

# Health Naturally

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Natural Medicine of Vermont

Office Hours:

Monday 11-4

Tuesday 10-5

Wednesday 10-5

Thursday 10-3

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## Welcome!

Welcome to the first issue of *Health Naturally*, the newsletter of Natural Medicine of Vermont (NMV)!

Each newsletter will contain current happenings at NMV, articles pertinent to health issues of the "season", a recipe, thoughts on daily meditation/spiritual practices and a few surprises.

We hope you enjoy this first issue and look forward to receiving future issues of *Health Naturally*.

# 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](http://www.nemedtherm.com).

## Endings and Beginnings

The theme for this newsletter is change, the change that comes with the transition of seasons and in particular with spring. I have been blessed with the opportunity to have had Karri Ingerson as part of my team. Her intelligence, compassion and hard work have supported me and NMV. For that I am very grateful. Endings, however, are also opportunities for beginnings and I am happy to announce a new addition to NMV. Meg Miller will start as the new part-time office assistant in March. She brings with her tremendous organizational skills, creativity, and wonderful presence and energy. You may already know her from the farmer's market or are wearing her lovely earrings. To these wonderful women - as with so many things in life - goodbye and hello.

## Lecture

Dr. Miller-Lane will be giving a free lecture at Ilesley Public Library in Middlebury, Vermont on April 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm sponsored by Middlebury Natural Food Co op. The topic will be on stress. Check the Co op newsletter and Addison Independent as the time nears for further information.

*My grandmother started walking  
five miles a day when she was sixty.  
She's ninety-seven now,  
and we don't know where the hell she is.*  
**Ellen DeGeneres**

## Healthy Eating

### Luscious Beet Salad

From Feeding the Whole Family by Cynthia Lair

*If you love beets and especially if you ever thought you didn't, try this recipe. It is one of my favorites! The cookbook also tops my list. I have made almost everything in it and everything is easy to fairly easy to make. The results are always delicious. Cynthia Lair also has wonderful ideas for modifying recipes or using components for babies and children. Dr. Karen*

#### Salad:

4 large beets  
¼ cup pumpkin seeds, toasted  
1 bunch beet greens  
2 scallions, finely chopped  
¼ lb feta cheese (optional)

#### Dressing:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
¼ teaspoon Dijon mustard  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh basil

Wash beets and remove tops. Place beets in a large pot filled with water and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer until beets are tender (about an hour). {If you have a pressure cooker you can halve the time.} Set aside to cool.

Toast pumpkin seeds by placing seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat. Move the skillet back and forth over the heat with one hand. This will toast the seeds evenly and prevent burning. When seeds begin to pop and give off a nutty aroma they are ready. Remove seeds from skillet and set aside.

To prepare beet greens, bring a large pot of water to boil. Wash beet greens by submerging the bunch in a sink full of cold water. Shake off water and chop the bunch into bite-size pieces. Drop greens into boiling water to make the stems tender. Place greens in a colander and run cold water over them to halt cooking.

Place all dressing ingredients in a jar and shake well. Peel beets and cut into small cubes. Squeeze excess water out of the cooked beet greens. Put cubed beets, beet greens, pumpkin seeds, and scallions in a salad bowl. Crumble feta cheese on top. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Preparation time: 1 hour to cook beets; 15-20 minutes to assemble salad.  
Makes 6 servings.

## Inspiration corner

Whosoever wishes to know about the world must learn about it in its particular details.

Knowledge is not intelligence.

In searching for the truth be ready for the unexpected.

Change alone is unchanging.

The same road goes both up and down.

The beginning of a circle is also its end.

Not I, but the world says it: all is one.

And yet everything comes in season.

**Heraclitus of Ephesos** (c. 540-c. 475 BC)

[Excerpted from **Fragments: the collected wisdom of Heraclitus**, translated by Brooks Haxton, Penguin Books, 2001.]

## Reflections...

### The Seasons – Spring

By Karen Miller-Lane, N.D., L.Ac.

One of the highlights of living in New England is the seasons. We have four/five distinct seasons. This provides the opportunities for *conscious* change amidst the *constant* change that are spring, mud season, summer, winter, and fall in Vermont.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine seasons are very important for understanding our health and well-being. Each season has a corresponding element. The “five elements” along with the theory of Yin and Yang constitute the basis of Chinese medical theory. This provides a grounding and understanding about how connected we are to our environment and to change. The seasons, diet, temperature, and emotions all affect our health and well-being in Chinese medicine and can support health when balanced or manifest in illness when out of balance.

Each of the five elements represents a season. The wood element corresponds to Spring and is associated with birth. As Dianne Connelly states in her book [Traditional Acupuncture The Law of the Five Elements](#)

“When the human being is flourishing just as the tree in the woods,  
The Energy, the vital Chi Energy is wholesome and clear.  
The human being is growing and rooted, flexible and strong,  
Carrying the seeds of new life and going through a cycle  
From season to season.”

What can we do to support ourselves during the spring or wood cycle?

This is a great time to support the liver, the yin organ that corresponds with the element wood and the season spring, by using foods and gentle herbs. When I think about spring I am drawn to nettle leaf and dandelion root tea, steamed nettles and dandelion leaf salads. They both support the liver and grow in the spring. Dandelions, and nettles especially, are beneficial as a spring tonic and rejuvenator. It is a time to begin adding pungent (spicy), sweet, & lightly warm foods to the diet to prepare the body for summer – moving from the cold into warmer weather. Basil, fennel, marjoram, rosemary, caraway, dill, & bayleaf are pungent cooking spices desirable for spring and support liver qi. This is the time to think green as it seems overnight trees burst forth and all around us is lush and green. What a wonderful way to remind us of the liver foods we should be focusing on - dark green leafy vegetables.

As we transition from winter to spring, take time to honor the changes in light, temperature, and foods available and how you feel as you move from the energy of solitude and conservation that is the winter toward growth and beginnings. The seasons give us an opportunity to notice what's around us and that everything changes. What will you do to honor that change in you?

## Health Corner

### Is Stress Making You Ill?

What is this amorphous thing called stress? In 1992, the United Nations named job stress "The 20th Century Disease," and the World Health Organization has called it a "World Wide Epidemic." Hans Selye, MD, one of the pioneers in stress, defined stress as "nonspecific response of the body to a demand." Stress isn't itself a bad thing. In fact, it is essential. It is also variable. We have all felt varying levels of stress in our life and know that it shifts. For some of us stress may manifest as a fatigue, feeling overwhelmed, tension headaches, or in others heartburn or high blood pressure. These are all real experiences and it speaks to the complexity of stress and how it impacts our lives. But what is stress doing inside of us? Let's look at some of the research from three leading researchers in the area of stress: Robert M. Sapolsky, Ph.D. at Stanford University, Dr. Bruce McEwen, Ph.D at Rockefeller University, and Elissa Epel, Ph.D. University of California San Francisco.

Robert Sapolsky, Ph.D, a neuroscientist at Stanford University oversees a lab with 20 assistants who are investigating causes for neuronal cell death in the brain; in particular, how stress and the related stress hormones affect a neuron's ability to survive after trauma. He also has run a field lab in Kenya for the past 20 years studying the behavior of baboons. He is well known for being the author of **Why Zebras don't get Ulcers: An Updated Guide to Stress and Stress-related Diseases and Coping** published in 1998. In it he elucidates on how prolonged stress causes or intensifies a range of physical and mental afflictions, including depression, ulcers, colitis, heart disease, memory, personality

and temperament. His lab was among the first to document that stress can damage the neurons of the hippocampus in the brain. One aspect of his research has been to show how stress hormones not only impact blood pressure, our sex life and the immune system, but also damage the nervous system. He is looking at how on a cellular level a particular class of hormones released during stress can damage neurons and how and why some of us are at more risk for this damage than others.

Bruce McEwen, Ph.D., is Head of the Harold & Milliken Hatch Laboratory of Neuroendocrinology at Rockefeller University. Dr. Bruce McEwen wrote a highly cited paper in the journal of **Brain Research** titled “The neurobiology of stress: from serendipity to clinical relevance”. In this paper he explains how the dysregulation of stress hormones can cause problems in immune suppression, visceral obesity and atrophy of brain structures. While stress hormones are essential for adaptation and survival, when there is an increase or they are not properly regulated, the changes become cumulative over time. Given this understanding we also have the ability to make choices that can decrease the dysregulation of the biological mediators that cause these problems (allostasis) and can decrease our allostatic load (wear and tear on the system). He cites some of these as choices, “like eating sensibly, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep and having a break from work. These are things that our mothers and grandmothers tried to teach us, but they make even more sense when they are based upon an increasing understanding of mechanisms of adaptation and damage.”

Elissa Epel, Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, University of California San Francisco (UCSF) and her colleagues published a study which found evidence to support the long suspected association between stress and cellular aging in the December 1, 2004 issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences*. The study compared 39 healthy women caring for a chronically ill child with 19 healthy women raising a healthy child. Epel and her colleagues made the stunning discovery that the cells of the high stress women appeared to be about 13 years older, on average, than the cells of the low stress women. In the study, they found that both prolonged psychological stress and the perception of stress had a dramatic impact on three specific biological factors — oxidative stress, lower telomerase activity, and shorter telomere length — all of which are related to cell longevity and disease. Telomeres are the structures at the end of chromosomes. Telomeres promote genetic stability. They play a critical role in determining the health and life span of cells, as well as whatever tissues those particular cells may form. In their study, they found that oxidative stress was related to shorter telomeres in people, not only cell cultures. They were able to show that stress had effects visible at the intracellular level.

As she stated in an interview with the American Federation for Aging Research in January 2005 regarding the significance of the study: “This new work quantifies a physiological price to feeling highly stressed. It emphasizes the importance of managing feelings of stress as much as possible to give your body a break. This often means one has to make life changes that promote well being. It is very sad that people who are giving so much of their lives to help their loved ones are paying a high price in both their mental and physical health. Most significantly, it emphasizes the importance of having some respite. That means

taking time out to get one's own needs met. These may include sleep, social connections, exercise, and having some free time. Even taking small steps toward incorporating these salutary behaviors can improve one's mood.”

What all this research makes clear is that stress can affect our blood pressure, sex hormones, immune system, memory, and how rapidly we age. However, basic changes such as getting enough sleep, eating whole fresh foods, getting out and moving our bodies, feeling supported, giving ourselves time to ourselves and with good friends can all change the imbalance that stress hormones can play.

As a Naturopathic physician this is where the heart of medicine lies for me. It is about getting at the cause and providing individuals with the space and choices to begin making health decisions that will optimize their health and understand the patterns that may be sabotaging all their good intentions. Stress itself is not an ugly word. It is about how it defines us and what we choose to do with it. With knowledge comes understanding and an ability to make different choices. By beginning to understand the long term consequences of stress we can begin to make healthier long term choices that can make a difference. Stress is inevitable, but how it impacts your health and well-being is not.

## Recommendations

- If any of you listen to Speaking of Faith by Krista Tippett on public radio there was one morning in particular when she interviewed a wonderful poet and philosopher who recently passed away. **John O'Donohue** is worth reading and listening to. This website also lists his books, the interview and some of his poems, <http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/>
- Cookbook recommendation: **Feeding the Whole Family**, Cynthia Lair (Moon Smile Press, 1997)
- In anticipation of spring cleaning: **Clean Naturally**, by Sandy Maine (Interweave Press, 2001)

*When one flower blooms, spring awakens everywhere.*  
*John O'Donohue*