

Health Naturally

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Natural Medicine of Vermont

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Welcome!

Happy New Year! Winter is in full swing – in January we were breaking snow records in Burlington with over 33 inches of snow. As we settle into February, it is a time for hibernation and rebuilding. The weather reminds us to slow down, get more sleep, eat warm nourishing food and rebuild and repair. The challenge with our society is that we no longer have to listen as carefully to what our bodies and the seasons tell us. We can choose to ignore the messages that each season brings and that our aching muscles or fatigued bodies remind us to do.

Or we can choose to listen and take action in a different way - the action that centers on a healthy body/mind/spirit/family/community/country/world. What would that look like and what choices would we need to make to manifest this?

NMV News

Thermography

We are now offering breast imaging through Thermography. Thermography is Digital Infrared Thermal Imaging. It is a non-invasive diagnostic technique that can detect changes in skin surface temperature reflecting vascular, muscular, and sympathetic nervous system changes. Infrared imaging is fast, non-contact, no radiation, and highly accurate temperature measurement.

Thermography can be used as screening for breast cancer, carotid artery disease, back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and many other medical issues.

Breast Imaging will be provided by New England Clinical Thermography at Natural Medicine of Vermont . Please call 802-388-6250 to schedule an appointment.

More information on Thermography can be found at www.nemedtherm.com.

Common sense and a sense of humor are the same thing, moving at different speeds. A sense of humor is just common sense, dancing.

[William James](#)

Healthy Eating

Rosemary Red Soup

This is a delicious and nourishing soup from one of my favorite cookbooks Feeding Your Whole Family by Cynthia Lair. Just add a whole grain bread or brown rice, and salad with the following flaxseed oil dressing for a wonderfully tasty and healthy winter meal.

3 medium carrots
2 beets
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 large onion, diced
2 tablespoons fresh rosemary or 2 teaspoons dried
1 tablespoon fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried
1 cup dried red lentils
2 bay leaves
6 cups water or stock

2-3 tablespoons light miso

Scrub and chop carrots and beets. Heat oil in a soup pot; add onion and sauté until soft. Add carrots and beets; sauté a few minutes more. Finely chop rosemary and oregano leaves; if using fresh herbs. Wash and drain lentils. Add herbs, lentils, bay leaves, and water or stock to onion mix; bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer 40 minutes. Remove bay leaves. Puree soup in blender or processor. Dissolve miso in ½ cup water and add to soup. Gently reheat before serving.

Kichiree

A delicious and nourishing savory porridge made from rice and lentils. It is high in protein, extremely digestible, and can be eaten for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

6 tablespoons ghee
1 teaspoon brown mustard seed
1 tablespoon turmeric
2 teaspoons coriander
2 tablespoons cumin
2 whole dried chilies
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped onion
1 tablespoon fresh chopped ginger
1 cup mung beans, split or whole
1 cup basmati rice
8 cups water
1-2 cups chopped spinach or other greens
plain yogurt

Heat the ghee in a soup pot. When it's hot, add the onions and ginger. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are translucent. Add mustard seeds. When they pop, add the other spices. Stir for a minute or two, being careful not to burn. Add the rice and mung beans. Stir to coat them with the spices. Add water and bring to a boil. Cover, turn down heat, and simmer until the rice and mung beans are very tender (about 30-45 minutes). Add the salt. Add spinach or other greens just before serving. Serve with a dollop of yogurt on top.

Flax Oil Dressing

Flax is one of the most important anti-inflammatory foods. It is particularly useful for vegetarians and vegans as it is the richest appropriate source of omega-3 essential fatty acids. Keeping a jar of this dressing in your fridge to use over salads is the best way to keep your omega-3 levels topped up if you don't eat oily fish.

Ingredients: 1 clove of garlic 1 tsp Dijon mustard
 4-5 tbsp flax oil pinch of black pepper
 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar,
 White wine vinegar or lemon juice

(this recipe called for 1 tsp of honey, however, if you used balsamic vinegar it is sweet enough.)

Method: Peel and chop garlic. Place all ingredients in a screw-top jar. Shake well until all the ingredients have blended. Used drizzled over salads. It's quite creamy.

Inspiration corner

“The wise nourish life by flowing with the four seasons and adapting to cold or heat, by harmonizing joy and anger in a tranquil dwelling, by balancing yin and yang, and what is hard and soft. So it is that dissolute evil cannot reach the man of wisdom, and he will be witness to a long life.”

- Huangdi Neijing Suwen

Reflections...

The Seasons – Winter

Everyone living in Vermont realizes whether our lives manifest this or not that winter is about slowing down. The energy is very different than in the spring or summer. Cold contracts, warmth expands. Winter is yin in nature; it is inactive, cold, and damp. It is ruled by the water element, which is associated with the kidneys, bladder, and adrenal glands. Kidneys in Chinese medicine are considered the source of all energy (Qi) in the body. According to Lonny Jarrett, the kidney official empowers the flow of life's purpose into the world; it empowers potency, constitutes our depths and lubricates the graceful unfolding of human destiny.

During the winter months it is important to nurture and nourish our kidney Qi. It is a time to focus on rest, reflection, conservation, and storage. The emotional aspect of this season is about bringing light to the darker aspects, or shadows, of ourselves during this yin season.

Working with the water element we can cut out stimulants such as coffee and sugar. Support our adrenals and nervous system through a daily practice of meditation and breathing exercises, exercise the bladder through kegel exercises, yoga, pilates, or tai chi. Foods which are nourishing in the winter and support the water element are soups and stews, root vegetables, beans, miso and seaweed, garlic and ginger. Sleep early, rest well and stay warm. By placing attention on the seasons we can remind ourselves that there is within ourselves along with nature a cycle and a spiral. We are ever evolving from winter to spring to summer and from water to wood to earth elements. And we can also move to greater and deeper understanding of ourselves, each other, and our environment within those cycles and take action which moves us forward. When we stop and pay attention, listen with our hearts and not only our heads, a true manifestation of health is possible.

Health Corner

Naturopathic Approach to Digestive Disorders

Digestion involves breaking down food into nutrients your body can absorb and utilize for fuel and the many functions to keep you healthy, happy and active. This involves eating whole foods, which contain the necessary vitamins, minerals, proteins and fats to fuel a healthy body and taking the time to eat our meals in a relaxing environment where we can chew and enjoy our food. Proper digestion involves having adequate enzymes and stomach pH to break down the nutrients in our food so our body can absorb them properly. It is important that our intestines have proper bulk (fiber) to ensure adequate peristalsis and we eliminate regularly and not do so too quickly or slowly. And last but not least we have the proper balance of gut flora to further absorb the nutrients.

We experience problems when we do not eat enough nutritious foods or perhaps over eat heavily processed foods, which lack any significant nutrients. As we age our production of digestive enzymes and hydrochloric acid go down and thus we have diminished enzymes to break down and absorb nutrients. You know the famous saying “One man/woman’s food is another man/woman’s poison”? It’s a simple reminder that people can have different reactions to the same food. There is increasing evidence that food sensitivities are more common and have a wider and more varied impact on our health than previously realized. Although often equated with food allergies, food sensitivities also include food intolerances which, unlike allergies, are toxic reactions to foods that do not involve the immune system and are often more difficult to diagnose. Many of the symptoms of food sensitivities including vomiting, diarrhea, blood in the stool, eczema, urticaria (hives), skin rashes,

wheezing and runny noses, are associated with an allergic reaction to specific foods. However, food sensitivities may also cause fatigue, gas, bloating, mood swings, nervousness, migraines and eating disorders. These symptoms which are more commonly related to food intolerance are less often associated with the consumption of food. Diagnosis can also be difficult because symptoms may be delayed for up to two days after a food has been consumed.

Other symptoms that indicate poor digestive health:

- increased gas or bloating after meals,
- bouts of loose stool or diarrhea and constipation,
- mild to significant abdominal cramping or abdominal pain,
- and nausea,
- stool which contains mucus, pus, or blood.
- increased or chronic fatigue,
- headaches,
- anemia,
- muscle cramping,
- perianal skin burning, itching, or soreness due to frequent loose stools,
- abdominal distension,
- rashes,
- frequent colds, etc.

If you are experiencing any of the above, a naturopathic physician will take a detailed health history, which includes a comprehensive diet history. Your ND may also order lab work to rule out certain conditions. Your diagnosis and treatment come from looking at the whole person, not just your symptoms. By addressing and seeking out the cause, the symptoms resolve and do not return. Treatments may include:

- nutritional therapy, such as effective changes in diet and certain supplements to support digestive enzymes or healing the gut
- herbal therapy,
- hydrotherapy, the use of hot and cold water to improve the immune system
- acupuncture
- homeopathy
- and life style counseling

The expected course for each individual varies and may take time. Patience, a positive attitude, careful monitoring and ultimately correcting the imbalances can lead to significant improvement in many.

The Sour Side of Sugar

Did you know that the average person in the U.S. consumes approximately 150 pounds of sugar a year? According to the American Heart Association (AHA) sugar (simple carbohydrate) intake averages 25% of total energy intake. The big point here is that if sugar is consuming a quarter of our energy/nutrient intake it is displacing real food and nutrients in the diet.

Another alarming trend we need to pay attention to are fat free manufactured foods. These “fat-free” foods are often higher in calories because of inclusion of high amounts of sugar. So here’s the rub, people think they are more heart healthy and therefore avoiding fat by buying fat free foods and are in fact compounding their health problems by eating ever more sugar. What’s a person to do? Stop being afraid of real fat (for example organic butter, extra virgin olive oil, and fat in nuts and avocados) and stop eating processed sugar. (I will discuss fats in a future article.)

What we are beginning to see in short-term studies are the consistent adverse effects of sugar consumption on HDL and triglyceride levels, which could accelerate atherosclerosis. High sugar consumption may worsen diabetes control, and the combination of sugar with protein and fats promotes formation of dietary advanced glycation end products or AGEs, which may be especially detrimental to those with diabetes. Dietary AGEs react with tissue proteins to form substances that reduce tissue elasticity and impede cellular function. AGEs have been identified as a pathogenic mechanism in diabetic nephropathy and vascular complications. And as I stated above, replacement of whole foods with high-sugar foods compromises attainment of adequate dietary vitamin and mineral intake from whole food sources. In short, sugar has no nutritional value other than to provide calories.

We are starting to hear more about the many names of sugar. Did you know that sugar goes by more than 100 names. One of the most popular is high fructose corn syrup which in some cases can contain up to 95% fructose and is becoming more common in beverages, canned fruits, confectionery products and dessert syrups. A recent study showed that almost half of tested samples of commercial high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) contained mercury, which was also found in nearly a third of 55 popular brand-name food and beverage products where HFCS is the first- or second-highest labeled ingredient, according to two new U.S. studies. The use of mercury-contaminated caustic soda in the production of HFCS is common. The contamination occurs when mercury cells are used to produce caustic soda. An organization representing the refiners is disputing the results published in *Environmental Health*. That said, is this what we really want to be putting in our bodies?

You have an opportunity every time you purchase a product, every time you plan a meal, every time you consider putting something in your mouth to make a choice. If you are

concerned about the high cost of health care, not wanting to take medications or lowering your list of medications, of being as vibrant and healthy as possible than you are the one that has to ultimately make the choice and bear the responsibility. Choose foods that are sweetened naturally and whose sugar levels are low. Remember when you are reading labels that approximately 4 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon. Instead of eating an overly sweetened breakfast cereal or pastry consider instead a bowl of oatmeal (not the instant and sweetened kind) with a ¼ cup of raisins and walnuts, a piece of fruit, and a glass of water or tea and you have significantly reduced your sugar intake increased fiber and omega 3 healthy fats and added good nutrition and fuel for the day. How do you want to start your day?

Recommendations

- This is a talk given by Robert Sapolsky a primatologist at Stanford University. It is titled *The Uniqueness of humans*.
http://www.ted.com/talks/robert_sapolsky_the_uniqueness_of_humans.html
- A beautiful expression of creative spirit:
http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=vOhf3OvRXKg

The part can never be well unless the whole is well. ~Plato