

Dear Practitioner,

Happy Autumn!

Have you had the chance to explore our new and improved web site? The upgrades that were made to make our site easier to use and to place orders should be immediately obvious. Our security systems have been vastly improved, and the new app makes it easy to access our site and order by phone or tablet. [www.gfcherbs.com](http://www.gfcherbs.com)

There are a number of informative articles in this newsletter. You may have patients or family members who complain of sleep apnea. If so, you should find the article herein by Jake Schmalzriedt, DOM, useful and informative. Ross Rosen, LAc, a specialist in pulse diagnostics, has contributed a piece exploring the important role the pulse can play in prioritizing strategies for our patients. We are also pleased to share more food therapy wisdom from Andrew Serman. We hope it helps you guide your patients to healthy food choices and using food as medicine. And please enjoy the article by Mary Saunders, DOM. Her book and on-line lectures are quality patient education support.

We have been getting an enthusiastic response to our line of essential oils, Alchemica Botanica, which are exclusively derived from common herbs in the Chinese *materia medica*. If you use essential oils and are a trained Chinese herbalist, you will enjoy using these high quality oils.

We are pleased to find more and more positive articles in the media about acupuncture and herbal medicines. The healing that we offer as practitioners of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine has a fantastic potential to transform people's lives in a positive way. Please be encouraged to send in and share articles to help spread the word about our medicine. Support your state professional AOM association and encourage your colleagues to be members. It is critical that we are engaged on all levels in order to help create a better future for our profession and ensure how our medicine will be available to future generations.

### **The Acupuncture Now Foundation**

We would like to make you aware of the Acupuncture Now Foundation, a not-for-profit educational foundation dedicated to educating the public, healthcare professionals, and health policymakers about the practice of acupuncture. The leadership of the ANF consists of volunteers dedicated to our vision of making acupuncture better understood and more widely available. The goal of the ANF is to bring down every barrier preventing acupuncture from meeting its true potential as a health care resource. We are excited that there is finally an organization dedicated to marketing and promoting acupuncture to the general public.

**ANF Vision:** A world where the benefits of acupuncture are known and available to all.

**ANF Mission:** To elevate acupuncture's impact on easing suffering and enhancing health through accurate information about its best practices.

Go to their website to learn about their Facebook presence and blog at [www.acupuncturenowfoundation.org](http://www.acupuncturenowfoundation.org). This organization greatly deserves your awareness and (tax deductible!) financial support. Let's work together to bring acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine to all of our friends and neighbors!

*We at Golden Flower Chinese Herbs are grateful for your business and support. We are committed to supporting the growth of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine nationally and internationally. We appreciate all of your communication, comments, and feedback.*

Sincerely,

John Scott, DOM and Lorena Monda, DOM



## Sleep Apnea

BY JAKE SCHMALZRIEDT, DOM

*(An expanded version of this article with acupuncture points and dietary recommendations is available on our website, [www.gfcherbs.com](http://www.gfcherbs.com))*

Sleep apnea is a sleep disorder that affects about 18 million adults in the United States. It occurs when breathing momentarily stops repeatedly throughout the night. The major symptom of sleep apnea is involuntary breathing cessation. This is often accompanied by snoring loudly, which is the most noticeable symptom of sleep apnea. It is important to note that every individual that snores does not necessarily have sleep apnea, but if you have sleep apnea, typically there is snoring. Other signs and symptoms include: being tired, sleepiness upon waking and throughout the day, restless sleep, waking abruptly with shortness of breath or gasping for air, headaches upon waking up, fatigue, insomnia, and irritability.

There are three types of sleep apnea; 1) obstructive sleep apnea, 2) central sleep apnea, and 3) complex sleep apnea.

**Obstructive sleep apnea** is the most common type of sleep apnea. It occurs when the muscles at the back of the throat relax, creating a narrowing or collapsing of the pharyngeal airway, resulting in inadequate oxygen intake. The narrowing of the airway usually causes loud snoring. The brain recognizes a decrease in blood oxygen levels, indicating that the person is not breathing or that airflow is being obstructed, preventing proper inhalation and exhalation; it briefly wakes him or her from sleep to enable the reopening of the airway. This momentary waking is usually unnoticeable by the individual. In some instances gasping or choking noises occur upon waking. This can take place on average anywhere from five to thirty times an hour, hundreds of times a night, and each episode can last from a few seconds to a minute or more.

There are a number of factors that increase risk of obstructive sleep apnea. Obstructive sleep apnea becomes more common as one ages, especially after age 40, but is seen in all ages. Obstructive sleep apnea is seen in both sexes. Men tend to be affected more than women. For women it is more common as a post-menopausal issue. Obstructive sleep apnea is more common in overweight or obese individuals as the soft tissue which includes the soft palate, uvula, tonsils, walls of the throat, and tongue, can become increased in size, decreasing and narrowing the airway. Other anatomical factors like an overbite, recessed chin, small jaw, deviated septum, and a large neck size can contribute. Smoking increases swelling in the upper respiratory tract. Alcohol plays a role, as it is a muscle

relaxant, relaxing the muscles in the back of the throat even more than normal, intensifying the severity of symptoms and elongating episodes. Genetic predisposition may also be a contributing factor to obstructive sleep apnea.

**Central sleep apnea** is less common than obstructive sleep apnea. In central sleep apnea, the respiratory center in the brain fails to transmit the correct signals to the muscles that are responsible for breathing. This results in not breathing for brief moments or breathing too shallowly to enable sufficient oxygen intake throughout the night. This lack of oxygen, like in obstructive sleep apnea, causes the body to momentarily wake up. The primary signs and symptoms of central sleep apnea are mostly the same as those for obstructive sleep apnea,

though the onset of symptoms involved with central sleep apnea are generally more sudden, as opposed to obstructive sleep apnea, which has a more gradual onset.

Central sleep apnea can affect anyone. Some medical conditions like heart disease, kidney failure, stroke, injuries to the brain stem (medulla oblongata and pons), spinal cord injuries, and Parkinson's, as well as certain medications like opiates (morphine, codeine, oxycodone, etc.) have been linked to central sleep apnea.

**Complex sleep apnea**, also known as treatment emergent central sleep apnea, is defined as a combination of both obstructive sleep apnea and central sleep apnea. The majority of individuals with central sleep apnea are also diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea. The diagnosis of complex sleep apnea is usually not found until obstructive sleep apnea has been addressed.

If sleep apnea is left untreated, hypoxemia (low blood oxygen levels), coupled with sleep deprivation, activates the sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight response) and causes a release of stress hormones (catecholamine and cortisol). Overtime this will have a negative impact on overall health. There is an increased risk of hypertension, heart attack, stroke, arrhythmias, diabetes, and depression associated with sleep apnea. Also with sleep apnea, there is an increased risk of accidents at work or while driving due to hypersomnia (excessive daytime sleepiness).

Western medicine treatment usually consists of a couple of options. A breathing device like the continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine is one of the primary treatment options for all types of sleep apnea. CPAP therapy uses constant air pressure to keep the airway open and prevent sleep apnea. Mouthpieces or mouth guards can be used to prevent airway collapse. They accomplish this by either supporting the position of the mandible (lower jaw) or holding the tongue in place. Surgery is





also used to treat areas of collapse by supporting or remodeling existing structures and/or removing tissue.

Sleep apnea will often go undiagnosed. Diagnosis and severity of sleep apnea can only be determined by a polysomnography or sleep study, either at home or in a sleep laboratory. This test records brain waves, blood oxygen level, heart rate, breathing, and eye, leg, chin, and chest movement. A multiple sleep latency test (MSLT) may also be done. This test measures the speed at which an individual falls asleep during the day. This time will generally be much quicker for an individual with sleep apnea as they are more fatigued due to the interrupted sleep at night.

### OM FOR OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA

In Oriental Medicine, obstructive sleep apnea is seen as a weakness or deficiency of the flow of lung qi or an obstruction to the flow of lung qi. Sleep apnea tends to be divided into deficiency or excess conditions. Deficiency conditions generally involve three yin organs; lung, spleen, and kidney, and are usually broken down into two primary patterns. These patterns include **lung/spleen deficiency** and **lung/kidney deficiency**. The excess patterns include **phlegm accumulation**, **liver qi stagnation**, **liver heat**, and **blood stasis**. Generally, it is a combination of excess and deficiency that is seen in the clinic, for example spleen deficiency with phlegm accumulation.

#### Lung

The lung has primary organ involvement in sleep apnea with a direct connection to the throat and breathing. The lung governs qi and the lung governs respiration. If the lung is deficient, its diffusion and dissemination functions will be impaired. The deficient lung qi results in a weak flow of qi. Additionally, retained fluids and phlegm will accumulate as a result.

#### Spleen

The spleen upbears clear yang qi to the lung. When the spleen is deficient, this function becomes impaired, resulting in lung deficiency. In five element theory, the spleen and lung share a mother/son relationship, in which the spleen (earth) nourishes and supports lung (metal). When the spleen is deficient, it will be unable to properly support the lung. If the spleen's transportation and transformation function is impaired, excess damp production occurs. This excess is stored in the lungs, resulting in obstruction of the free flow of qi. With the spleen's directional movement upward, it is responsible for upbearing and preventing prolapse of organs. This applies to the soft tissue of the palate and throat as well. If the spleen function is strong it will keep the structure in place. If deficient, the throat loses muscle tone and relaxes, narrowing the airway.

#### Kidney

One of the functions of the kidney is to aid in respiration by grasping qi. If the kidney is deficient, its grasping and astringing functions will be impaired, resulting in the kidney's failure to grasp and hold the qi. This leads to

respiratory difficulties, including sleep apnea. This deficiency can be either a deficiency of kidney yin or kidney yang. The kidney is also responsible for regulating water metabolism in the body. Excess fluid in the body commonly results in edema. It also results in fluid buildup in the lungs. This excess impairs lung function, causing an obstruction to the flow of lung qi. It is important to note that while the kidney rules water metabolism, any or all of the previously mentioned organs—lung, spleen, kidney—may be involved in regulating water metabolism.

#### Phlegm

There will almost always be some element of phlegm in sleep apnea. This excess condition obstructs the flow of lung qi. Snoring is the sound of phlegm obstructing the airway. Phlegm generally originates because of a spleen and lung deficiency. The phlegm then encumbers these yin organs, further hindering their deficiency. Phlegm-damp obstruction, often with qi and blood stagnation, is a common presentation for overweight individuals. Phlegm has a physical manifestation as excess fatty tissue surrounding the upper airway including the soft palate, throat walls, and other tissues of the oropharynx in obstructive sleep apnea. Invisible, or non-substantial, phlegm may also be present in the throat, encumbering airflow.

#### Blood Stasis

Blood stasis will often accompany phlegm turbidity and usually comes from chronic stagnation of qi. Blood stasis is often associated with aging. The presentation of blood stasis may not manifest in the typical manner as a fixed, sharp, stabbing pain, but rather is seen more as a hardening of structures, a rigidity, and dryness. You will also see the presence of blood stasis in the tongue and pulse. The tongue will be purple, stiff, with engorged sublinguals. The pulse will be tight, choppy, or wiry.

#### Liver Excess

Liver excess presents as liver qi stagnation or liver heat. This pattern in combination with phlegm accumulation is one of the most common presentations of sleep apnea, especially for non-overweight individuals. Liver qi stagnation inhibits the qi mechanism causing problems to the free flow of lung qi. This obstruction over time damages lung function. Qi stagnation combined with phlegm accumulation obstructs and inhibits qi flow in the throat. Heat congeals phlegm, further exacerbating the condition.

One of the risk factors of sleep apnea is that it becomes more common as you age. At 40, the kidney *jing* begins to decline, and as a result, the kidney is not as efficient at grasping qi and regulating water metabolism. Spleen function also tends to decline with age, making it easier to gain weight and to more easily become fatigued. Phlegm and blood stasis are also common factors with many age related conditions, and some consider phlegm and blood stasis as a primary pathological presentation of old age in modern times.

To recap, the primary aspects of sleep apnea include: deficiency of lung, spleen, and kidney; and phlegm accumulation, blood stagnation, and liver qi stagnation and/or liver heat. Treating the appropriate presentation will result in effective treatment. The following are suggested herbal formulas based on pattern differentiation for obstructive sleep apnea.

#### HERBAL FORMULAS FOR OSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA Lung/Spleen Deficiency

For lung/spleen deficiency, the primary deficiency pattern, use **Ginseng and Astragalus Formula** (*Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang*). This formula raises yang qi and supports both lung and spleen deficiency. The chief herb, astragalus (*huang qi*), governs these actions. Astragalus (*huang qi*), white atractylodes (*bai zhu*), and ginseng (*ren shen*) support the spleen, addressing the root of phlegm. Astragalus (*huang qi*) with cimicifuga (*sheng ma*) raise the yang qi. In addition to the tonifying actions of this formula, it also contains bupleurum (*chai hu*) to support the liver, tang kuei (*dang gui*) to nourish and move blood, and tangerine peel (*chen pi*) to regulate qi, making it extremely well suited to treat sleep apnea. For additional support, Platycodon Combination (*Jie Geng Tang*, KPC 2530) can be used as a guiding formula to the upper airway and can be easily added to other formulas.

#### Lung/Kidney Deficiency

For lung/kidney deficiency, **Restore the Lung Formula** (*Bu Fei Tang*) is a beneficial formula to support lung and kidney. The astragalus (*huang qi*) raises qi and supports the lung. Cured rehmannia (*shu di huang*) and schisandra fruit (*wu wei zi*) tonify the kidney's ability to grasp qi. Codonopsis (*dang shen*) supports spleen qi. This formula also contains phlegm-transforming herbs, which include mulberry root bark (*sang bai pi*), aster root (*zi wan*), and platycodon root (*jie geng*). Mulberry root bark (*sang bai pi*) and aster root (*zi wan*) also clear heat, while platycodon root (*jie geng*) is used as a guiding herb.

#### Phlegm

**Pinellia and Magnolia Bark Formula** (*Ban Xia Hou Po Tang*) has a focus on the throat addressing damp/phlegm accumulation and qi stagnation. Its chief herbs, prepared pinellia (*zhi ban xia*) and magnolia bark (*hou po*) have secondary functions to regulate qi. Added to the original formulation are cyperus (*xiang fu*) and green tangerine peel (*qing pi*) to strengthen this function. This formula can easily be combined with other formulas. For Phlegm-heat, use **Fritillaria and Pinellia Formula** (*Chuan Bei Ban Xia Tang*).

**Hawthorn and Fennel Formula** (*Shan Zha Xiao Hui Xiang Fang*) is a good formula for phlegm accumulation with qi stagnation and an underlying spleen qi deficiency. This formula is commonly used to help individuals lose weight.

#### Liver Disharmonies

For liver qi stagnation use **Chai Hu Shu Gan Formula** (*Chai Hu Shu Gan Tang*). This formula is excellent for regu-

lating qi and blood, while lightly supporting the spleen and harmonizing liver and spleen. For liver heat/fire use **Gentiana Drain Fire Formula** (*Long Dan Xie Gan Tang*). Liver pattern disharmonies are commonly seen with phlegm accumulation and should be combined with an appropriate formula to address this, if needed.

#### Blood Stasis

**Blood Palace Formula** (*Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang*) is rarely used alone for sleep apnea, but is a good formula used in combination with other formulas to address the element of blood stasis that may be present.

#### Combined Excess and Deficient Pattern

**Salvia 10 Formula** (*Dan Shen Jia Si Jun Zi Pian*) is an excellent formula for combined excess and deficient pattern sleep apnea. This formula addresses blood stagnation with salvia (*dan shen*), curcuma (*yu jin*), and red peony root (*chi shao*). Curcuma (*yu jin*) has the added function to transform phlegm. Albizia flower (*he huan hua*) regulates qi and calms shen. The base of the formula is **Six Gentleman Formula** (*Liu Jun Zi Tang*) that is used to support the middle burner and transform damp/phlegm.

#### OM FOR CENTRAL SLEEP APNEA

In Oriental Medicine, central sleep apnea is generally due to a blood and phlegm obstruction, blocking the clear flow of qi and yang of the brain, with an underlying deficiency. Often the underlying deficiency will involve the spleen and kidney. Treatment should consist of clearing the obstruction by addressing the excess accumulation of phlegm and blood stasis, supporting the spleen, the root of phlegm; and nourishing the kidneys, supporting marrow and the brain.

**Salvia 10 Formula** (*Dan Shen Jia Si Jun Zi Pian*) is one of two primary options for formulas to address central sleep apnea. This formula promotes circulation of qi and blood, resolves phlegm, calms the *shen*, opens the orifices, and supports underlying spleen deficiency. Salvia root (*dan shen*) and curcuma (*yu jin*), the chief herbs in the formula, have the function to stimulate cerebral circulation and are used to benefit disorders of the brain.

Ginkgo (*yin guo ye*) is another herb that stimulates cerebral circulation and has been shown to have neuroprotective properties. Ginkgo (*yin guo ye*) is the chief herb in the **Ginkgo Formula** (*Yin Guo Ye Wan*), another excellent formula for central sleep apnea. The formula's actions are to supplement heart and liver blood, open the orifice, calm the *shen*, and sedate liver fire and liver wind.

Over time sleep apnea will damage qi and yin. Appropriate modifications / additions can be added to the previous formulas to address the underlying deficiencies like **Sheng Mai Formula** (*Sheng Mai San*) or **Eight Immortals Formula** (*Ba Xian Chang Shou Wan*). For additional kidney support use tonics like **Essential Yang Formula** (*Jia Jian Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan*), **Rehmannia Six Formula** (*Liu Wei Di Huang Wan*), **Two Immortals Formula** (*Jia Jian Er Xian Tang*) or **Nourish Essence Formula** (*Zi Jing Di Huang Wan*).



# GETTING FOOD IN ORDER: A GUIDE TO MEAL DESIGN

By Andrew Stermán

Food talk today can be complex and confusing: eat more of this, less of that; this is a superfood, that other is a must-avoid...or is it the other way around? Fads come and go, and studies can be found to justify almost anything. What is often overlooked is the importance of the way foods are combined into dishes and into meals. This is the open secret: it's not just the foods we include or exclude, it is the amounts and the way we combine them that may be the key to supporting good digestion and—by direct extension—nearly every aspect of our health.

In earlier times there was no order to meals, all the food was present on the table at once. Think of the European medieval banquet. Early recipe books and court paintings tell the story of huge tables laden with soups made with fruit and spices, porridges, roast meats, cheeses, meat pies, fruit pies, fish pies, pastries, breads and cheeses. Commoners, meanwhile, generally ate one-pot meals with anything available included. Things were similar in Asia, where savory and sweet dishes are still commonly served together. Dessert in Chinese restaurants is not well-developed by our Western standard. When I first began traveling to China, a meal was completed by a quick broth made from the bones of the fish that had been part of the meal. That tradition, so sensible, rooted in peasant ingenuity, using every bit of food for nourishment, sadly, has seemed to have fallen away with increased availability and the growth of affluence. Today, appetizers and desserts may be offered as a nod to Western custom, but meals in Asia tend to be more a celebration of bounty than an organized sequence of dishes.

The division of a meal into courses is not a contribution of East or West, but was introduced to Europe by an Arabic musician and master of lifestyle, Abu al-Hassan, also known as Ziryab (al-Hassan's nickname means blackbird, a reference to his singing skill, his unusually well-tended black hair or his dark skin). Ziryab left Baghdad in the early 9th century for Cordoba, Spain, the farthest point of the Arabic world. There he found patronage, built a school for performing arts and hosted highly sought-after dinner parties. A cultural star in his day, Ziryab was responsible for many innovations. Under his influence Andalusians learned to wear clothing of differing weight and colors for different seasons, washing and trimming hair often, scenting it with

aromatic oils, using deodorant and toothpaste, (all firsts in Europe). He even contributed to the evolution of the Arabic lute into the modern guitar. His fine dinners were served one course at a time, beginning with a soup, then dishes with meat or fish. Fruits and sweets were served only after the heavy dishes had been removed. Almonds were nibbled afterward, during conversation and performances. Arabic Andalusia fell to unified Spain 600 years later, but Ziryab's influence continued to spread, becoming inseparable from modern living.

The adoption of the sequential meal brought welcome clarity to an extended dinner, and cooks in many cultures have created healthy and delicious traditions. Sometimes, however, foods can clash and digestion can be bogged down, leading

to discomfort, weight gain and gradual degeneration of health. Too many pleasures tonight can result in great displeasure in both short and long term.

To understand the many contributions Chinese medicine has to offer here, it is necessary to understand a few concepts.

- First, it is important to differentiate between *basic eating* and *dietary therapy*. All of us could benefit from careful and specific uses of food, but most of us eat for enjoyment and reasonable health maintenance within a social, emotional or cultural context. This is basic eating. In contrast, therapeutic eating calls for a conscious selection of foods and methods within a well-formed strategy aiming at a specific goal, for example, to support fertility, reverse pre-diabetes, prevent hay-fever or migraines, rid bronchitis, support cancer recovery, etc. The focus here is on basic eating rather than therapeutic diets.

- Second, foods are classified into one of the three levels of qi: *wei* qi level, *ying* qi level and *yuan* qi level. While foods are understood in nutrition science through analysis of their material contents (offering some useful details), Chinese dietary medicine understands foods through keen observation of how a food interacts with our being. These assessments are made based on direct insight and experience, but also through classification based on a food's origin, its part of the plant (root, tuber, stem, leaf, flower, fruit, seed, nut, etc.), its animal's nature (sea or land, fast or slow, etc.) This classification process can become extremely refined and precise, but it is possible to work with it right away.



*Ying Qi Level*—*Ying* qi means nutritive qi, or the level of basic nourishment. *Ying* qi foods are basic to humanity: grains, beans (legumes), leafy vegetables, tubers and root vegetables, many nuts and seeds, and meat from land animals, poultry, fish, and many fermented foods. These foods resonate with the organs of digestion: stomach, spleen, pancreas, liver, gallbladder, small and large intestine. It is from this level of food and function that we derive principle nourishment for building bones, blood, muscles and hormones. This is the “middle” level of qi, but I’m presenting it here first because it is central for diet.

*Yuan Qi Level*—*Yuan* qi means original, source, or constitutional qi and refers to the deepest level of our health: our genetic health, our bones, marrow, gonadal and adrenal hormones, and the organs of kidney, bladder, reproductive system, and so forth. *Yuan* qi foods support this level and include shellfish, eggs, mushrooms, some seeds and nuts, sea vegetables, bone broths, etcetera.

*Wei Qi Level*—*Wei* qi means protective/defensive qi and refers to the body’s complex active response capacity. *Wei* qi protects us from germs and challenging experiences. *Wei* qi is the energy behind our overall alertness as well as a host of defensive functions from sweating and sneezing to localized healing responses to trauma such as inflammation and swelling. ‘*Wei*’ denotes ‘the outer’, but *wei* qi actually functions throughout the body. *Wei* qi relates particularly to the lungs but relies on many contributing factors for support. Foods that resonate most with *wei* qi are the products of plants and animals, such as nuts, dairy foods, fruits, honey, and, of course, chicken soup.

• Third, it is important to understand the concept of prenatal qi (the inherited spark of life that functions tenaciously as a kind of pilot light beneath all our functions) and postnatal qi (the day-to-day fuel we extract from eating and breathing to support growth, repair and all bodily functions). Prenatal qi, being inherited, is finite, but postnatal qi is created by effective digestion and assimilation of food. Simply eating something isn’t enough; postnatal qi is created as food is broken down, separated, nutrients absorbed, mixed with fresh breath in the lungs, then transported throughout the body to be metabolized. Digestive strength and integrity are even more important than the selection and quality of food. Prenatal and postnatal qi are important collective concepts because they are in a kind of mutual dance. Prenatal qi is like a limited amount of candle wax with a gentle flame burning; this flame is enough to light the ‘fire’ of digestion and support the warmth of *wei* qi. Postnatal qi is gathered from the world through eating and breathing supported by the inherent life-fire of prenatal qi. But, if we don’t eat or breathe well, if our food is consistently poor, if we eat while stressed or at wildly irregular times, if we derive energy from caffeine or sugar rather than food, or if we suppress our lung

qi with cold drinks while digesting, then postnatal qi will not be amply formed from our meals and our bodies will reach into prenatal qi for more and more support. In the well-known paraphrase of the American poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, this is ‘burning the candle at both ends’; in the view of Chinese dietary medicine it is using constitutional reserves to finance what should be supported by the good digestion of an appropriate diet. Seen either way, it weakens us at the deepest level of our health and prevents us from living our fully allotted days. (It should be noted that if health and spirit are exceptionally well-balanced, some masters have taught that it is possible to replenish prenatal qi, but whether or not this is possible, the principal method is to protect prenatal qi by living life from postnatal qi.)

### Constructing Healthy, Satisfying Meals

It is possible to understand constructing satisfying meals that are truly health-supportive with these (somewhat overlapping) concepts in mind.

**For Basic Eating:** Combine foods from one level of qi at a time. The foods for basic nourishment are largely in the *ying*/nutritive qi level: grains (rice, breads and noodles, millet, oats, etc.), greens (e.g., broccoli, kale, chard, green beans), squash, rhizomes and root vegetables (zucchini, squashes, edible pumpkins and their seeds, potato, sweet potato, carrot, parsnip, beets), beans, fish and meat (beef, lamb, chicken, most fish). For basic eating these foods can safely be combined together.

Foods from the *wei* qi level are best eaten as solo meals or alone as snacks: milk should be a solo food (if you choose to include dairy in your diet), and cheese is best as a snack where digestion can begin and finish its work before other foods are eaten. Fruit and nuts are best alone or combined together (still within one level, for example, almonds with raisins and coconut shavings).

Foods from the *yuan* qi level can also be eaten alone, for example, snacking on walnuts or chestnuts. *Yuan* qi level foods are also often combined with *ying* qi level foods for specific purposes in a therapeutic eating strategy, establishing mutual support between the *yuan* and *ying* qi levels.

**For Therapeutic Eating:** selectively combine *yuan* qi or *wei* qi level foods with *ying* qi foods to add directionality, internal communication and mutual support.

### Portions

Portion size should be determined with clear intention in order to avoid confusing the body’s energetics. Focus on the *ying* qi level by making those foods the largest part of the meal (or dish) and make connections to *yuan* qi or *wei* qi levels by introducing small amounts of their representative foods (for example, a side dish of seaweed salad or fish crusted with sesame seeds or pine nuts). Use spices (*wei* qi



level) to fine tune the dish. It is the relative proportion in a dish which indicates to the body which foods are principal and which function in various supportive roles.

### Tastes and Properties

The tastes (sweet, salty, bitter, pungent, sour and bland) add important functionality to dishes. The cooling or warming nature of various foods is also of central importance, as is the part of the plant (root, bulb, stalk, leaf, bud, flower, etc.) Integrating this point of view with the very familiar categorization of foods as either carbohydrates (grains, tubers, sugars), proteins (beans, animal food), and fats (oils, nuts, seeds, dairy) can create a rich palette for healthy eating that is creative, delicious and satisfying. Above all, meals designed within these guidelines will be easy to digest. When digestion is poor, consuming even good food leads to distress, weight problems and eventual ill-health.

### Poor Digestion

Sometimes the way we have been eating no longer works for us; our digestion no longer keeps up with what we feed ourselves.

Signs of sluggish or weak digestion are:

- + tiredness or sense of discomfort after eating
- + hiccups, burping, flatulence
- + bloating, discomfort, distention, pain
- + difficulty concentrating ('foggy brain') after eating (often arising 1-2 hours after)
- + constipation, possibly alternating with diarrhea
- + puffiness including in the ankles, hips, belly, chest, throat or face

### Appetizers

The appetizer's true role is to clear stagnation from poorly digested old food and prepare digestion for the current meal. Appetizers today are often only small portions of common dishes (in the style of the medieval free-for-all); too often this confuses digestion rather than awakening appetite. Ascertain whether starter dishes are well-chosen or merely additional desirable food.

Foods that work well as appetizers are those with a clearly descending directionality, either through being a root (e.g., carrots, beets) or having a mildly bitter taste (olives, artichokes). Fermented foods are also important appetizers because they aid digestion, particularly of the liver/gall bladder function (pickles, miso soup, olives and brined artichoke hearts). Small amounts of aperitif wine or a spoon of apple cider vinegar are also fermented and stimulate the stomach acid required for digesting protein and assimilating minerals needed for renewing bone strength.

### Spices

Spices are not merely for enjoyment or cuisine purposes, spices and kitchen herbs strongly aid the digestion, if used strategically. Spices are a 'tool kit' to help digest the foods they accompany.

(See *An Introduction to the Energetics of Kitchen Herbs & Spices* in the Spring 2016 Golden Flower Newsletter—available on our website [gfcherbs.com](http://gfcherbs.com))

### Side Dishes

Side dishes must not compete with main dishes or confuse digestion by creating poor combinations. Side dishes usually are made from *ying qi* level foods (green vegetables, potatoes, beets, etc.) or *yuan qi* level foods, such as mushrooms and sea vegetables.

### Other Considerations

Good meal design must consider the time of day and your plans for that day.

+ Breakfast should open our senses to start the day. It can be beneficial to us some grain (porridge-style or bread) to supply carbohydrates for fuel and glucoregulation, some protein (eggs, because they are easy to digest) to support *yuan qi* or simply for building and repairing the body. Orange juice is the essence of a fruit, and therefore easily overconsumed; a small amount is best to open the senses and stimulate the *wei qi* level. Milk (in cereal or coffee) also helps keep the *wei qi* level alert, however, it's easy to see that a common breakfast with milk, orange juice, grain product and protein includes all three *qi* levels and is therefore difficult to digest and energetically unclear. To optimize that type of breakfast, skillfully balance the portions: very small glass of juice (if any), no milk, principal portion of eggs with some toast and butter. Avoiding any refined sugar (in coffee, as jam, honey or maple syrup, etc.) will allow the body to extract fuel (blood sugar) from the food (rather than sweets), fostering alertness throughout the morning. Around the world, many breakfast options focus on a grain, a protein and some herbs, rather than beginning the day with sweets and caffeine, as is common for many busy Westerners.

+ Lunch is the ideal time for protein, providing building materials for replenishment and repair while the day is still active.

+ Dinner ideally is a quieter meal, a time for conversation. Have animal food and warming spices if preparing to go out, or focus on grain (rice or millet, etc.) and cooler protein (beans, tofu, fish) for a quiet evening (with, of course, plenty of green vegetables). The evening is a time to digest not only our dinners but thoughts and feelings from the day.

### Dessert

Ideally, dessert, if planned, will complete something missing in the meal, a flavor, an energy. Or think of the innovations of Ziryab: sweets—fruit, preserved fruits, dairy, spices from flowers such as vanilla or saffron, belonging to the *wei qi* level—should be separated from the main eating, reserved for well after the meal, if desired. Can we digest any more? Will a bit of sweetness harmonize the meal or throw a wrench into the digestive works?



patient's health via blood tests, MRIs, x-rays, and western medical diagnoses and asked to treat based upon this information. Many have been convinced that these tests are the gold standard. With Chinese medicine we can know better. We know to seek the process, not a moment in time. We know to search for the roots, not be distracted by, or prioritize, the branches. We can know the why and not just the what.

The pulse is our gateway to this knowledge and though it may take time and effort to master, the dividends it pays are worth one's patience (and patients). Some common examples I see from interactions with students and other practitioners can illustrate some of the many benefits of the pulse. Below are just two examples of many to motivate and inspire one to delve a bit deeper into the mysteries contained within, and the importance of, the pulse at the radial artery.

1. Cancer and autoimmune disorders: It is not uncommon for practitioners to see cancer patients and those with compromised immunity. How does one know whether or not to attack fire toxins and cancerous activity or strengthen the patient and seek latency/dormancy instead? This is an area where I see a lot of damage being done to an already precarious community of patients. Many see stagnation and toxins (by virtue of a cancer diagnosis)—the what, not the why— and seek to eliminate toxins and move stagnation. Often times this is highly inappropriate and ill advised and can speed up the demise of one's patient. The pulse will let us know if the patient has enough strength to afford the invigoration of blood and release of toxins and whether or not there are sufficient resources to finance such a plan. After all, Chinese medicine instructs us to consider our patient's constitution and terrain, not just the stress/bacteria/cancer. It is the landscape that these pathogens reside in that is of paramount importance. Seeking to break up stagnation and release toxins in an individual who has lost the ability to maintain latency can be disastrous. And seeking to eliminate a pathogen without sufficient resources (yin-fluid) to flush it out will waste qi and impede resolution. The pulse can give us direct knowledge of the status of these factors and help determine the proper strategy to embark upon (and when it might be appropriate to switch strategies).

2. Pulse Signatures: Over the course of my studies and practice of Shen-Hammer and Classical pulse diagnosis, I have seen a number of repetitive 'signature' pulses that I always associate to specific health concerns and even social medicine issues affecting us all.

a. Radiation toxicity: Back in 2008 I began noticing a trend of Leather pulses in young individuals. Having only felt these pulses in patients exposed to radiation therapies during cancer treatments, I became concerned. After sharing my findings with Dr. Leon Hammer and discussing this trend, we realized that this pulse was revealing a burge-

## Why Pulse?

BY ROSS ROSEN

*Dao gives birth to the One*

*One gives birth to the Two*

*Two gives birth to the Three*

*Three gives birth to the ten-thousand things*

—*Dao De Jing Chapter 42*

Patients coming in to our clinics often present with manifestations of the ten-thousand things. Years and often decades of symptoms present themselves to us to be sifted through, understood and prioritized, and these symptomatic branches must be traced back to their root causes. We as clinicians are all confronted with this task and how well it is done determines our success in the treatment room. Treating without this knowledge often leads to temporary relief at best, and more often an inability to create positive change for those under our care. But the art of Chinese medicine should not rely on a diagnostic stab in the dark; we are charged with a higher calling: healing our patients. And while healing does not look the same for everyone, it should create an awareness and an opportunity for positive change in a patient's life.

While all the diagnostic pillars play a significant role, the pulse has always been the hallmark of Chinese medical diagnostics. From palpating the radial artery at the wrist, we have the capacity to understand our patients in a way that even they themselves may not. We can learn not only of their current plight and symptoms, but also their histories, emotional and psychological states, behavioral patterns, genetics and predispositions, their constitution and personality. We can see links from their pasts that manifest in the present and even predict where they may move to in the future. As the classics state, the superior physician must understand transmission. The pulse provides this timeline. And we must be able to intervene in a way that prevents harm while causing the spark that initiates wellness. We must provide that opportunity and can only do so if we can properly diagnose all the disparate pieces of our patient's physiology and pathology and create a synthesis therefrom which can be used in the treatment phases of our interactions.

All too often we are provided with snapshots of our



## 4 GETTING FOOD IN ORDER: A GUIDE TO MEAL DESIGN

If desired, add a dessert with spices to help digest and resolve heaviness: vanilla, cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove. Introduce a waiting period, a chance to assimilate what we've already consumed. Allow time for the meal to "land" and for us to feel sated; maybe we won't need dessert after a 20 minute patience period. Either way, observe how you feel, and if the pleasant humming-warmth in the belly that accompanies good digestion turns into a sense of being very, very full, you have sabotaged a clear meal. Note this for next time.

### Summary

We eat to remain lively, to provide for growth and repair, and to provide fuel (well-regulated blood sugar). We eat to absorb what we need in order to move forward in our lives. We also eat to feel our cultural roots or to explore the culinary gifts of the world. We eat to create and share intimacy. All these reasons overlap in the collage we call 'eating'.

If problems do arise (and there are always challenges, small or large), it is essential to reduce or eliminate foods that create or exacerbate the problem, or that prevent the problem from resolving. Then, look to restore digestive strength and integrity:

- eat smaller meals
- include true appetizers
- use side dishes that contribute without confusing digestion
- include spices and kitchen herbs (the 'tool kit') skillfully
- combine foods within *ying* qi level for main eating; add yuan qi level foods for deep support, and eat wei qi level foods as solo snacks, for basic eating
- wait before having second portions or dessert
- look honestly at your food habits; reduce or eliminate those that support problems. Eat for lively vitality.

These are very simple guidelines from the highly nuanced field of energetics. It is not necessary to know the details of each food; focusing on improving digestion is more than half the journey. As our two young children will tell you, a basic meal includes a grain, a green and a protein. Specific therapeutic meals can be exceptions. Understanding these principles provides a template for delicious eating made from simple ingredients that speak for themselves in a language our bodies innately understand.

### Sample Menus

As you work with people focusing on their health and diets, the traditional teaching of Chinese dietary medicine is confirmed again and again: health is personal and diet must adjust individually and for the seasons, there is absolutely no general advice that fits everyone or every time. Yet, sharing meals is central to good living and it's not practical to cook differently for everyone day in and out. In our home we cook for whomever has the most pressing need, including any guest who may drop in for dinner nursing a cold or having had a particularly tough day.

But basically, a meal is a grain, a green and a protein. From there, adjust according to your knowledge of food energetics

and what you know of how everyone is doing. Here are a few sample meals for when basic eating is appropriate (or as a starting place to adjust for specific needs). Cooking, like life, is an improviser's game. Consider all recipes and meal plans as suggestions to be modified, ad libitum.

### Meal 1

*Appetizer:* Sliced carrots with olive oil and pinch of sea salt. Steam lightly to add some yang qi to a cold food; leave just enough crunchiness to stimulate digestion via the stomach meridian which runs through the jaw. (Nibble the appetizer as you cook and converse.)

*Grain:* Steamed millet.

*Green:* Steamed kale, with olive oil and crushed sesame seeds sprinkled on top.

*Protein:* Lentils (any variety) cooked with cardamom, coriander seed, cumin, fresh ginger and turmeric, with butter, ghee, or grapeseed oil and pinch of salt when finished.

### Meal 2

*Appetizer:* Cured olives and artichoke hearts in brine.

*Grain:* 2/3 white rice mixed with 1/3 buckwheat kasha (cook together). Brown rice has more nutrients but is markedly more difficult to digest. From a cuisine point of view, I prefer brown rice with vegetarian meals and white with heavier animal-food meals. Buckwheat adds a moving quality that helps avoid stagnation.

*Green:* Asparagus and zucchini, sliced and sautéed together.

*Side dish:* Crimini mushrooms cooked in butter, tamari, and a scrape of nutmeg.

*Protein:* Sliced skirt steak marinated in tamari, balsamic vinegar and sliced fresh ginger, cooked medium rare.

### A Breakfast

*First thing is Water:* room temperature plain water first thing in the day, one or two glasses, a centerpiece of good health.

*Grain:* Corn polenta cooked with butter, served with a sprinkle of salt and just a touch of freshly cracked pepper.

*Green:* Parsley or cilantro.

*Protein:* Poached (or other method) eggs (or sautéed tofu for vegetarian option).

**ANDREW STERMAN** teaches food energetics and sees clients for private dietary therapy and qigong practice in New York City. He has studied broadly in holistic cooking, and since 2001 has been a student of Daoist Master Jeffrey Yuen in herbal medicine, qigong, tai chi, meditation and of course, dietary therapy from the classical Chinese Medicine tradition. Andrew is currently completing a multi-volume book on food energetics and previews material on his blog, [andrewsterman.com/#!blog/c5kf](http://andrewsterman.com/#!blog/c5kf) or at [facebook.com/UnderstandingFood](https://facebook.com/UnderstandingFood).

ing medical crisis regarding the impact of electromagnetic radiation on our physiologies. It prompted us to publish an article on this topic back in 2009. This pulse quality has been increasing over the years and has become a significant marker in understanding a number of unexplained illnesses and how people are becoming more and more *yin-jing* deficient and toxic as a result of exposure to EMFs.

b. Breast cancer: There are certain illnesses that seem epidemic in our time, breast cancer being an important and life-threatening one. Seeing dozens of patients with this complaint, I noticed early on a finding that has shown 100% reliability in my practice for understanding a root cause; namely separation of yin and yang in the liver (an empty pulse in left middle position). While this quality can manifest in varied instances and for countless reasons, when it is found along with a restricted and muffled quality in the special lung position, breast cancer will be found on the opposite side to the special lung position finding. This becomes a significant finding in understanding a root cause, but also helps us to determine a strategy of treatment (see example 1 above). Even more profound than detecting this manifestation of cancer is being able to detect the process of this in development in order to prevent the occurrence of breast cancer. In this regard, I have found over the years that prior to the special lung position becoming restricted, there are intermediary stages wherein that position demonstrates a profound reduced substance quality in the center of the position. Should that be allowed to progress, eventually the reduced substance advances to a point wherein it 'pinches off' and separates, bifurcating the pulse, one side becoming restricted. This process, in my opinion, reflects formation of a tumor and eventual blockage of circulation to the tissues. I have had the unfortunate opportunity to diagnose this early stage and predict a future breast cancer in a few patients who did not continue treatments, only to find out years later that it had in fact developed.

So, why pulse? Because understanding the pulse provides context, clarity, definition, detail, and specificity to our patients' complaints and allows us to see, prioritize, and stratify the diagnoses at the root of the ten-thousand things.

ROSS ROSEN, JD, MSTOM, LAc, Dipl OM (NCCAOM) is the owner and founder of the Center for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine in Westfield, NJ ([www.acupunctureandherbalmedicine.com](http://www.acupunctureandherbalmedicine.com)). He is a senior certified teacher by Dr. Leon Hammer and serves on the board of directors of Dragon Rises Seminars and Contemporary Oriental Medicine Foundation. He is also a long-time student of Jeffrey Yuen in Classical Chinese Medicine. Ross actively teaches Shen-Hammer and Classical pulse diagnosis as well as offering year-long mentorship courses which encompass Shen-Hammer and Classical Chinese medicine foundational material, including the work of Dr. John Shen, the secondary vessels and much more.

**Ross Rosen will be presenting a 3-part series on the Shen-Hammer pulse diagnostic system at Golden Flower Chinese Herbs in Albuquerque beginning in April of 2017.**

## Educating Our Patients for Greater Clinical Success

BY MARY SAUNDERS

Excess stress, smoking, drinking, improper diet, and lack of exercise are five main contributors to

disease. We all know this, patients and practitioners alike, so why don't we change our habits around these issues? It is not simply a question of forcing ourselves to do something we know will be good for us. We have most likely tried this approach numerous times, and it just does not work over the long term. In fact, the odds are nine-to-one against us changing these behaviors that make us sick. Even with the support of acupuncture and herbal medicine, we have all seen how difficult it is for patients to beat those odds.

I was thinking about this while reading Maoshing Ni's translation of the *Huangdi Neijing*. I became interested in the section on the five failings of the physician, especially the fourth failing which occurs in counseling.

*"When a physician is hasty and does not make the effort to guide the patient's mind and moods in a positive way, that physician has robbed the opportunity to achieve a cure."*

There it is in the *Neijing*: Patient education is in the scope of our practice, it is our responsibility. This is especially relevant in clinical practice today because even though our patients have access to more information than ever before, they are not applying this to how they live. Research shows that we are the most in-debt, obese, addicted, and medicated adult cohort in U.S. history. As practitioners of a profoundly wise medical tradition, we must look more closely at this situation and respond by counseling or educating our patients in new ways.

The most important aspect of this new way to educate is to understand that unconscious beliefs formed in childhood, repressed emotions, and unlived aspects of our personalities end up running our lives much more than our rational, analytical minds would like to believe; this prevents us from the change we so desire. As practitioners we can support our patients in shifting their attention to this inner world where the potential for real transformation often lies.

Traditional Taoists and shamans as well as modern day somatic therapists understand the power of the unconscious mind and that the body is the gateway to unconscious core beliefs. These beliefs organize our experience on all levels, including our capacity for change and healing. If we then include the truth that the present moment is the only moment where anything real can happen, we have a powerful tool for transformation to use in our clinics.

Following is a simple yet profound practice to get in touch with the inner knowing of the body. This may provide you with more information to help guide your treatment pro-





ocols and lifestyle suggestions. However, this information becomes lived wisdom only when we align our habits and actions in daily life with the inner knowing that comes as a result of mindful awareness. For patient and practitioner alike, talking is not enough, we must act on what we know!

### PRACTICE

Take a few moments to slow down, relax, breathe, and turn the attention inward so you both become more mindful. Ask your client to close their eyes if this feels safe and to let the body speak. Generally things markedly slow down while we are working with the body in this way. If you notice the words, breathing or something else in the process speeding up, the patient may have shifted up from the body into the mind, since this is a more familiar place for most of us. Gently remind them to return to the body, stay with the experience, and speak from this inward place.

Now mindfully ask a few questions. Questions are made more powerful if they are short, direct, and speak clearly to this mindful state of awareness in the present moment. Following are a few examples:

- *What do you notice in this moment?*
- *Where in your body does your attention go?*
- *What images, sensations, memories come up?*
- *If that sensation (or symptom) had words, what would it say to you?*
- *What does your “wise self” want you to know about your condition?*
- *How can you honor what you have learned here?*

Make a closing statement similar to “*You can easily connect with this part of yourself whenever you want. Take a few breaths now and slowly return to this space and time.*”

You can modify the above to its simplest form. If you as the practitioner bring your full relational presence to the moment, this can be quite effective. Ask your patient to go inward, take a few deep breaths, relax, access their wise self, and ask one of the above questions or simply: What does your “wise self” want you to know about your condition?

If the above is not your style or not feasible in your clinic, you can still educate your patients as many practitioners now do. One resource you can offer them is my book, *Rhythms of Change*. Leave a copy in the waiting area of your clinic for patients to peruse, give a free copy to each new patient, and/or have copies of the book for sale in your store. In modern and easy to understand language, the book discusses *wu xing*, the five phases /elements, and provides practical guidelines for addressing the physical and psychological issues typical of imbalance in each phase. Included is The ONE Thing, the essential habit or practice to bring balance back to each phase, which addresses the five main contributors to disease mentioned in the opening paragraph.

We have all heard the quote, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” When you offer your patients the experience of mindful awareness, you help guide them back into relation-

ship with the body, their inner knowing, and the experience of their own wholeness. This new relationship to the present moment and to their own embodied wisdom will feed and nourish them and change the way they live each day.

It changes our clinical practice as well! Clients contribute their own experience and get excited when they are equal partners with you in the healing process. They become more motivated to align their daily habits with what they know supports their health. Clinical outcomes improve, and you will feel more satisfaction as a practitioner

*MARY SAUNDERS has 30 years of experience in Oriental medicine. She is a practitioner, educator, and mentor. She specializes in mentoring women practitioners to enhance their own self-awareness, more effectively educate their patients, and move toward more satisfaction in their lives. She is the author of Rhythms of Change: Reclaiming Your Health Using Ancient Wisdom And Your Own Common Sense. [www.MarySaundersHealth.com](http://www.MarySaundersHealth.com)*

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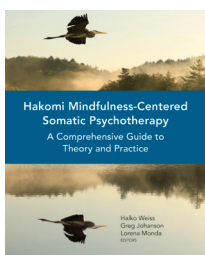
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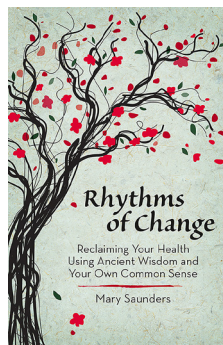
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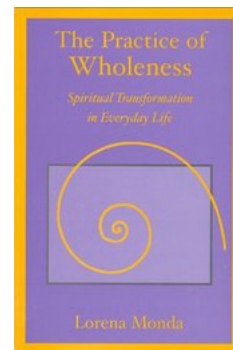
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