### **Acupuncture and the Change of Seasons –Winter**

#### **Recharge Your Battery this Winter with Acupuncture**

If you feel tired and drained, you are not alone. "Lack of energy" is one of the top five complaints that doctors hear in their offices. According to Oriental medicine, the cold months of winter are the perfect time to recharge your battery and generate vital energy – Qi - in order to live, look, and feel your best.

The ancient Chinese believed that human beings should live in harmony with the natural cycles of their environment. The cold and darkness of winter urges us to slow down. This is the time of year to reflect on health, replenish energy and conserve strength.

Winter is ruled by the Water element, which is associated with the Kidneys, Bladder and Adrenal Glands. The Kidneys are considered the source of all energy or "Qi" within the body. They store all of the reserve Qi in the body so that it can be used in times of stress and change, or to heal, prevent illness, and age gracefully.

During the winter months, it is important to nurture and nourish our Kidney Qi; it is the time where this energy can be most easily depleted. Our bodies are instinctively expressing the fundamental principles of winter – rest, reflection, conservation and storage.

The *Nei Ching*, an ancient Chinese classic, advises people to go to sleep early and rise late, after the sun's rays have warmed the atmosphere a bit. This preserves your own Yang Qi for the task of warming in the face of cold.

Eating warm hearty soups, whole grains, and roasted nuts help to warm the body's core and to keep us nourished. Sleep early, rest well, stay warm, and expend a minimum quantity of energy.

**Seasonal acupuncture treatments in winter serve to nurture and nourish kidney Qi which can greatly enhance the body's ability to thrive in times of stress, aid in healing, prevent illness and increase vitality.**

#### **Here are some dietary suggestions that can lead to an increase in vitality and radiant health**

**Water** - The Kidneys are associated with the Water element. Drink ample water, at room temperature, throughout the day.

**Kidney Shaped Foods** - Black beans and kidney beans are excellent examples of kidney shaped foods that nourish and benefit Kidney Qi.

**Blue and Black Foods** - The colors blue and black correspond to the Water element of the Kidneys and are thought to strengthen the Water element. Include blueberries, blackberries, mulberry and black beans in your diet.

**Seeds** - Flax, pumpkin, sunflower and black sesame seeds relate to fertility and growth which is governed by Kidney Qi.

**Nuts** - Walnuts and chestnuts have been found to be especially effective for increasing Kidney Qi.

**Vegetables** - Dark, leafy green vegetables are the best choice for Kidney Qi. Other Kidney Qi boosting veggies include asparagus, cucumbers and celery.

taken from:

"How to Boost Energy with Acupuncture in Winter"

-Diane Joswick, L.Ac., MSOM