

Acu News

"The first wealth is health." Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Season of Winter

The ancient Chinese developed a system of medicine thousands of years ago and that system is still used around the world today. This system incorporates more than just medicine though. Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners also educate their patients on how the seasons affect the body and ways to stay healthy. This will ultimately lead to a long, healthy life.

Traditional Chinese Medicine teaches that humans should live in harmony with the seasons. According to TCM there are five seasons – winter, spring, summer, late summer and fall. Each season has many associations that help us change our habits allowing for a more balanced mind and body. When these systems were being developed, people were living in harmony with nature. People rose with the sun, ate what was available during the different seasons and they were much more aware of their natural environment. What to wear, when to wake up, when to go to sleep and what activities to engage in were all dependent on the weather and the environment. Because of this, people were capable of staying healthy throughout the year and their immune and organ systems were strong enough to ward off disease.

In this system, the season of winter is a time of repair and rejuvenation. Winter is associated with the kidneys, which hold the body's fundamental energies. Harmonizing with the seasons will help the body stay healthy and prepared for each succeeding season. Rest is important for revitalizing the kidneys and this is why some animals hibernate during the winter months. Winter is also a really good time to turn inward and do some reflection. This is why practices like tai chi, qi gong and yoga can be very beneficial during the

winter season. These practices help us connect to our inner selves, while supporting the kidney energy. These practices help relax the mind and calm our emotions.

Winter is also associated with ears in this system. Our ability to hear is related to the health of our kidneys. The stillness of the winter months allows us to hear the world more clearly and forces us to slow down. The bones are also associated with winter, which means that it is important to tonify and heal any orthopedic problems during these months.

There are many foods that are beneficial to eat during the winter season. These foods should be the ones that naturally grow during this season. Food items like squash, potatoes, root vegetables, winter greens, cabbage, carrots, apples, pears and mushrooms are all examples of things that should be incorporated into the daily diet during the winter months. Also warming foods such as soups and bone broth are highly recommended. There are foods that specifically target and nourish the kidneys too. These foods include black beans, kidney beans, lamb, walnuts, chicken, dark leafy greens and black sesame seeds. It is recommended to cook items for longer periods of time, on lower heat and with less water, as the food should be warming as well as nourishing.

When we align ourselves with the natural processes of life and the seasons, our bodies will adjust and perform optimally, just as they are intended to. This is how we are supposed to live and can quite possibly be why there is so much more disease now than in the past. So to be the healthiest you possible, learning to take cues from the seasons might just be the best suggestion ever.



3 Alternative Gifts to Give this Winter

The holidays are about giving. Whether it be giving gifts to your family, community or co-workers, everyone knows it is the season to help other people. Unfortunately, not everyone has the same living situation as one another and there are millions of people throughout the world that are in need. A great gift to give someone you love is the gift of helping people who need it most. Here are a list of five charitable foundations and alternative gifts you can give your loved ones to not only make them happy, but to make loads of other individuals have a warm and bountiful holiday season as well.

1 World Vision - Sponsor a child

World Vision is a well-renowned charity that allows you the option to sponsor a child, the child can be sponsored in your name or in lieu of somebody else you plan on giving the gift too. This truly is a remarkable charity. When you sponsor a child you can help them work their way out of poverty. World Vision states that they help more than four million children in over 100 different countries. To learn how you can sponsor a child go to www.worldvision.org

2 World Vision - Donate an Animal

Another beneficial opportunity World Vision offers to help those in need is the donation of an animal, and there are a plethora of different options. The World Vision site offers price points and specifics on what animals you can give to families in need. From goats and chickens to alpacas there are many options you can choose from to really assist those who need help.

3 Big Sunday

Big Sunday is a charitable organization that donates to shelters, food banks and various social programs across the country. Big Sunday has an emphasis of helping people get back on their feet so they can live their lives to their fullest potential. There are various ways to help out a Big Sunday in order to bring cheer to those less fortunate. Donate money, clothes, gently used items and books are key examples of how you can help at Big Sunday. But those are just a few of the over 2,000 ways Big Sunday states they offer to help the underprivileged.



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