

# Mornington Complementary Medicine

## March 2014



*In March we welcome the crisp Autumn mornings and find it is the time to harvest our energies and focus on building the foundations to prepare for the cooler months ahead.*

*This month we look at gut health and offer you both a TCM and Ayurvedic view on how you can 'stoke the digestive fire' and improve your gut health and in turn your overall vitality.*

*Check out page 6 for a fabulous offer on Ayurvedic Lifestyle Consultations from Mel McMaster and of course we have some fabulous recipes to get you started.*

### **THIS MONTH**

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# Your Gut and Chinese Medicine

*-Peter Loupelis-*

The gastrointestinal system (GIT) plays a central role in health. Even in ancient China, the physician Li Dong Yuan developed a school of practice centred around this same idea.

When our gastrointestinal system functions efficiently, we have adequate nutrition, thus affecting other systems in the body. In fact, our gut's health also influences our immune, nervous, and cardiovascular systems; it plays a role in inflammation and neuro-endocrine function, hormone balance, and also affects the detoxification system of the liver.

At the root of most common GIT complaints, as well as many other complex chronic illnesses, is the issue of malabsorption and maldigestion. This is where the processing of nutrients is impaired, usually by issues such as:

- ◆ not chewing food properly
- ◆ stomach acid insufficiency
- ◆ low pancreatic functioning
- ◆ liver/gallbladder dysfunction
- ◆ small intestine bacterial overgrowth (SIBO)
  - ◆ bowel mucosal damage
  - ◆ bacterial/viral infections
  - ◆ intestinal permeability
  - ◆ digestive enzyme insufficiency
- ◆ side-effects of drugs and incorrect treatments
- ◆ and diseases such as Crohns' Disease, Giardiasis, and lactose intolerance

Our GIT is normally populated by a variety of micro-organisms which play a symbiotic role. When our guts are populated by a healthy ecology, then our digestive system works efficiently. There are always present a number of micro-organisms that aren't that useful, but in a healthy gut they are in relatively low concentration. Dysbiosis occurs when the ratio of 'good' micro-organisms is lower than the number of 'bad' micro-organisms. When this happens systems such as indigestion, gas, bloating, IBS, constipation, diarrhoea, reflux, and abdominal pain occur.

Intestinal dysbiosis should also be considered as a disease-promoting mechanism in cases of chronic inflammatory disorders, immune system dysfunction, food allergies and intolerances, breast & colon cancer, unexplained fatigue, malnutrition, and neuropsychiatric symptoms.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, these are described as the “Middle Burner Disharmony” or “Spleen and Stomach Deficiency”. It involves the Taiyin and Yangming channel networks. While acupuncture assists in shunting the qi and blood of the body through these channel networks, herbal medicine and nutritional support assists in creating the necessary bio-chemical changes in the GIT to effect changes.

There is also the situation where intestinal parasitic infection takes over the ecology of the GIT. Bugs such as Blastocystis hominis, Dientamoeba fragilis, Entamoeba histolytica, Giardia and Klebsiella can all play havoc in our GIT and affect normal digestive functioning.

These are very easy to eliminate – when a practitioner knows what they are doing! Many conventional medicine practitioners will simply prescribe antibiotics. The reason why these often don't work is because these gut bugs wrap themselves in a bio-film and embed themselves into the lining of your gut. Chinese Medicine practice takes a four-fold approach to dealing with parasitic infestation: starve the bug, pierce the bio-film, flush them out of the gut, and then re-build gut ecology! With the correct identification and treatment principle, one can be free of these pesky little hitch-hikers in no time.

Whilst a thorough Chinese Medicine diagnostic consultation will usually reveal the nature of any GIT disorder, we find that further functional pathology testing such as a Complete Digestive Stool Analysis is incredibly beneficial to get to the specific nature of the problem – is this gut bugs, if so which one? If its dysbiosis, is it due to short-chain fatty acids or pancreatic enzyme function?

Treatment still follows traditional methods of acupuncture and herbal medicine, but also nutritional medicine – the idea being that every time we eat, we eat something that will have a specific therapeutic function.

Peter Loupelis is an acupuncturist and traditional Chinese Medicine Herbalist who integrates classical and modern approaches to the treatment of digestive and gastrointestinal issues. He is able to refer for Digestive Stool Analysis and other functional pathology testing such as Liver Detoxification profiles, Salivary Hormone Profiles, and Complete Thyroid testing.

***Peter is available for consultation at  
Morningson Complementary Medicine on Mondays and  
Wednesdays.***



## The Digestive Fire

*-Excerpt from article by Scott Blossom-*

Like a small campfire (Agni), the average human's digestion is delicate: overload it and you smother it; feed it too little fuel and it dies; stir it too much or too little and it sputters.

The key to good fire tending is to be a good observer and listener. Elemental fire knows what it wants and communicates its needs in the form of heat, radiance, and sizzle. Our internal digestive fire speaks its own sensual and intuitive language: that of gut feelings.

For successful digestive fire tending, at least from an Ayurvedic perspective, consider these images:

- ◆ Heavy foods, like flesh foods, dairy, highly processed and intensely sweet foods are big logs. (Actually, dairy and intensely sweet foods, especially sweetened dairy foods like ice cream, are more like green or soggy logs, since they are the hardest to digest for most people.) Kapha – binds and stabilises
- ◆ Nuts and legumes, which fall in the middle of the spectrum from heavy to light, are well-seasoned medium logs; their vegetable fat and protein content make them both easy to burn and substantial enough to burn for awhile. Kapha /vata Water/earth/heavy – nuts (dried), Air/space – vegies. Vata – movement.
- ◆ Vegetables and fruits are light foods, easy to burn but quick to burn out. Fiber-rich foods like these are the sticks that keep the fire burning, that stir it up and keep air circulating within it (via healthy peristalsis and elimination patterns). Vata/ Kapha/ Pitta
- ◆ Judicious amounts of alcohol (apertif anyone?) and seasonings are your matches and kindling. Pitta – any stimulants – creates metabolism - transforms

An experienced fire tender knows you need all of these items, in the right balance and timing, to have a good fire.

So how does our fire-making go wrong?

- ◆ Heavy food offered to your internal digestive fire in excess can overwhelm it and produce indigestion by stifling the fire.
- ◆ Insufficient heavy food and too much light food will weaken the fire by starving it.
- ◆ Large amounts of strong spices, fried food, or alcohol will cause the fire to flare up, which may scorch the fire-tender. (Excess alcohol overheats and dampens the fire simultaneously.)

The key to tending the digestive fire is to learn to accurately identify the moment of satiation, the first signs of which are feelings of energy, satisfaction, and gratitude. Complications set in because most people, for a wide variety of reasons, take these first signs of satiation as a cue to eat more. In a Hollywood world, the film's score would loudly alert everyone to the danger approaching in that the next plate of food or glass of wine that will upset the eater's digestive harmony. In the real world the score, while clear enough if we listen carefully, is sometimes too subtle to detect.

Like most skills proficient tending of your digestive fire is best developed through personal trial and error. Useful suggestions may be found by reading about eating well but even the best theory requires verification. Personal experience and paying attention to how the crucible of your own stomach works are the only sure ways to knowledge. In my opinion, one of the best sources of insight in this regard is to tend an actual fire, from ignition to ashes, and draw your conclusions from direct observation and intuition. As you watch the interplay flame, air, fuel and smoke you may put yourself on a surer course to avoiding gastronomical collisions this holiday season.

Read more: <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/digestive-tips-for-your-holiday-feast.html#ixzz1efouwUtU>



# Ayurvedic Tips To Aid Digestion

*Ayurveda can seem quite difficult to get your head around especially when it comes to food combining, but these few tips can make a lot of difference!*

- ◆ A first step can be to introduce yourself to the idea of eating fruit by itself. Fruit can create a sour and indigestible “wine” in the stomach when mixed with other foods.
- ◆ Avoid eating lots of cooked and raw foods together, and avoid eating fresh foods with leftovers.
- ◆ Eat a ½ teaspoon of grated ginger with a pinch of rock salt with a squeeze of lemon or lime before a meal to stimulate digestion.  
This can also be used after a meal to relieve gas and bloating.
- ◆ Take small sips of warm water with a meal. Do not take iced water as it slows digestion.
  - ◆ Ghee stimulates the digestive fire and improves digestion.  
Proper chewing is essential to good digestion.
- ◆ Ideally, the stomach should be filled with one third food, one third liquid and one third empty.
- ◆ Very often in Ayurveda, herbs and spices are added to help make foods more compatible or to ease a powerful effect. For example, coriander which is cooling may be used in a spicy dish. Or potatoes will be cooked with black pepper to alleviate their tendency to cause gas. Cardamom may be added to coffee to balance its effect, which is stimulating to the nervous system.
- ◆ According to ancient Ayurvedic literature, honey should never be cooked or put in hot drinks. Uncooked honey is nectar, cooked honey is poison.

*Thankyou to Ayurveda.com for these suggestions!*

**Find the info interesting? Want to know more? Feel you eat healthily but just don't feel great?**

**Book an Ayurvedic lifestyle consultation with Mel McMaster and receive a personalised program to stabilise your agni, sleep better, have more energy along with heaps of recipe suggestions and handy health tips with ingredients often found in your kitchen cupboards.**

**All consultations made before 30<sup>th</sup> April will receive \$25 off (that's a saving of over 20%) and some free Ayurvedic stuff to help support your journey to feeling better- simply mention this add when you call to book.**



**For bookings call:  
Mel McMaster  
Ayurvedic Practitioner  
0408 088 315**

## Easy Ayurvedic Porridge

Soak a few raisins, dates, dried figs, apricots (as desired) overnight in a pan of water. You can also add sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, linseed, blanched almonds, hazelnuts, shredded coconut. In the morning bring this to the boil and add rolled oats (or millet, quinoa, barley flakes etc.) and cook till soft. Add some cinnamon powder and a few



crushed cardamom seeds. To make creamier porridge you can use oat, soya, rice or almond milk instead of cow's milk which is too heavy in this recipe. To sweeten, add any syrup of your choice (date, maple, barley, rice etc.), fruit spreads along with hazelnut or almond butter.

Avoid adding honey until porridge has cooled right down.

## Mung Dhal Soup

A highly nutritious recipe which detoxifies, kindles digestive fire and sharpens the mind.

*400g mung beans (whole green or split green or yellow); 2 litres water; ½ tsp. turmeric powder; 2 pinch asafoetida; Lime or lemon juice; fresh root ginger; 2-3 cloves garlic; an inch of fresh root ginger; 1 tsp. cumin seeds 1 tsp. coriander seeds; rock salt or herb salt. Makes 5 generous portions*

Wash the *mung* beans and soak for at least four hours or overnight. Heat *ghee* or olive oil in a pan and add teaspoon of turmeric and 2 pinches asafoetida (to prevent gas). Sauté for a few seconds then add the beans, fresh water and fresh root ginger. For one part soaked *mung* you need about four parts of water. Simmer for 30-40 minutes adding more water if necessary, until beans are soft. In a pressure cooker this takes 8 minutes once the vessel has come to pressure. You can then turn off the heat and leave the pot to cool for a further 10 minutes before opening it. Once the beans are cooked, heat *ghee* or olive oil in another pan, add 2-3 cloves chopped garlic (if you wish) and sauté lightly for a minute until soft. Add chopped fresh root ginger, then one teaspoon of cumin and coriander seeds plus any other herbs or spices (except chillies) eg: cardamom, black pepper, cumin seeds and briefly sauté. Add these sautéed spices plus some rock salt into the beans and simmer for a further few minutes. Serve soup warm with a squeeze of lime juice and some fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped. You can also add green leafy vegetables, pumpkin, leeks, courgette, fennel, parsley, mint, coriander, or basil for variety. You can



also add 1 tsp. of *ghee* or – if you are vegan or do not like the taste of *ghee* – 1 tsp. of an omega 3/6/9 oil.

Omega oils should be added to food *after* it has cooled down a bit, as these oils are not heat stable and thus also not suitable for cooking.