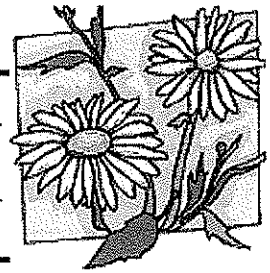


TO YOUR HEALTH



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SUMMER VACATION

by Barbara Chenoweth, NP

Even if you are planning to have a summer vacation in your own backyard, summertime often brings back the memories of school vacations with their feelings of freedom, leisure and endless balmy days. Although those days, in reality, may have been less than carefree and perfect, the mental images and emotions that they conjure up *do* have a magical quality to them. While those days are part of a remote past, again capturing the essence of those times and those moments may lead us to experience this summer in a renewed fashion.

The beginning of summer is the beginning of a new season, a new start. Like the gardens and flowers that each year miraculously appear and that are deliciously enjoyed as if for the first time, summertime can give us a new spark of energy. Maybe we can initiate a plan to have contact with friends or family members who we haven't seen for a while. Graduations, summer weddings, weekends away...all are opportunities to reconnect with the people who are important in our lives. Or maybe these occasions offer the chance to make new friends, re-establish old relationships or go some place new.

Staying "young at heart" has little to do with chronological age but more to do with an attitude of openness and spontaneity. This "mental flexibility" has been associated with positive health and happiness, (*Dr. Andrew Weil's Self Healing*, October 2007). One way to cultivate this openness is to keep a daily "gratitude" journal. Recording our blessings has been shown to increase energy, enthusiasm and attentiveness in healthy people. This helps us to for-

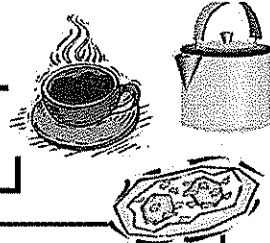
give and to let go of old hurts that prevent us from meeting each day with hope and openness.

Agility of the body is just as important as flexibility of the mind. Summer is the perfect time to be outdoors and to take part in the various outdoor opportunities for exercise. Walking, gardening and even sitting outside are ways to invigorate the body. Walking 30 minutes a day is ideal but should be started slowly and increased gradually .

Being outside in the summer is the natural way to take in Vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin. Even wearing sunscreen will not completely block out the Vitamin D. Unless a person is very compulsive about using plenty of sun screen, Vitamin D still "leaks" through. In fact the Vitamin D requirement can be met by exposing the arms and legs to the sun for just 5 to 15 minutes, two or three times a week between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., (*Harvard Health Letter*, August 2008).

Just as sunny, warm weather is associated with summer, everything from fresh vegetables and fruits to outdoor cookouts and picnics are crucial parts of the season. According to *Tufts Nutrition Blacklist* (August 2008), staying well and healthy means avoiding processed meat, fried fish, undercooked hamburgers and cola drinks. Brewing ice tea with herbal teas offers an alternative to colas and sweetened juices. Take advantage of the fresh food season to improve and change what you eat.

As we appreciate our "summer vacation," we also can use the benefits of the summer season to become more healthy in mind, body and spirit.



WELCOMING SUMMER

by Margaret Ryding, Acupuncturist

Summer and the solstice are almost here. I thought it would never come after the endless cold and snowy days this winter. But it's finally here and I'm basking in the sun and heat. This is the season of the fire element.

Summer is nature's season of growth and maturation. My garden is lush and beautiful. Lilies and rhododendron are blooming with great splendor. Tomatoes, herbs, and lettuce flourish in my garden. The energy is strong and intense.

In the Chinese Five-Element philosophy, the fire element governs the heart and small intestine. The heart has to do with the ability to rule, to understand and to serve compassionately. The small intestine functions to receive, digest, and assimilate nourishment. Also two other systems, pericardium and triple burner, are controlled by the fire element. The triple burner controls the temperature in our body, and the pericardium regulates blood flow, sexual secretions, and protects the heart.

Fire is light and warmth. Its function in the body is to maintain heat. On an emotional and spiritual level, the fire element gives enthusiasm, vitality, and energy. It also gives us our ability to play, feel joy, and have fun. It governs our sexuality and intimacy. Our passion and warmth towards others comes from the fire element. If we struggle with those qualities, we might be deficient in this element. Now is the time of year to nourish our fire. Find what gives us joy in our life. Spend more time outside. Take action on an idea started during the wood element. Go for a picnic. Take a swim at Walden Pond. Go dancing. The play and fun we have during the summer will nourish our fire for the coming year.

This is the time of year to eat lighter. During summer, eat lots of cooling fresh fruits

and juices, multicolored salads and vegetables. The bitter flavor nourishes the fire element. Some bitter herbs include endive, escarole, and watercress.

May you have a joyful and healthy summer.

Welcome Morning

*There is joy
in all:
in the hair I brush each morning,
in the Cannon towel, newly washed,
that I rub my body with each morning,
in the chapel of eggs I cook
each morning,
in the outcry from the kettle
that heats my coffee
each morning,
in the spoon and the chair
that cry "hello there, Anne"
each morning,
in the godhead of the table
that I set my silver plate, cup upon
each morning.*

*All this is God,
Right here is my pea-green house
Each morning,
and I mean,
though I often forget,
to give thanks,
to faint down by the kitchen table
in a prayer of rejoicing
as the holy birds at the kitchen window
peck into their marriage of seeds.*

*So while I think of it
let me paint a thank-you on my palm
for this God,
this laughter of the morning,
lest it go unspoken.*

*The Joy that isn't shared, I've heard,
dies young.*

-Anne Sexton

If you'd like to try a Jin Shin Jyutsu treatment, Kate Smyers is offering FREE treatments in the Clinic. Call for an appointment.