



**Eating by the Season: Spring**  
Presented by August-G Varlack L.Ac.  
Oakland Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine Clinic  
Spring 2014

## **I. Introduction**

“In the late twentieth century, food finally began to be recognized in the West as an important healing force. For the first time in US history, the Surgeon General acknowledged (in 1988) the value of a good diet, while simultaneously condemning typical American eating patterns. According to his statement, fully two-thirds of all deaths are directly affected by improper diet, and poor eating habits play a *large part* in the nation's most common killers-coronary heart disease, stroke, atherosclerosis, diabetes, (obesity), and some cancers.

Holistic practitioners have always seen marked improvements when individuals make appropriate dietary changes. These changes are actually a revival of ancient principles, but only in recent years has this consciousness reached mainstream America, as evidence by the above government recognition. What is needed now are not only higher quality foods and better basics diets, but a clearer picture of which foods are best for overcoming personal imbalances and for maximizing vitality in each individual.”

--- Healing With Whole Foods, Paul Pitchford ---

## **II. Qi Vitality:**

### **A. Definition of Vitality**

- i. Power to live or grow
- ii. Physical or Intellectual vigor
- iii. Capacity to live and grow

### **B. Rating of Vitality as good Qi?**

- i. Ability of one to accomplish things
- ii. Lack of obstruction in the body
- iii. Better functioning of Organs (internal/external)

### **C. Understanding Qi**

- i. Qi is Yang by nature
- ii. Its counterpart is Blood: Blood is YIN by nature.
- iii. POETIC: *Blood is YIN and is “the MOTHER OF QI.”*
  - a. The nutrients in Blood support and nurture Qi
- iv. Qi leads and directs Blood

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510-379-8910

[august@abetterbeing.com](mailto:august@abetterbeing.com)

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**D. Quality of Qi in you**

- i. Weak people Lack Qi (Qi Xu) vs Strong people have Abundant Qi
- ii. Clear minds are considered to have “Refined Qi” vs “confused Qi”
- iii. Gracefulness = Harmonious Qi
- iv. Stagnation of Qi in the body results in Obesity, tumors, cyst, cancer, viral infection, yeast related diseases.

**III. Food in the Spring:**

Is a time of renewal/revitalization. Like nature after the winter frost has lifted. Spring is the time when worms begin to emerge from the earth, ladybugs land on screen doors, green buds appear, birds chirp, and flowers begin to bloom. The vernal equinox signals the beginning of nature’s renewal in the Northern Hemisphere.

**A. Traditionally the body cleansed itself**

- i. In the spring metabolism naturally raises, such as in the winter ones metabolism naturally lowers in order to store necessary calories to stay nourished through the winter
- ii. One should cleanse from the fatty/heavy foods that were consumed in the winter
- iii. Appetite should naturally be reduced
- iv. Cleansing isn’t just about food. “...not only of food residues, but of excessive desire, and the accompanying emotions of dissatisfaction, impatience, and anger. The metaphorical membrane over the eyes and mind disappear, and vision becomes clearer. Things are seen in a new way.” *New Years resolution*

**B. Foods of Spring (Attending to the Liver and Gallbladder).**

- v. A lighter diet (the lightest of the year)
- vi. Young plants, fresh greens, sprouts, immature wheat and other cereal type grasses.
- vii. AVOID/HIGHLY LIMIT: Salty foods (Soy sauce, miso, sodium rich food , bacon)
- viii. Consume Sweet & Pungent Foods---> “Renews the Spring Within”
- ix. Very little Sweetener combined with pungent herbs. Example Honey-Mint Tea

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- x. Pungent Cooking Herbs: Basil, fennel, marjoram, rosemary, caraway, dill, bay leaf, etc.
- xi. Sweet: Grains, legumes, seeds, young beets, carrots, and other starchy sweet vegetables

### **C. Cooking in the Spring: Much Simpler**

- xii. Raw and sprouted foods are to be emphasized
- xiii. RED FLAG: people who are too weak (showing s/s of deficiency should consult specialist- an Acupuncturist or Ayurvedic practitioner.
- xiv. Cooking for shorter periods of time
- xv. cooking with Oil should be quick: sauté/stir fry
- xvi. cooking with water: steam/minimal simmer

## **IV. Spring foods to heal and prevent common Liver/Gallbladder ailments any time of year**

### **A. General Liver & Gallbladder Harmony / Disharmony**

- i. Symptoms of Liver Disharmony (Spring and any time of year): When these signs and symptoms appear foods of from the Spring menu should be consumed
  - a. Emotional : Anger, impatience, frustration, resentment, violence, belligerence, rudeness, edginess, arrogance, stubbornness, aggression, impulsive and explosive person
  - b. Physical: Too many to name
- ii. Causes: too much fat, chemicals, intoxicants and denatured food all disrupt the intricate biochemical processes of the Liver. Most frequently occurs when one eats too much

### **B. Dietary Principles for Healing the Liver:**

- i. **Liver Qi Stagnation/ Swollen Liver: Insomnia, pain, Thyroiditis/Goiter, Cholecystitis, Plump Pit Qi, swelling in groin, neck and sides of body, tumors, cancerous growths, Heart disease and more.**

- a. Eat less

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- ii. Eliminate or greatly reduce foods high in saturated fats, hydrogenated and poor quality fats, excess of nuts and seeds, chemicals in food and water, all intoxicants and highly processed refined foods

### **ii. Foods that stimulate the liver out of stagnancy**

- i. Moderately Pungent Foods Spices and Herbs: Watercress, all members of the onion family, Mustard greens, Turmeric, Basic, Bay leaf, Cardamom, Marjoram, Cumin, Fennel, Dill, Ginger, Black , Pepper, Horseradish, Rosemary, Various mints, Lemon balm, Angelica Root, Prickly ash bark
- ii. Note: Too much extremely pungent food, such as fiery hot peppers, can damage those with liver stagnation.
- iii. Mildly Pungent Foods: Beets Taro root, Sweet rice, Amasake (fermented rice drink), Strawberry, Peach, Cherry, Chestnut, Pine nut, Cabbage, Turnip Root, Kohlrabi, Cauliflower, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts
- iv. Raw Foods: Sprouted grains, Beans, Seeds, Fresh vegetables, Fruits

### **iii. Foods Which Harmonize the Liver:**

- i. Natural Sweeteners (used sparingly): Honey, Stevia powder, Unrefined cane juice granules, Whole sugar cane, Licorice root, Barley malt, Date sugar, Molasses, Rice Syrup

### **C. Foods that reduce excesses of the liver: Ulcers, G.I. disorder, diabetes, abdominal inflammation, indigestion, colitis, enteritis, etc.**

- i. Vinegar (mix with honey for improved effect), Unrefined apple-cider, Brown rice, Rice wine
- ii. If Heat Signs used the following instead of Vinegar: Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit, Bitter
- iii. Foods that reduce excess of the liver: Rye, Romaine lettuce, Asparagus, Amaranth, Quinoa, Alfalfa, Radish leaves, Citrus peel
- iv. Bitter Herbs that reduce excess of the liver: Dandelion Root, Bupleurum, Milk thistle , seeds, Oregon grape root, Chamomile Flowers, Peony also reduces liver stagnancy gently and harmoniously

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EXAMPLE: mix equal parts of dandelion and peony roots with one-third part each licorice root and turmeric

**D. Foods for Detoxifying and cooling the liver (Liver Heat): Constipation, aversion to heat, strong desire for cold drinks, \*inflamed eyes, dry eyes, anger, headaches (especially migraine), dizziness, high blood pressure and plenty more.....**

- i. Mung beans and their sprouts, Celery, Seaweeds, Lettuce, Cucumber, Watercress, Tofu, Millet, Plum, Mushrooms, Rhubarb root or stem, Radish, Daikon radish

**E. Foods for building liver yin and blood: Insomnia, night sweats, butterfly rash on cheeks/malar flush, fresh red tongue, early menopause, irritability, nervousness, and depression.**

- i. Mung beans, mung sprouts, chlorophyll rich foods, cucumber, tofu, millet, seaweed, watercress and plum.
- ii. Fresh cold pressed flax oil, borage oil, evening primrose and black currant seed oil.
- iii. Spirulina, dark grapes, blackberries, huckleberries, raspberries and blackstrap molasses. (in severe cases gelatin or organic animal liver)

**F. Foods and spices which reduce liver wind symptoms: Common cold (wind), dizziness (HBP connection), vertigo, tremors, seizures, emotional turmoil, Wind-Bi/Arthritis, moving pain in body, itching, \*eczema, numbness, stroke, rigidity (post stroke)**

- i. Celery, basil, sage, fennel, dried or fresh ginger, anise, oats, black soy beans, black sesame seeds, kuzu, pine nuts, coconut, fresh cold pressed flax oil and shrimp

**G. Foods which accelerate liver rejuvenation: Alcoholism, drug addiction, severe malnutrition**

- i. Wheat or barley grass juice powders, Spirulina, wild blue-green and chlorella.
- ii. Parsley, Kale, watercress, alfalfa and collard greens
- iii. Fresh milk of goats, cows or sheep
- iv. Soup containing liver from organically raised livestock (sheep, beef or chicken)

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## **SPRING SALADS**

### **Dandelion Salad**

Ingredients:

- ½ pound dandelion greens

Dressing

- 1 clove garlic-chopped
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon Umeboshi paste (A citric acid sour condiment)
- 1 teaspoon oil (optional)

Instructions:

- Blend dressing ingredients
- Toss with greens

### **Hot and Sour Chinese Salad**

Ingredients:

- 2 cups snow peas – cooked slightly
- 4 cups noodles- cooked, drained and cut into 2 inch length pieces

Dressing

- 1 green onion-chopped
- 1 tablespoon Umeboshi paste
- 1-3 teaspoons mustard
- Juice of 1-2 lemons

Instructions:

- Gently combine peas with noodles
- Blend ingredients for dressing
- Add dressing to noodle mixture
- Mix lightly and serve before noodles become mushy

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**Marinated Asparagus**

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch asparagus spears

Dressing

- 1/8 cup olive oil
- 1/8 cup lemon juice
- 1 tsp Umeboshi paste

Instructions:

- Boil 2 inches of water in a pot
- Stand asparagus up in the pot with tough ends on the bottom. Cover and simmer 10 minutes or until vivid green
- Mix dressing ingredients
- Drizzle over asparagus spears
- Toss with dressing and marinate for several hours

**Simple Sprout Salad**

Ingredients:

- 2 cups alfalfa sprouts
- 2 cups Mung sprouts
- 1 cup sunflower sprouts

Instructions:

- Arrange an outside ring of alfalfa sprouts on a plate
- Next make a ring of Mung sprouts
- Place sunflower sprouts in the center
- Serve with your favorite salad dressing

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