

## June 2014

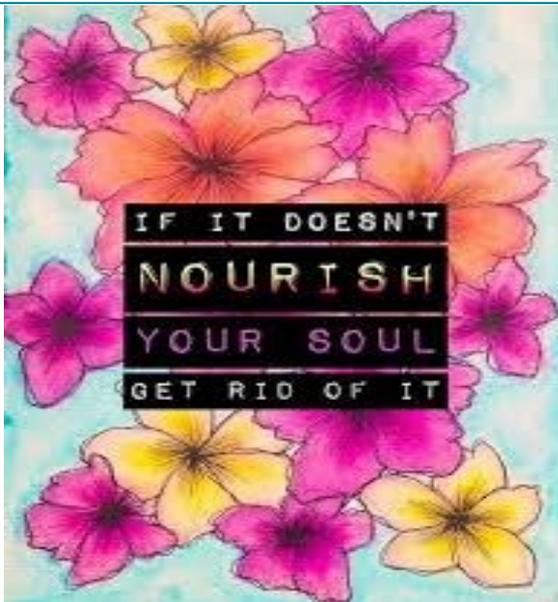
*Wow how the time flies—we can't believe it's already June!*

*This month we have a great feature article on the thyroid article from one of our practitioners 'Peter Loupelis', as well as details about his Tai Chi classes.*

*A yummy recipe to keep you warm this Winter. Ever wondered what your practitioner is looking for when they ask you to show them your tongue? Check out page 5 for a fascinating insight.*

***AND...For something a bit different we want to feature your recipes next month.***

***Check out page 6 for all the details!***



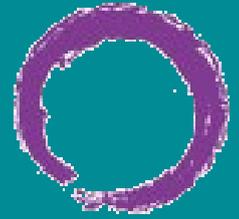
### This Month

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# The Thyroid and TCM

By Peter Loupelis



The thyroid gland is a small butterfly-shaped gland in the neck situated in front of the trachea. As part of the endocrine system, it regulates the two thyroid hormones T3 (triiodothyronine) and T4 (thyroxin), which enhance protein synthesis and oxygen utilisation. These physiologic activities in turn influence the basal metabolic rate (BMR). They also influence heart rate and nervous system functions and are vital for growth and development.

Neurons in the hypothalamus of the brain are triggered by environmental and metabolic stimuli such as cold and stress, which then stimulate cells in the pituitary gland to secrete Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH). Depending on the level of TSH release, the thyroid gland will then increase or decrease secretion of T3 and T4 based upon the body's feedback.

Diagnosed thyroid disorders affect around 3-4% of Australians and include hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, thyroid cancer, iodine deficiency disorder (goitre), and thyroid nodules. Also common are Graves' Disease (an autoimmune hyperthyroid disease) and Hashimoto's Disease (an autoimmune hypothyroid disorder); in these cases, antibodies will be found in a blood test.

Hyperthyroidism is a high functioning thyroid where too much T3/T4 are being secreted. This will lead to increased BMR, **weight loss, irritability, anxiety, and nervousness** amongst a number of other symptoms.

Hypothyroidism is a low functioning thyroid where not enough T3/T4 are being secreted. This leads to lowered BMR, **weight gain, lethargy, depression, and poor memory** amongst other symptoms.

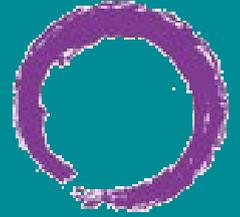
Because of its role in metabolism, thyroid dysfunction can also be the root of many other physiological issues such as **infertility, hair and skin** issues, some **musculoskeletal** issues, **mental** and **emotional health**, and **sleep disorders**.

There is an interesting link between the thyroid and adrenal glands, in that excess cortisol secretion from the adrenals can impact the thyroid directly, and in turn thyroid dysfunction can also affect the adrenals and the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis. It is not uncommon that clinically we see both systems affected, presenting as **burn-out, stress, and adrenal fatigue**.

**Stress** is major problem for both thyroid and adrenal glands, with blood sugar levels, chronic pain, xeno-oestrogens, food allergies, heavy metals, infections, toxins, and emotional disturbances being fundamental aetiologies in these kinds of disorders.

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# Testing

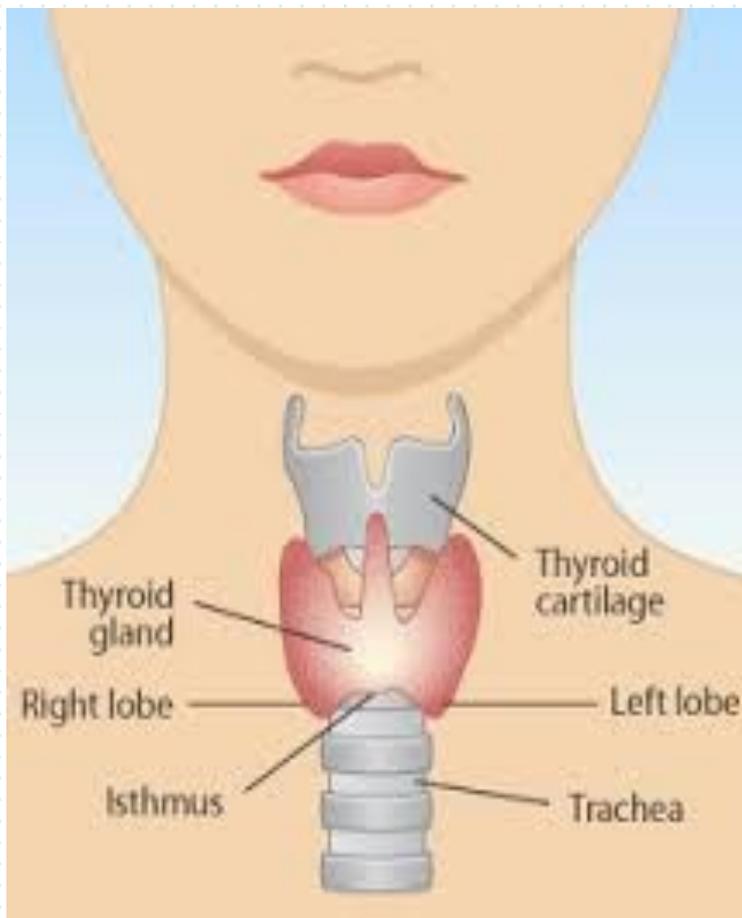


It is not uncommon for GP's to merely test TSH levels. This is not enough to get a whole picture of functional thyroid physiology. T3 and T4 levels should also be tested.

As well as this, reverse T3 (rT3) needs to be tested. Reverse T3 is an inactive form of T3 that is produced in the body particularly during times of stress. Under normal conditions, it will be eliminated from the body quickly. In times of fasting, illness, stress, or liver disease rT3 levels will be noticeably increased, and competes with T3 (fT3) and inhibits the conversion of T4 to T3. Measurement of rT3 is valuable in identifying euthyroid conditions where T3 levels appear normal, and is expected to be found in cases of **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)**, **Wilson's Thyroid Syndrome**, and **stress** (associated with high levels of Cortisol and Adrenalin).

Antithyroid Antibodies should also be tested for, as these will confirm whether or not the thyroid condition is due to an autoimmune disorder - Graves' Disease or Hashimoto's Disease.

We are able to refer you directly for complete thyroid function profiles. This information is very useful in identifying the root of your condition, and thus treat it naturally and effectively.



# Thyroid & Chinese Medicine

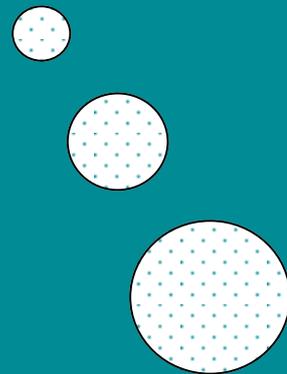
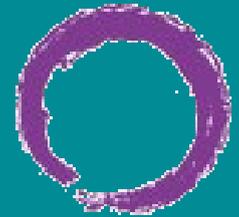
Chinese Medicine has an extensive history of treating Goitre, as many areas of China would see iodine deficiencies present. Hyper-/Hypo-thyroid disorders were described as common patterns of disharmony, albeit not ascribed to the thyroid directly. Nodules and goitre are very easily treated with acupuncture, herbal medicine, and food therapy, avoiding the need for harmful chemical/radiation therapy - or worse, surgical removal of one of the most important glands in the body!

Interestingly, the inter-relationship between the thyroid and adrenal glands which is only recently understood in Western functional medicine, is described as a dysfunction of the Kidney-Heart or *Shaoyin* axis in Chinese Medicine. Generally speaking, Hypothyroidism is a depletion of *yang*, whilst hyperthyroid is a depletion of *yin*. These conditions can all be treated with acupuncture and herbal medicine, and there is no need for surgery or harmful chemical/radioactive therapies which render the thyroid useless, thus making you dependent on medications for the rest of your life.

In Chinese Medicine, we treat the you, not your thyroid; so by identifying the overall pattern, we are able to bring balance to the body and in particular the endocrine system. Acupuncture being highly effective in regulating your body's own systems means it is not invasive, and allows your body's homeostatic balance to return in a gentle and natural manner.

There are some herbal medicines that are known also to assist in bringing your thyroid back into balance, and again the prescription is based on your individual presentation. What is known to be particularly effective is natural medicines containing desiccated thyroid gland from either porcine or bovine sources. However, these would not be appropriate for those concerned with using animal products; in these instance, we would only source such medicinals from sources of chemical-free, hormone-free pasture-fed animals to ensure a clean product, and to encourage humane treatment of animals. Most Chinese Medicine formulas for thyroid treatment only ever involve plant-based substances.

While food therapy is very useful, if the thyroid is affecting digestion severely (especially in the case of hypothyroidism), this can be a little tricky, as digestive function is impaired, thus all available nutrition from the food may be lost in the digestive process. These are instances where medicinals need to be used as the first phase of treatment, followed up with appropriate dietary and lifestyle changes.

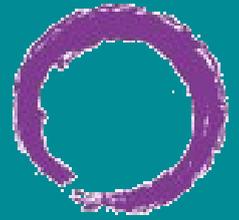


**If you have thyroid issues or suspect that you might MCM can help.**

**Pete is available for consult Mondays and Wednesdays.**

**To book/enquire call MCM on 59736886**

# Warming Black Bean and Vegetable Stew



## INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups of squash, peeled and cubed
- 4 cups of broccoli diced
- 3 cups cooked black beans
- 1 cup of diced tomato
- 1/2 cup cooked azuki beans
- 1/2 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 garlic clove pressed
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon lime juice
- 1 mild pepper diced
- 1-2 tbsp ghee, olive oils, sesame oil, or coconut oil
- Garnish: Sour cream

## METHOD

Prepare the vegetables as directed. In a large soup pot, heat oil until hot, then add cumin seed cooking until fragrant.

Sauté the onion by cooking at a medium-low temperate, stir through the ginger, coriander, pepper, the diced pepper and garlic.

Add the butternut pumpkin cooking for 3 -5 minutes. Then add liquid and cook until butternut is almost tender. Add cooked beans, tomatoes, broccoli, then simmer for approximately 20 minutes until all vegetables are tender.

Adjust seasonings to taste. Serve hot, optional to garnish with sour cream and chives or coriander.

*Want to be part of  
the next newsletter?*

*See page 6 of the  
newsletter for details*

We are always on the lookout for delicious, fresh and nutritious recipes @ MCM to share with you all.

If you've discovered a recipe lately that you think the MCM community might enjoy we'd love to hear about it!

Recipes can be sent via message on our Facebook page @

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mornington-Complementary-Medicine/301623589849360>

We will pick our favourite to feature it in next months newsletter :)



# Chinese Tongue Diagnosis: What is my Acupuncturist Looking at?

Despite the fact that most Americans are used to opening their mouths and saying “Ahhh” at the Doctor’s office, the majority of people are very curious about what their acupuncturist is looking at when they ask to see the tongue.

The tongue is the only muscle that we can easily see, without cutting anyone open. One major reason for inspecting the tongue is that the coloration and size of the tongue can be an accurate indicator of the coloration and size of other body tissues that are much harder to visually inspect. By examining the tongue, your acupuncturist is able to get a good idea of the systematic state of your Blood Circulation, Fluid Metabolism, and Digestive Health. The tongue also has regions which correspond to other parts of the body, so an anomaly on the tongue can be significant depending on its location.

## Blood Circulation

Go ahead, stick your tongue out in front of a mirror. Let it relax, and just hang out over your lip. What color is the tongue? Is the tissue very pale, bright red, or a nice healthy pink? Does the color have a clear lustre, or is it more of a muddy tone? Ideally, the tongue will be a healthy pink. If the color varies, there may be some room for improvement in the circulatory system. Lift the tongue up and check the veins on the underside. Are they small and pale, or thick and purple? The acupuncturist is looking for all of these things.

## Fluid Metabolism

Now let’s look at the size and shape of the tongue. Is the tongue tiny and dry? Or is the tongue swollen and puffy? Can you see scalloped marks on the edges where the teeth leave imprints? All of these are indicators of fluid metabolism. If the tongue is swollen, chances are there is water being retained in other parts of the body. Knowing what’s going on with the fluids helps the acupuncturist choose points, and herbs, that regulate fluid metabolism and retention.

## Digestive Health

Lastly, take a look at what’s called the “Tongue Coat.” This is the covering on the top of the tongue. A lot of times it will be white or yellow, and cover most of the back of the tongue. The tongue coat is said to be an indicator of the state of the digestive system. Often people who eat a lot of greasy/fried/heavy foods will develop a greasy/heavy tongue coating. This is a sign that the digestive system is being bogged down. Don’t be embarrassed about your tongue coat; a lot of people brush or scrape their tongues, but your acupuncturist needs to see it to best assess you!

## The Tongue is a Map

Reflexology is a system of acupressure based on the concept that different parts of the body have reflex areas on the feet. In fact, Chinese medicine recognizes multiple reflex areas all over the body, not just the feet. The tongue is one such system. By noticing abnormalities such as dry patches, discolorations, cracks, or red dots in certain places on the tongue, the acupuncturist can detect problems in corresponding organ systems. In this way, the tongue becomes a map of the body, and any variation is a clue to your health.

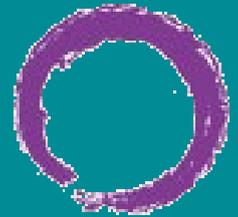
The Diagnostic Map of the Internal Organs on the Tongues

If you notice any abnormalities in your tongue (and most everyone will), don’t panic! The changes on the tongue are usually indicators of subtle imbalances. However, whatever health problem you have is usually related to your overall state. Your acupuncturist can examine you, and use the clues your body provides to create a treatment plan that best fits your individual needs.

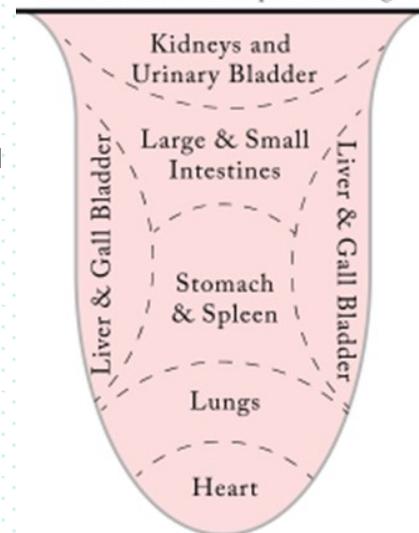
ARTICLE COURTESY OF:

<http://acupunctureofasheville.com/2014/06/10/chinese-tongue-diagnosis-what-is-my-acupuncturist-looking-at/>

Mornington Complementary Medicine



Chinese Medicine Map of the Tongue



# TAI CHI CLASSES

Tai chi is often described as "meditation in motion"

Term 3 classes begin soon.

Gain better health, increased vitality, better posture and flexibility, and relieve stress.

**Term 3 classes commence Thursday 17th July**

**Duration:** 10 weeks.

**Time:** 6:30pm

**Where:** The Yoga Room

4/15 Kenji St, Mornington VIC 3931

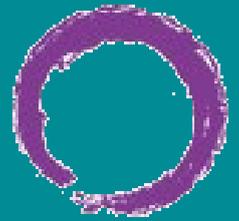
Investment of \$150 paid in full or \$20 per class for casual attendance (existing students only)

For those thinking of joining us in Term 3, don't worry you will pick it up quickly, in a friendly relaxed environment.

**Tai Chi**



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*To enquire or book  
call Peter on  
0403 782 436  
or email to  
peter@nourishing  
life.com.au*

