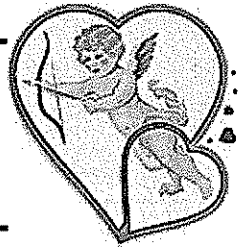


TO YOUR HEALTH



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THE DEPTH OF WINTER

by Margaret Ryding, Acupuncturist

We are deep into winter with frigid temperatures, bitter winds and long nights. In Chinese medicine winter is the season connected to the Water Element. This is the coldest time of the year, when nature appears to be dead, yet the seeds of new growth are germinating in the earth. The potential for new life is already here, waiting for the right time and temperature to make itself manifest. The dark inactive time of winter gives a needed rest to trees, animals and humans. This time of rest allows us to gather our energy before the renewal of spring.

Winter tests our will to survive, to live through the cold and storms and make it to spring. It is a time of waiting. During this time of waiting we have been reading about failing banks, home foreclosures and global crises. Pessimism and despair are everywhere. It is easy to be fearful and anxious as a chronic response. This fear and anxiety affects our adrenal glands and our "fight-or-flight" instinct. Our Water Element can become imbalanced. But as fear and anxiety reflect this time of year, so does courage. Finding courage to move forward and accept is more essential than ever. Acceptance is something everyone can practice, even during difficult times.

A simple but radical spiritual practice is to accept whatever arises in the Now-within and without.

- Eckhart Tolle

When you are feeling fearful, practice deep breathing and find the courage to accept what is in your life. New life and spring will come.

THERE'S NO SUBSITUTE FOR REAL SUGAR

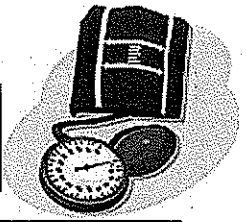
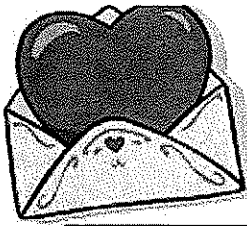
by Barbara Chenoweth, NP

The fact that 84% of Americans use sugar substitutes, or products containing them, is a good indication that we've come to believe that real sugar is a problem. Real sugar, the white granulated substance that comes in boxes and packages, has become the enemy in the fight against weight gain. Instead many people chose products with artificial sweeteners in hopes of avoiding extra pounds.

Yet, it turns out that artificial sweeteners may interfere with the body's natural ability to judge a food's caloric value based on sweetness, (*Dr. Andrew Weil's Self-Healing Newsletter*, June 2006). As a result, people tend to overindulge in other sweet foods and drinks. For example, aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal) is 200 times sweeter than sugar, and sucralose (Splenda) is 600 times sweeter than sugar! It is no wonder there is little evidence that artificial sweeteners actual help in weight loss.

The picture on sugar in food grows even more complicated with the realization that *high-fructose corn syrup* is found in most soda, candy, jam, fruit beverages and cookies. Besides these sweet foods, it is found in unlikely foods such as yogurt, bread, beer and even baby food. Since the 1970s, the consumption of high-fructose corn syrup has increased by more than a 1000% (*Dr. Andrew Weil's Self-Healing Newsletter*, October 2006), coincidentally at the same time as the dramatic increase in obesity.

Whether the addition of this processed sugar, a combination fructose and glu-



cose, is in itself harmful, is still open to debate. However, there is little doubt that the addition of excessive, empty calories is not healthy and may be contributing to the epidemic of diabetes and obesity. Current research suggests that it may also be a factor in the development of high triglyceride levels, blood fat that causes heart disease and insulin resistance. The latter, along with weight gain, can lead to diabetes.

How can one cut back on artificial sweeteners and high-fructose corn syrup?

- Drink lots of water
- Drink plain or flavored seltzer water with no added sweeteners or unsweetened tea or coffee
- Avoid juice “drinks”
- Drink real fruit juices
- Read labels and avoid foods and drinks with high-fructose corn syrup
- Eat real fruit
- Avoid processed cakes, cookies and candy
- Real sugar is ok in moderation unless you are diabetic

With Valentine’s Day around the corner, does this mean no candy?? Yes and no. Candy, even most dark chocolate, the candy now touted to have health benefits, contains high-fructose corn syrup and fats that are not healthy. For some people, candy can be addictive, for others a little goes a long way. As with all things, knowing yourself is the key. Perhaps for some of us, this is the year to find other alternatives to candy!

COMING ATTRACTION

Introducing Jin Shin Jyutsu will be presented by Kate Smyers, RN, BSN. See a demonstration and learn how this ancient Japanese healing art can induce relaxation and reduce the effects of stress. Join us Wednesday, February 25th, 10:30 to 11:30, in Auditorium Center.

FLEX YOUR HEART

By Muire Lindahl

The heart is a muscle about the size of your fist and weighs approximately 10 ounces. Composed of highly specialized, striated muscle fibers referred to as cardiac muscle, this organ is capable of beating 100,000 times per day and pumping 1,900 gallons of blood throughout the body. A healthy heart is highly resistant to fatigue due to a large number of cellular mitochondria that make continuous aerobic respiration possible.

As the heart pumps blood throughout the circulatory system it does so with ease when the vessels are clear and pliable. This is measured when taking blood pressure. The systolic, or top number, refers to the contraction phase of the cardiac cycle as blood is pumped away from the heart, and the lower number represents the relaxation phase of the heart when re-oxygenated blood returns.

When the vessels are no longer clear and pliable, a resistance takes place that causes the heart to work harder to supply oxygen to the vital organs and working muscles. This results in enlargement of the heart and rigidity and narrowing of the arteries. These conditions create a potential for stroke, kidney failure and heart disease.

Much has been written about lifestyle changes that can reverse heart disease, one of which is Dr. Dean Ornish’s *Program for Reversing Heart Disease* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990). The essentials for this program are:

- Mindful Eating
- Exercise
- Stress Management
- Social Support

Let February be your month to flex your heart muscle to optimum health.