



Personalized Brain Body Balance Program **By Dolores Baretta**

The Great Inquisition:

Being healthy, unfortunately, is not a God given right. It is something that has to be worked at constantly. Sometimes, it even means sacrifice. I train five days a week, even on days where I don't want to get out of bed. I devote time to my health. I enjoy running half marathons and eat an egg free and dairy free diet. In addition to this, I take time away from work to center myself and give myself a break. I enjoy my health. This, however, has not always been the case.

20 years ago, at the age of 25, I felt sick. I had no particular disease to speak of, but often caught common colds and flus and suffered from frequent headaches and daily digestive problems. After taking every possible test, the results remained inconclusive. My medical history up to that point was chronic bronchitis and allergies. As a child, I often suffered from hay fever, asthma and eczema. Safe to say, I spent a lot of time at the doctors. I was prescribed a cocktail of medicines for every infection I had; antibiotics to fight those infections, corticosteroids for the allergies, a proton pump for the digestive complaints and pain killers for the migraines.

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Here's the thing with these medicines – they only cover up the problem. Yes, I might have been numbed, but the root of the problem was still viciously tearing me apart. I knew there had to be a better way than doping up my body – so I began to research. This initiated my journey to Chinese medicine. Through my newfound knowledge I quickly changed my drug regime and turned to acupuncture and Chinese herbs instead. The needles, I discovered, stimulated my body to heal itself. I have come a long way since I was 25. And now I have the ability to help other people with it to.

When I first began my practice using Chinese medicine and acupuncture, I soon realized that there was more to ailments than just what I was providing. To be healthy my patients also needed a balanced life, both in body and in mind. I began looking at how my patients were eating and how they were living. I realized that some were struggling with diets that worked for others, but seemingly not for them. The reason it didn't work: because every person is different. That is why I wanted to design a program that would help my patients live a healthy lifestyle that didn't exclude any variables. Through my Personalized Body Brain Balance Program I have created a unique program for each of my patients, including nutrition, which works best for their lifestyle and goals.

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1. The Programs

The Personalized Program

The Personalized Program is designed to help you make positive changes to your life. These changes may include achieving small goals, such as losing a couple of pounds. Others might help with some kind of recovery, say from IBS, anorexia or depression. Whatever the circumstance, the program is designed especially for you. I will suggest any necessary supplements that would benefit you, as well as recommending an exercise regime that you can maintain. With all these components converging, your body and mind connection will reconnect allowing your physical and mental focus to change.

By choosing foods that activate and energize your body, you are feeding both your physical body and spiritual mind.

The program is organized according to the Five Elements (Fire, Water, Wood, Metal, and Earth) and Chinese medical theories.

The Basic Program

The basic program allows you to start your journey to happiness. How foods are chosen, how they are related to the five elements and emotions, all play a part in this. This program will allow you to analyze any physical issues or disorders you may suffer from, through the 8 Diagnostic Principles of Chinese Medicine. You will be able to assess whether you are in need of supplements or further testing. This is a journey to find balance between your body, as well as your mind. Below you will find some of the most important factors that impact healthy living.

The Swiss Program

As my clinics are based in Switzerland, I can offer one on one sessions in my clinic. I will also be able to give you shopping and restaurant guides, as well as organize grocery delivery according to your specific meal plan.



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2. The Gut and Brain Connection

Firstly, I need to explain this connection between the gut and the brain. These two parts of your body send messages to each other. If you are mentally upset, your gut feels this and reacts. The same happens the other way around. The nerves that bind the brain with the gut help you feel and understand your inner body and emotions. Understanding is an essential part of feeding your mind. Bad eating habits and negative feelings can reinforce nervousness, a potential lack in focus, or even depression.

The Intestine

The intestine is also known as our second brain. It is embedded with 100 million neurotransmitters that are responsible for digestion. These neurotransmitters also have a connection to the brain. This connection influences our daily mental state. It can have an impact on many diseases within the body and can determine how we feel. The number of neurons in our gut is actually the highest out of every part of the nervous system. Furthermore, 90% of the fibers of the vagus nerve (found in our 10th cranial nerve) send information from the intestine to the brain, and not the other way around.



From this, we can assume that our state of mind is affected when the intestine sends disturbed signals to the brain. The popular saying “I have butterflies in my stomach” would be a good example of the gut reacting to stress or anxiety.

Intolerance and Peptides

You also have to take into account any deficiencies that might occur. Many people suffer from digestive deficiencies such as lactose intolerance or gluten intolerance. These are the result of incomplete digestion of food, meaning proteins are not broken down into amino acids (that are easily digestible) but stay in their peptide form and enter the bloodstream. These inevitably cause an immune reaction.

Some proteins that are not broken down into amino acids, are degraded into polypeptides chains and can mimic hormones such as insulin, adrenaline and thyroid hormones. These polypeptides, if [to](#) cross the blood-brain barrier, can also bind to opiate receptors. This then creates chains known as Morphine Peptides. Let's break it down.

Take for example the milk protein, casein. If it enters the blood stream as a polypeptide it is able to cross the blood-brain barrier, where it can bind to opiate receptors. It is then mimicking a morphine peptide and the body reacts accordingly. This peptide chain is called caseomorphin. This can induce behavioral outbursts, autism, ADHD and other mental illnesses. When this protein is removed from a diet, many have adverse reactions, as if they were in withdrawal. The problem is that peptides should not enter the blood stream in the first place, they should be broken down in the intestine into an amino acid form first. If these proteins are not absorbed as amino acids, then the gut lacks the essential enzymes needed and it has become permeable, hence the term a 'leaky gut'.

In contrast to this, many are familiar with the term lactose intolerance. This is different than what is mentioned above. For a person to be lactose intolerant, they must lack the enzyme needed to break down lactose, [lactase](#). The inherent lack of this enzyme in the intestine and the incorrect digestion of the lactose, may cause stomach issues such as diarrhea or stomach cramps.



Sleeping, Eating and Loving

Poor sleep, mood swings, depression and a reduction in libido can all be caused by a serotonin deficiency. Serotonin is a chemical produced from the amino acid *Tryptophan*. The majority of the serotonin in the body is produced and found in the intestine. When digestion is not functioning correctly, the tryptophan is not broken down properly and remains as a peptide and is therefore, unable to create the amino acid that creates the neurotransmitter, serotonin.

Both the brains in our body – our actual brain and the gut, known as our second brain – rely on hormones to function. Chemical changes in the mind can provoke intestinal issues, and visa versa. For example, the true cause of Irritable Bowel Disease is unknown, however, many doctors attribute stress and an excess of serotonin as a cause. It is, therefore, considered a mental illness of the gut brain.

From the categories listed above, it is clear that certain foods can impact your life physically as well as mentally. Furthermore, metabolic reactions which convert food into energy and new structure, as well as detoxification processes and disturbances in the balance of bacteria, may also impede body and brain functioning. When your mind and body are not in balance, havoc can be wreaked. To find out if certain foods are causing disruptions, I suggest having a food intolerance test done. To measure metabolic and detoxification processes, I have seen fantastic results from doing an organic acid urine test (see test section).



3. Chinese Nutrition

Contrary to popular belief, Chinese nutrition is not about Chinese food. Rather, it is seeing food from an energetic perspective and using food as medicine to heal and balance the body and mind. The law of balance comes from Yin and Yang. Yin is cold and Yang is warm, within one there is also always the other and visa versa. One cannot exist without the other. Yin will nourish the body while Yang will move the nourishment throughout the body. They co-exist to keep your energy, mind and spirit in balance.

Foods are divided into the following categories: warming or cooling and drying or lubricating. Energetically warm foods are used to cool the body while lubricating foods work to counteract dryness.

Once you understand your imbalances you can counteract these with foods.

Hot Body Type - Yang

Red complexion

Sweats easily

Strong appetite, constipation, dark urine

Dry cough

Personality is outgoing, potentially aggressive

Food to correct: fresh fruit, juices, green vegetables

Foods to avoid: spicy goods

Cold Body Type - Yin

Pale and easily feels cold

Prefers warm drinks

Low energy, sleeps a lot, edema

Weak voice, often dizzy

Personality is introverted and quiet

Foods to correct: garlic, ginger, green onion.

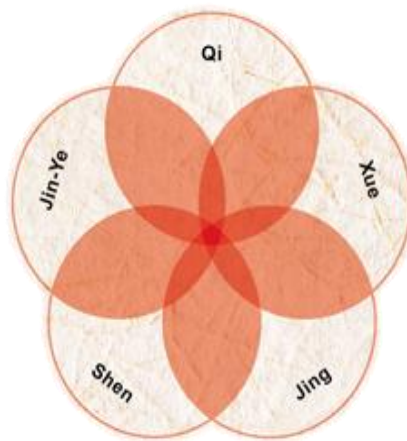
Foods to avoid: cold and raw

Background of Chinese Medicine

The Vital Substances

There are Five Vital Substances in Chinese medicine that are seen to be essential to life. They are all of equal importance and work together dynamically.

1. **Qi:** Qi can be described as the force of life energy. This is both our physical strength as well as the strength of our immune system.
2. **Blood:** Blood nourishes the body as well as our Qi energy.
3. **Body Fluids:** This includes fluids such as sweat, tears and lubricating fluids such as mucous membranes that are all important to keeping the body healthy.
4. **Jing:** Jing is the essence of life. This includes sperm, ovaries, marrow and brain. It is our vitality and youth.
5. **Shen:** Shen is our inner spirit. Our intuition, our instincts and our ability to comprehend.





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The food we eat influences these vital substances and can also nourish them. Ginseng is a popular example. Ginseng is used in Chinese Herbal medicine to nourish the Qi of the body, as well as generating body fluids.

Other foods may nourish the blood. It is important to note that certain foods need to be added that are considered Qi foods. These foods assist in distributing nourishment around the body. If these are lacking, the body finds digestion a difficult task. Therefore, recipes should find a healthy balance between Yin foods which nourish and Yang foods which aid in movement.



Miso-Vegetable Soup

This is a good example of a recipe which balances all the Elements.

1 Tablespoon of olive oil	Earth
400 Grams of Vegetables:	
Carrots, Parsnip, Pumpkin, Potato	Earth
1 Onion	Metal
Pepper (Szechuan)	Metal
Add Water- Cook 15 mins	Water
Then add 2 Tbs Miso	Water
1 Teaspoon Apple Cider Vinegar	Wood
Pinch of chili	Fire

Method: Cook the onion in the olive oil, add the diced vegetables and cook for 2-3 minutes, then add the pepper and water to cook. After 15 minutes add the miso paste, vinegar and serve with a pinch of chili on top.



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I have included this section into the program as this will give you the ability to use certain foods to help nourish any deficiencies you may have. For example if you are low in blood (ie. If you have anemia) then you can add certain foods to your diet. My favorite recipe is a slow cooked chicken broth. (See recipe in appendix) Your nutritional needs will differ depending on your body type and your lifestyle, as well as the environment you live in. A sample recipe of a Qi moving spice mix can be found at the end of the program.

The Five Elements

In Chinese medicine all things can be divided into five elements. These elements provide a framework for making balanced nutritional choices that could be beneficial for you. The Five Element system will help you identify any parts of your diet or cooking methods that may harm your body.

The Five Elements: (The organ) its season, color and taste.

- **Fire:** (Heart) summer, red, bitter.

Foods which dry dampness and are dispersing relate to the fire element. Examples include red lentils, chilies, red wine and coffee.

- **Wood:** (Liver) spring, green, sour.

Foods which are absorbing, consolidating and astringent relate to the wood element. Examples include citrus fruits, arugula and sprouts.

- **Metal:** (Lungs) autumn, white, pungent.

Foods which are dispersing, invigorating, and aid in circulation relate to the metal element. Examples include radish, jasmine rice, cauliflower, onion and garlic.

- **Earth:** (Stomach/Spleen) late summer, yellow/orange, sweet.

Foods which are tonifying, harmonizing and reinforcing relate to the earth element. Examples include sweet potato, corn, quinoa, apples and apricots.

- **Water:** (Kidneys), winter, black or dark colors, salty.

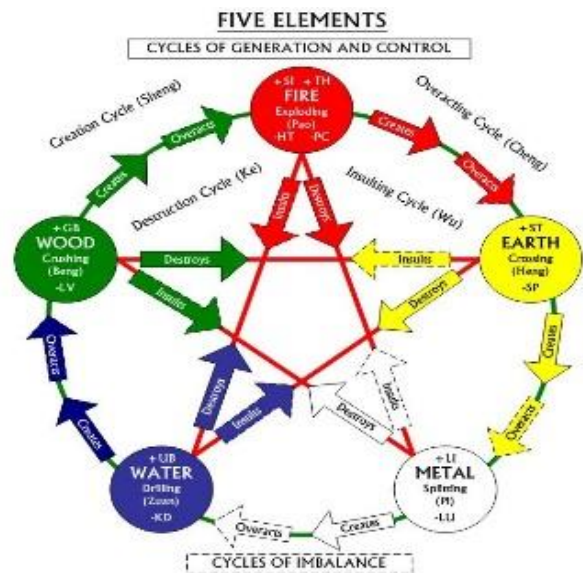
Foods that are soft and dissolve hardness relate to the water element. Examples include eggplant, miso, seaweed, figs, pumpkin seeds and fish.



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Recipes for balancing the elements can be found in the recipe section of this program.



The Five Emotions

As the seasons transform, we transform with them.

Our life is an ever changing environment. As spring comes, and nature expands, we are encouraged to exit the home and grow. If this is hindered, then frustration sets in. Summer arrives and we are excited, feeling the warmth on our skin. We must try to remain balanced and not to burn the candle at both ends, otherwise restlessness will prevail. As the summer starts to wain, we should feel centered and connected to the earth. If not, we will feel melancholic, and obsess over that which we want to protect. As autumn arrives, we start to look inward and bring order into the home. It is a time to learn to let go. Winter has arrived, representing our ever flowing journey through life. This is a time to accept that things in life change and we should just go with the flow.



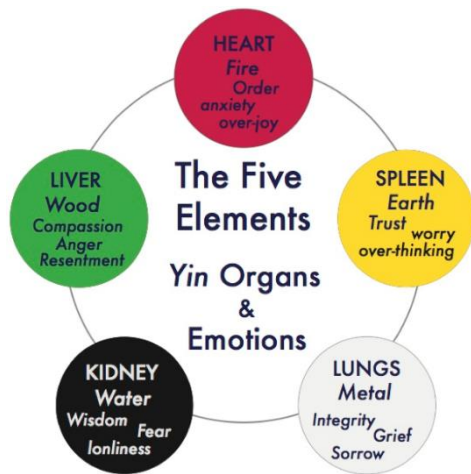
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When the Elements are out of balance then so too are the emotions. These are the emotions corresponding to the elements.

- **Wood:** Aggression, anger, nervousness
- **Fire:** Joy and hysteria
- **Earth:** Worry and pensiveness
- **Metal:** Sadness and grief
- **Water:** Fear and shock

In practical terms when we treat the emotions, we judge them according to the elements. If someone is always aggressive, angry and nervous; these emotions are of the Liver and therefore, we would sedate the Liver by using foods from Metal, as Metal controls the Liver. If you have issues with focus, we would look at the Earth element and the wood element, as wood controls the earth. Similarly, if you have issues with sadness and depression, then this would correspond to the Metal Element. We would nourish the metal and control the fire element.



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When we use the five emotions, we describe physical and mental manifestations that can be felt in the corresponding organs.

- **Metal and the Lungs:** Feelings of sadness and grief effect the lungs and you may feel pressure on the chest.
- **Earth and the Stomach:** Worry depletes the stomach and can give you digestive problems.
- **Fire and the Heart:** Excessive or unwarranted over-reacting with joy. This tends to be associated with deeper issues regarding mental instability.
- **Wood and the Liver:** Anger and resentment are conveyed in explosive behavior or inner nervousness and an inability to calm down.
- **Water and Kidney:** Fear or shock manifests in the kidneys and can cause lower back pain or weakness.

It is natural for us to feel emotions and we should not hide them – rather embrace them, so we are able to deal with them and move on. Finding balance in body and mind is extremely challenging, and I remind people every day to try not to let life overwhelm them, as exhausting as it may be. Take at least five minutes every day to just sit, clear your mind and breathe in life.





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Cooking for the Emotions

The Power of Smell:

Our smell receptors are in fact connected to a complex system of nerves and networks in the brain, known as the limbic system. The limbic system controls our emotions, such as anger and pleasure, and drives our instincts. Some smells therefore, can incite memories, and can generate happiness.

I remember as a child, growing up in Australia, riding my bike to school, and at the end of the school year there was a particular flower that bloomed and emitted the most wonderful smell. It flowered at the beginning of December, which reminded me of the upcoming holiday and festive season. Wonderful memories. Now whenever I smell that flower, which blooms in May and June in Europe, I think of Christmas and the holiday season ahead. People of course think I'm weird when I smell it and say, 'Oh how beautiful, it smells of Christmas'. In countries where Christmas is cold, the smell of cinnamon and vanilla are more likely to incite such memories.

Cinnamon and Peppermint are common herbs we have in the pantry, which are used in Chinese Herbal Medicine as medicine to open the orifices. Cinnamon is warming and relieves pain; while peppermint is cooling, and treats symptoms such as headache, fever and sore throat, as well as aiding in balancing 'unstable emotions'. Both herbs stimulate the central nervous system and enhance motivation.

Ginger is also used to open the orifices, and studies show it can reduce depression and anxiety, as it directly links to the production of dopamine. It has long been used in Chinese medicine for nausea and indigestion, as it warms and invigorates, driving you to feel energized. Ginger as a food is 'warm' and helps you to sweat. If you already feel warm and are sweating, consuming ginger is contraindicated.

Dried peel of tangerines and mandarins are used in Chinese medicine to help move food downward. The herb is used to prevent indigestion and bloating, and to break up phlegm. Interestingly, research also shows that citrus fruits directly affect the improved production of the brain's neurotransmitters, serotonin and dopamine.



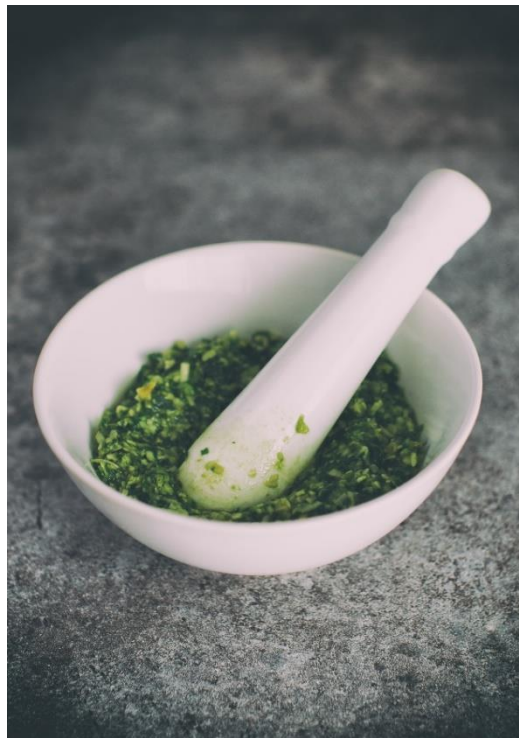
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Cacao or dark chocolate, possess a long tradition as a known aphrodisiac. Research has shown that cacao contains phenyl ethylamine and serotonin, which are both "feel good" hormones. Cacao has a bittersweet flavor and therefore stimulates fire (joy), and tonifies earth, inducing a feeling of happiness and a sense of being grounded.

Turmeric is another 'trendy' herb which is used today to heal every ailment. It must, however, be considered that nothing is perfect for everyone. Turmeric moves Qi and Blood, and relieves pain; it is also cooling and relieves jaundice. It is, however, contraindicated if you are pregnant, have blocked bile ducts, stomach ulcers, or hyperacidity, as well as if you take blood thinners.

Medicine is a preparation that treats or prevents disease, and food too can act as medicine. Like Hippocrates wrote more than 2000 years ago, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food".





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Cooking with the Elements

Another element of nutritional planning to take into consideration is the style of cooking that would best suite you. Each cooking style is attached to an element. The following is a list of the methods and their element:

- Stewing, Boiling, Steaming, Poaching, Curing and Sous Vide Cooking – Are all attached to the *Water element*.

These particular styles of cooking would be used if you are dehydrated and frail, and requiring easy to digest foods. The water element is also attached to winter, so this style of cooking is particularly suitable in winter.

- Grilling, Smoking, Searing, Pickling and Fermenting - Are all methods of the *Wood element*.

These particular styles can be used in spring to move the watery foods of winter. Spring is a time of movement and growth. The sour taste of pickling and fermenting will start to dry the water element of winter.

- Stir Frying, Flambéing, Sautéing, Toasting, Dehydrating – Are all attached to the *Fire Element*

These are the methods of summer. It corresponds with quick and light cooking.

- Baking, Roasting, Stewing, Mashing, Pureeing, Preserving, Caramelizing – Are all attached to the *Earth Element*

This method is for tonifying the center, the stomach. This method is also slow, but is not water based. The earth element comes into power at the end of summer and before autumn. This time is known as 'Late Summer'.

- Flavoring (Umami) and meals involving Garnishes, Condiments and Finishing Sauces – *Metal Element*

This method of food preparation is performed by adding flavor to the dish, which contains some pungency, and helps give movement to the food; examples include pickled ginger or garlic.



Digestion starts in the mouth. Most people forget how fundamental it is to make food easily digestible. Fast food is a huge problem for the digestive system. This is not only the food you can get from a fast food restaurant, but also at the speed with which you consume food. **It is extremely important to sit and eat with no distractions.** It has been proven that eating on the run or at your desk is not good for your digestive system. Generally, you should eat nuts and seeds as well as fruit before meat. This way, you avoid it sitting on top of the meat, resulting in fermentation. Steaming, stir frying, stewing and baking or broiling, all acceptable methods, depending on the time of the year and what your body specifically requires. Try to avoid lots of oils if possible, as they are hard to digest.

Foods should be eaten in their whole form, avoiding processing and tampering. If, however, you have a weak digestion, I would recommend white rice instead of brown, as it is easier to break down. Only peel your food if necessary, as the peel often contains many nutrients. It is also recommended that you try to buy organically grown products, so as to avoid toxic chemical residue. Cooking in glassware or stainless steel are the best cooking utensils to use. When choosing your ingredients, choose foods that are in season as they are substantially more affordable and readily available. It is rare that I recommend eating salads or cold foods, but I will never recommend eating iced foods or drinking iced drinks. Your stomach is a cooking pot, don't add foods or drinks which will put out the fire.

Eat organic, as the chemicals in soil which are transferred into the food we eat can accumulate in our liver and become toxic. If you are eating a diet high in meat protein, you have to understand you are also ingesting the chemical pollutions that are in meat. Animals are routinely injected with steroids (Bovine Growth Hormones), to fatten them so that they can grow quicker and produce excess amounts of milk. Other things given to meat include antibiotics and sulphur, so as to ward off disease. These drugs remain in the meat and milk of the animal. The hormones that are added can cause men to show signs of excess female hormones, along with sterility and impotency, while women can experience premature ageing, as well as hormonal and endocrinal imbalances.





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4. Differential Diagnosis and Causes of Disease

This section focuses on **how to diagnose a disease** according to Chinese medical theories. I will explain the principles behind the diagnosis and discuss reasons why these diseases may have arisen.

When I do an Intake Form the main areas I look at are according to the Eight Diagnostic Principles of:

Internal or External
Deficient or Excess
Cold or Hot
Yin or Yang

Internal or External:

- Internal causes affect the organs, and are caused by emotional or other deeper causes. For example bronchitis has penetrated the organ for instance. While it may have started as an external cause, like a cold, it has then developed into something deeper in the body.
- External causes affect the muscles and skin. These are characterized as sudden onset symptoms. Other external causes include that of the channels, and are known as Painful Obstruction Syndrome, causing pain in the muscles, joints, sinews and bones; which can be an intense, burning, tingling or dull pain.

Deficient (Empty) or Excess (Full)

- Two important underlying factors include whether a pathogen is present, and what the state of the body is. If a pathogen, which is characterized as a bacteria, virus, fungus or parasite, is present and the body is in excess (restless, irritable, severe pain, HBP), then it is a *full* condition.
- If there is no pathogen present and the body is weak, it is an *empty* condition.



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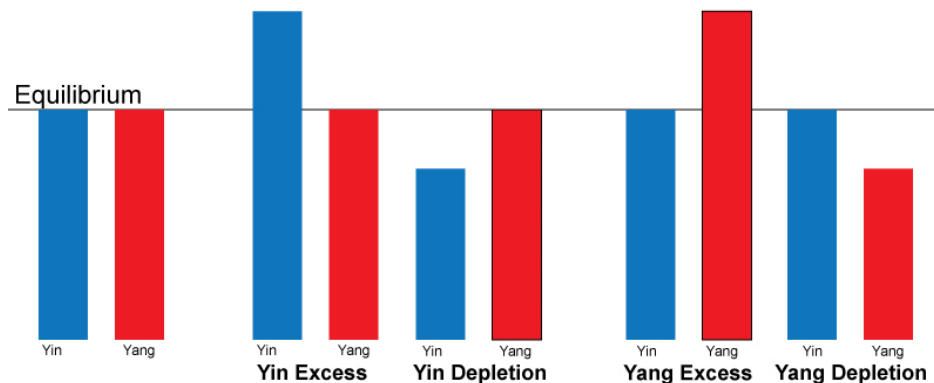
Cold or Hot

Subcategorized as Full or Empty Heat and Full or Empty Cold

Not to confuse you, but there is a significant difference between these syndromes.

- Full Heat - Fever, red skin eruptions, burning stomach pain
- Empty Heat - Dry mouth, afternoon fever, night sweats.

To better explain, when Yang is in excess, it is full heat. Therefore, the Yin is normal, but the Yang is in excess. When you have heat, but this is due to the Yin being deficient, then you have an Empty Heat. So the Yang is normal, but the heat signs come simply from the Yin being too deficient.



The same can be explained of Full and Empty cold.

Full cold would be an excess of Yin, while Empty Cold is simply a deficiency of Yin.

Yin or Yang

This can be explained as a combination of the above six categories.

- External, Hot and Full is Yang
- Internal, Cold and Empty is Yin

I have tried to explain here, how to make a diagnosis of a disease from a Chinese medicine point of view. These Eight Principles can be used to give an analysis, and to differentiate the location and nature of any disease, no matter how complex the disease may be.



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Causes of Disease:

External causes of diseases tend to arise from environmental factors, such as cold, heat, dryness, damp and wind. In western terms, this would be categorized as an infection from bacteria's, viruses or other microorganisms. These external factors have penetrated our shield, and lay under the surface of the skin. These include the common cold, as well as neck and joint stiffness. Once the disease has advanced deeper into the body, for example, when you have a lung infection, then it is no longer external.

Diseases can also arise from *internal factors* such as emotions: joy (mania), grief, anger, depression, worry, melancholy, and fear. These emotions can convert into physical symptoms, especially digestive issues. Emotional balance is essential for maintaining good health, and one must find an outlet to release excessive emotions. Exercise is great example to help release this.

Other causative factors that may cause disease include trauma and injuries that are not properly treated. These can cause stagnation and swelling due to a blockage of fluids. Other factors include all excessive or improper activities such as an excess in eating, working and exercising.

Overeating is a major issue today in many first and second world countries. This can lead to obesity, which is linked to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, as well as high blood pressure. Overeating for many, is used as a clutch for when one is stressed and attempting to escape problems. Often, eating on the run also leads to overeating as it takes time for your brain to send the signal that your stomach is full. We should all take the time to chew and eat mindfully to avoid overeating.

Excess work leads to stress, and we all know that chronic stress is a killer. It has a significant effect on the immune system, and ultimately will lead to illness.

Sport too should not be done in excess, as it draws on our body's reserves. Physically, it depletes our Yin substances, as well as our Yang energy. Excessive endurance exercise can also have an effect on the heart and the arteries, with excessive arterial and ventricular overload.

Important to note here is the many faceted causes of disease. This reiterates that balance is the key. Excesses or deficiencies can both lead to disease.

5. Women's & Men's Health

Both women's and men's health are multi-faceted, multi-layered and very diverse areas to explore. During my studies, I particularly remember my professor comparing a woman's body to a motorbike. A complicated machine. While a man's body is more like a bicycle. Not to undermine the machine, but, simply to compare the complexity. In this section, however, I want to cover some ailments that both men and women suffer from; such as infertility, sexual arousal disorders and andro/menopause. I will look at these disorders from a Chinese, western, and psychological point of view.

Fertility- Food and Lifestyle

Problems posed today are very different to those decades ago. While we have all this technology, the ability for couples to actually get pregnant, due to environmental, health or age issues, is becoming ever more complicated. This is due to the fact couples today are often opting to start in the baby making business much later than some decades ago. These issues have become very current challenges, and at an individual level, I recommend to my patients to help fertility by ensuring they both eat a diverse diet, containing specific nutrients. You should be getting adequate amounts of certain nutrients to ensure equilibrium and flourishing fertility.

Here is a list of 10 nutrients I have put together that are essential for both men and women to promote healthy fertility:

- *Vitamin D regulates the female cycle, and in men it is essential for the development of the nucleus of the sperm cell*

When we look at Vitamin D on a nutritional level, we should be eating eggs, fatty fish and cod liver oil. Supplements otherwise, are a good way to top up on sunshine, although I think it doesn't feel as good.

- *Vitamin E works as an antioxidant, by protecting the cell membrane from oxidative damage*

Foods high in Vitamin E include sunflower seeds, almonds, spinach, papaya and dark leafy greens.

- *Vitamin C improves hormone levels and sperm health*

Great sources of Vitamin C are red peppers, broccoli, cranberry, cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, citrus fruits, cherries, strawberries and spinach.

- *Lipoic Acid is vital, as it protects the reproductive organs*

Foods high in lipoic acid are potatoes, spinach and red meat.



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- *Vitamin B6, as it treats luteal phase defect*

The big B6! A very important vitamin in fertility. It is found in tuna, banana, turkey, liver, salmon, cod, spinach, bell peppers, turnip, garlic, cauliflower, celery, cabbage, asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, avocado, potatoes, wild caught fish, grass-fed meats and eggs.

- *Vitamin B12 balances hormones and improves the quality of sperm*

Good sources of B12 include clams, oysters, salmon, trout, mussels, liver, fish eggs, crab, lobster, beef, lamb and eggs. As you can see B12 is found in a lot of animal products but can also be found in cereals.

- *Folic Acid to prevent congenital diseases*

Another very important B vitamin is folic acid. It is found in liver, lentils, pinto beans, asparagus, spinach, black beans, kidney beans and collard greens, cereals, leafy vegetables (spinach, broccoli, lettuce), okra, asparagus, fruits (bananas, melons, lemons), legumes, yeast, mushrooms, orange juice, and tomato juice.

- *Iron for egg health*

Iron is found in lentils, spinach, tofu, sesame seeds, kidney beans, pumpkin seeds, venison, garbanzo beans and beef.

- *Selenium as an antioxidant to protect the egg*

Food sources include liver, snapper, cod, halibut, tuna, salmon, sardines, shrimp, turkey and brazil nuts. Brazil nuts are one of the best sources of Selenium you can get. However, don't eat too many, as this can lead to brittle hair and nails; but as an addition to a well-balanced diet they are excellent.

- *Zinc, to maintain hormonal balance and prevent miscarriage*

Oysters, beef, lamb, venison, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, yogurt, turkey, green peas, shrimp. When cooking products rich in Zinc, be careful not to overcook, as this will damage the Zinc.

One cannot say that having a deficiency in one of these vitamins or minerals is the sole cause of infertility, however, having the right stock of them will definitely benefit you in creating strong healthy eggs and sperm. If you are not getting the right amount and variety of foods, a good quality, broad spectrum supplement can definitely benefit you.



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Lifestyle and Fertility

Men can easily damage sperm by becoming overheated through exercise, and especially by wearing tight exercise shorts. Men too, should be careful of excess cycling or overheating in hot baths. Women, on the other hand, should avoid cold environments. Cold temperatures and cold water cause stagnation in the body, and it is essential for the uterus to stay warm so blood and energy can flow in the area. Women should make sure that their lower back and lower belly are protected, and not exposed to the cold.

Getting 7 to 8 hours of sleep is important for fertility. Sleep is related to cortisol and blood sugar metabolism. In Chinese medicine, 11pm to 3am is the time of the Gall Bladder and Liver. This is the time for the birth of the Yang energy, which creates energy, as well as a time for the body to detoxify and create blood. From a western point of view, sleep will help balance your adrenal and hormonal functions. Stress is also a big fertility killer. Stress pushes the thyroid, causing improper hormone signaling, and puts chronic pressure on your adrenals. Find ways to reduce your stress levels through meditation and exercise,

Chinese Medicine and Fertility

Infertility, from a Chinese medicine point of view, can be divided into physiological or psychological factors, environmental, stress, diet, age, illness, or endocrine imbalances. Depending on the underlying factor, a treatment plan would be created to put your body back into balance. When patients choose only Chinese medicine as treatment, then a combination of acupuncture and herbs are implemented. If the patient chooses western treatments, studies have shown that there is a significant increase in the success rate in the treatments when they are combined with Chinese medicine. In Chinese medicine the hormone cycle is divided into four phases: menstrual, follicular, ovulatory and luteal phase. The treatment plan is, therefore, also divided into four, and each of the phases have different acupuncture and herbal formulas.

This ancient method of treating infertility has a long history of success, and provides an extremely effective approach to addressing modern fertility problems.

Sexual Arousal Disorder

A hypoactive sexual desire is defined as either a nonexistent or decrease in the desire to have sex. The cause of this disorder can be from medication, drugs, personal issues, repressed emotions from childhood trauma, or even the inability to achieve orgasm, can lead to a lack in desire.

- Psychological causes play an important role in sexual arousal. Emotional issues causing anger, sadness or worry can definitely influence your responsiveness, as too can financial stress or past sexual trauma. These emotional issues must be dealt with, perhaps even with professional help, in order for you to regain your libido.
- Chronic disease can also have an influence. Common conditions include Addison's, hypothyroidism, diabetes, anemia and neurological disorders of the heart, liver or kidney. All of these disorders can have an influence on hormones, and in turn diminish desire.
- Reproductive Disorders may also hinder arousal such as vulvitis, vaginitis, atrophy of vagina, or polycystic syndrome.
- Medications or excessive intake of alcohol or drugs containing barbiturates have a sedative effect on the central nervous system. Diuretics too may decrease vaginal lubrication, and influence sexual function.

When making a diagnosis, it is important to note: when the sexual desire started to reduce, personal and family history, age (if around menopause), and specific hormone levels.

From a Chinese medicine point of view, there are four main syndromes related to hypo sexual desire:

- The first relates to the Kidneys, which occurs in women during menopause and in men who suffer from low testosterone
- Liver Qi Stagnation, which relates to stress and emotional issues
- Qi and Blood deficiencies, either coming from constitutional weakness, overwork or overexertion
- Finally, a Kidney/Heart Disharmony, from excessive fear or fright.

All these syndromes can be treated with herbs and acupuncture.

As a low libido is mostly due to a deficiency, diet and lifestyle changes are essential. In order to maintain a nutritious diet, an increase in warming foods such as lamb, onions, tuna, venison, honey and eggs can be helpful. With this, a balanced lifestyle is essential, including proper work hours, exercise and play; all of which are essential for a healthy body.

Andropause and Menopause

Both menopause and andropause are not a disease, but rather a normal process of life. For women this is the permanent cessation of menses, and for men, it is a decline in the production of testosterone. While this is the result of aging, it is the symptoms that may come with this process, that cause problems.

For women, symptoms include:

- Vasomotor issues, such as hot flushes
- Psychosomatic with insomnia, obesity, bulimia, depression or mood swings
- Genital atrophy, where the lowered estrogen levels makes the vulva and the lining of the vagina thinner and drier.
- Osteoporosis

For men symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Depression
- Sexual problems with lowered libido

Causes for Treatment for Menopause

Women only tend to seek treatment when symptoms start to disturb their daily activities. This tends to happen when hot flushes become frequent at night, as the flushes cause women to have insomnia, restlessness, irritability and emotional disturbances. Genital atrophy becomes a problem due to pain during sex, lowered libido, increased risk of infection, or painful urination, and psychological treatment may be necessary for depression or eating disorders. Osteoporosis is considered to be the most severe condition of menopause. Menopause is a risk factor, as women tend to lose between 1% to 2% bone mass per year after onset.



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Treatment

There are numerous pharmaceutical options available for treating menopause and andropause related conditions with hormone replacement therapy, however, despite some benefits, there are a staggering number of side effects to these treatments, which include causing cancer. For this reason, I recommend my patients to try every natural method possible.

In Chinese tradition, the Kidney is the source of youth and is responsible for growth, maturation and aging. It can, therefore, be concluded that menopause and andropause are a deficiency in the Kidneys. Therefore, Kidney tonics are essential for the treatment of all patients.

Some example of syndromes that are related to the kidneys may be Kidney Yin deficiency, with symptoms such as hot flushes, tidal fever, night sweats and irritability. Another example is Kidney Jing (Essence) deficiency, with symptoms like osteoporosis and diminishing libido. I have had a lot of success with herbal formulas that are tailor made, depending on the syndrome/symptoms.

According to lifestyle and dietary recommendations, I suggest for women to eat a diet with a very high content of vegetables, with whole grains and soya. Outdoor exercise is important for Vitamin D, and to strengthen bones. Foods that should be avoided include alcohol, sugar, spicy foods and caffeine. Men should be more geared toward foods containing zinc, like red meats, mushrooms and spinach, as well as omega 3's like nuts, salmon, sardines and chia seeds. Cigarettes should be avoided, as they drain Yin and body fluids. Stress levels should be evaluated, and supplementation may be recommended, which will help support focus and mind/body balance.

Conclusion to Men and Women's Health

Physical and mental health is not something to take for granted. There are many ways you can personally maintain this: through exercise, stress management and diet. It is important to start early in life, so as to ensure no enduring problems in the future. Putting excessive demands on the body at any age will take a toll, and you will sooner or later pay.

Nutrition is your medicine. The right dietary plan is like a Chinese herbal formula. All the ingredients should work synergistically together. Where food is not enough, because of intestinal damage or excessive demands on the body, then supplementation can help fill the gap. This will help you maintain or re-gain body and mind balance for fertility, and ease of ageing.



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6. ASSESSING WHAT TYPE OF PERSON YOU ARE:

I would now like you to take the time to answer these questions about yourself.

Would you regard yourself as a 'hot' Yang or 'cold' Yin type? List your character traits.
(Page 7)

What are your favorite foods that you eat the most of? What is the most prominent taste?
Eg. Chocolate cake – sweet, French fries – salty, oranges – bitter, sour and sweet.
(Pages 10-16)

Would you say you are deficient in any of the vital substances, for example blood or energy?
If so, which? (Page 8)

Do you tend to express one particular emotion more so than others? And if so, which one?
(Pages 11-13)

Do you have any illnesses or complaints? If so, how would you describe them according to the Eight Principles? (Pages 18-19)

7. Supplements: Why they are Essential

1. Today's modern society has put major pressure on agricultural land. With the shortage of land, and the constant increase in the world's population, farmers are being forced to heavily increase production. This has been aided by the use of fertilizers and high-yielding crop varieties, but at a price to the nutrients that were once in this fertile soil. The result is that the fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses and nuts do not grow in the same organic rich soil from which they did in the past. Subsequently, we simply are not getting enough nutrients from the food we eat.
2. To add flame to the fire, we also have 'fast food'. Perhaps you do not think you eat 'fast food', but do you really make a wholesome meal, every day, packed full of vegetables? And when I say 'make', I mean make from scratch. Anything that has been, in any way 'pre-prepared', such as a frozen pizza, frozen fries, microwave dinners and obviously all takeaway, have all been tampered with, and therefore, don't have the original vitamins and minerals within.
3. Many people today are living stressful, hectic lifestyles. We all know stress affects us inadvertently, but how exactly? Stress increases intestinal permeability, and causes inflammation. An extended period of over-activity, inevitably causes damage to our intestinal lining and flora. As a result, we are unable to properly absorb what little nutrients are left in the food, leading to an increase in micronutrient deficiencies. This has become a global health issue, and in fact the *WHO* established a special department to monitor micronutrient deficiencies globally. The *WHO* considers that more than two billion people, in both underdeveloped and industrialized countries, affecting all races, suffer from vitamin and mineral deficiencies.
4. Intestinal hyper-permeability, known as 'Leaky Gut Syndrome', involves the development of small gaps in the intestinal wall that allows partly digested food particles, bacteria and/or toxins to enter the blood stream. This in turn, causes an immune response, where the immune system releases antibodies, causing an inflammation. Each time this food is eaten and not properly digested, the body will respond to it, as these antibodies are circulated in the blood. A recurrent inflammation can therefore occur anywhere in the body.
5. Intestinal damage can also occur from antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, hormones, environmental toxins, incorrect eating habits or chemotherapy, the list goes on. Although this phenomenon is not a new finding in any way, we must recognize the damage it is causing.



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I hear it every day from my patients, that they heard that this new trendy food is really healthy. My answer is always 'yes, for some that is appropriate, but not for everyone'. Today, we face so many issues with the food we eat, the lifestyle we live, the work we perform and the environment we live in, that nothing is right for everyone.

About Supplements:

About Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are essential nutrients. They are the orchestra in a concert. Each instrument has an important role to play, and each are essential for the overall performance. Among the many tasks they perform, they help to give strength to bones, heal wounds, and nourish the immune system. They also convert food into energy, and repair cellular damage. If we are not getting them from the food we eat, then we must replace them with supplements. There are many products on the market; choose carefully, study the ingredients. If you can't see what the ingredients are, and the amounts in the product, then don't buy them.

About Digestive Enzymes

Digestive enzymes break down proteins, cellulose, starches and other foodstuffs. In doing this, it is possible for the intestine to absorb nutrients. The digestive process is however inhibited, if these enzymes are absent or deficient. The cause of enzyme deficiency may be due to external factors, such as environmental toxins, or consuming toxic foods such as unsaturated and hydrogenated fats. Other factors that can influence the internal 'environment' are due to pancreatic problems, or brush border (microvilli) dysfunction, which will also cause a decrease or absence in the production of essential enzymes. The thing is, stress and even aging decreases digestive function; so adding digestive enzymes is the best way to help your body break-down your food into a form that is easier to digest.

About Probiotics and Prebiotics

Probiotics are good bacteria that help to break down sugars, and as a byproduct, lactic acid is produced. Lactic acid plays an essential role in a healthy immune system, as well as helping to promote the release of digestive enzymes, and increasing the absorption of many minerals. Probiotics furthermore acidify the colon, so as to prohibit the proliferation of 'bad' bacteria.

Prebiotics work symbiotically with good bacteria, acting as a fertilizer for probiotics and the existing good bacteria. Prebiotics are highly resistant to heat, cold, acid or time.



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The Supplements I use on a regular basis are products to replace the missing nutrients which we do not accumulate from the food we eat, as well as Enzymes and Pro/Prebiotics, to maintain a healthy flora. I choose a good quality Vegetarian Enzyme Blend, Prebiotics and Probiotics that have clearly stated the amount of bacteria that is in the formula, as well as a Multi-Vitamin/Mineral/Trace Element formula.¹ Finally, depending on one's specific requirements, I include a Vegetarian source of Omega 3, such as Chia Seed Oil or Flaxseed Oil into my daily routine. This is my regime and is custom-made specifically for me.

7. Testing for an Intolerance or an Imbalance in the Flora of the Intestine

There are a variety of ways to diagnose which foods you may be intolerant to. This can be performed through methods of elimination, or by a simple blood test, such as an Antibody Assessment Test. This test helps to determine whether you are intolerant to a particular food by testing if you have an immune reaction to it. This is accomplished by a simple prick test and can be performed at home. Once these food intolerances have been identified, I am able to analyze the results and make a treatment plan that is suited to you.

Comprehensive Stool Analysis: I use this particular test to evaluate the status of your intestinal bacteria, or whether particular yeasts or parasites are present in the intestine. If you are having problems with your stool, for example, unexplainable chronic diarrhea, then I would recommend this test to check for any dysbiosis in the GI tract. I have also found it to be a valuable test if you have recurring problems with your digestion after travelling or post food poisoning.

Specific Urine Test: I have found this test very valuable in providing data on the body's cellular metabolic processes, and the efficiency of metabolic functions. It is an excellent way to assess any weaknesses in metabolism, liver detoxification, oxidative overload, or neurotransmitter breakdown. The body releases certain acids into the urine and by evaluating these, I am able to build a comprehensive picture of the body's functioning. There are also a set of compounds tested to show imbalances in digestive bacteria. Once any imbalances have been established I will be able to use dietary changes and specific vitamins, or micro-nutrients to help correct them, giving your body back its ability to heal and stay healthy.²

From my experience, food intolerances and intestinal imbalances cause many different symptoms including chronic skin problems, joint pain, chronic urinary infections, headaches, hay fever, bloating, depression and mood imbalances. This list is non-exhaustive and many of these symptoms can turn into life-long chronic diseases.

What is important to note, is 'Leaky Gut Syndrome' or Food Intolerances, are often overlooked as the cause of many health issues.



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Why I find value in DNA testing

There are many companies out there doing DNA tests, giving you an analysis of your genes and ancestry. It is very important to note that gene differences must be significant, in order to make a quantitative evaluation. Therefore, only specific genes are worthy of testing in order to give clinical value. Furthermore, it is important to note that in 'dnalife' tests, differences in the nucleotide of the gene are not mutations. These differences act as biological markers that indicate a predisposition towards a behavior, or physical/physiological attribute. In assessing these variations, you are able to better optimize your health and make specific choices in diet and supplementation.

DNA Sport

DNA Sport examines various biological areas that impact training responsiveness and sporting performance. These include soft tissue and bone formation and re-modelling; inflammation; oxidative stress; oxygenation influenced by blood flow and respiration; energy and fuel production; and metabolism during exercise. These gene variations can influence key biological areas and can be used to further explore any genetic advantages you may have and identify any weaknesses that need to be supported through diet and training strategies. I recommend this test to professional or eager amateur athletes who want to improve their general performance or help create better training plans which are suited to their gene types.

DNA Health

The DNA Health test is designed to optimize well-being and health by personalizing lifestyle and diet choices, and, where necessary, using supplements tailored to offset any particular nutritional deficit based on specific gene variants.

The DNA Health test assists me in creating the optimal nutrition plan necessary for good health, longevity and offsetting any risk in disease. Diet is a key factor in determining genomic stability, as it impacts on all relevant pathways: exposure to dietary carcinogens, how your body breaks down drugs, DNA repair and breakdown and building. Current recommended dietary allowances for vitamins and minerals are based largely on the prevention of diseases of deficiency and are based on the average person. However, due to the fact diseases of lifestyle are partly caused by damage to DNA, it stands to reason that we should focus our attention on defining optimal requirements of key minerals and vitamins that are suitable for your gene type, and not simply for the average person.



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DNA Estrogen.

DNA Estrogen includes 11 genes involved in estrogen production, estrogen metabolism, and phase I and phase II detoxification, providing information to guide a personalized diet, lifestyle, and hormone and supplement recommendations.

Approximately 80% of breast cancer occurs in women with no family history. Estrogen affects the function of a number of target tissues, and research has shown that an increased lifetime exposure to estrogen is a strong risk factor in the development of breast cancer. DNA Estrogen tests for gene variants have been exhibited to have an impact on how estrogen is metabolized. The personalization of diet, and hormone and nutritional supplement recommendations, based on the insight gained from the DNA Estrogen test, will help you understand where you can improve your estrogen metabolism. This test can benefit both men and women who suffer from numerous estrogen-dominant conditions and who have higher lifetime exposure to estrogens, estrogen metabolites and other carcinogens.

DNA Diet

One of the first products of its kind in the world, DNA Diet tests for 15 genes that impact metabolism and exercise. The genes comprising the DNA Diet test have associations with body weight and body mass index. These genes are involved in energy use, appetite and the metabolism of fat. All of these factors play an important role in regulating your weight. I will provide a detailed report with recommendations that include dietary changes and an exercise program.

It has been proven that 40-80% of the variance in body weight is due to genetic factors. This helps to explain why not everyone gains or loses weight whilst following the same diet, despite being exposed to similar environments. By identifying an individual's responsiveness to diet and lifestyle, I will be able to help you make appropriate modifications in order to control weight.

DNA Tests provide a valuable insight into precursors in your genes that may develop into illnesses in the future.

www.nordiclabs.com

www.micronourish.com



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I want to thank you all for following me on this journey. For those of you who have finished the Basic program, I hope you have found some relevant insight into how your body works and what action towards personal improvement is appropriate for you. For those of you who have chosen the personalized program, I look forward to discussing with you your habits, lifestyle, and what your goals are, in order to find balance in body and brain.

Your health and well-being are in your hands!



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8. Appendix:

Recipes

Understanding where your deficiencies are will help you to create dishes that better suit your body. Perhaps you need more in the way of foods that move 'Qi', which are Yang; or more nourishing foods that tonify Blood, and Body Fluids. By choosing the right foods, you are creating your own medical formula.

You can, for example, add spices to a recipe that act as the moving agent. They therefore help to move the ingredients and are great for helping you to digest! These can be regarded as Qi moving spices.

Here is a Garam Masala recipe. It is a spice mix used in South Asian cooking which uses spices that are pungent in nature, and are therefore used to help your digestion or to warm the nature of the recipe.

- 3 Bay Leaf
- 2 Cinnamon sticks
- 40grs Cumin
- 25grs Coriander Seed
- 20grs Cardamom capsules
- 20grs Black pepper
- 15grs Cloves
- 15grs Mustard seeds
- 20grs Aniseed
- 20grs Fennel seeds
- 15grs Fenugreek Seeds
- 15grs Turmeric
- 15grs Nutmeg

Method: Except for the nutmeg, put all other spices, into a fry pan without oil. Roast lightly until the spices start to release their aroma. Remove from pan and place in a pestle and mortar. Grind to make a powder. Keep in airtight container in refrigerator. Use this mix when cooking with meat and vegetables to add a dynamic nature to the food.



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Chicken Broth Soup

My favorite recipe I give to patients who are anemic, or to women after childbirth.

3-4 liters Water
1 organic Chicken or Chicken Leg
2-3 twigs Thyme or Oregano
1 twig of Rosemary
2 Carrots
1 Celery Bulb
1 large piece of lovage
1 bunch of Parsley with roots
1 piece of Savoy Cabbage or 1-3 pieces of Swiss Chard
1 piece of Ginger or Radish
1 large Onion with cloves pocked into it
1 stalk of Leek
1 teaspoon of Coriander seeds
A few Bay leaves
1 piece of Kombu or Wakame
1 piece of Dang Gui
Add a little salt if needed

Method: Put everything into a pot a cook for 12-24 hours on a low heat. Strain and drink 1-2 cups per day.

Foods that nourish Blood are red: Beetroot, red grape juice, cassis, Floradix

Our Qi (energy), Blood, Body Fluids, Jing (essence) and Shen (consciousness) link all parts of the body, and when they are in balance and flow smoothly they contribute to a healthy state of body and mind.



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