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Shiatsu Spring Newsletter

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Welcome to the second edition of our Shiatsu Newsletter.

Wood Element

The Wood element represents the new life of springtime; in the body Wood is responsible for action, expression of self, and the smooth flow of Ki. The Wood element is associated with the Liver and Gallbladder meridians. These are situated on the sides of the body, and are important for bending and twisting. The Liver functions as a detoxifier in the body, and the Gallbladder assists by storing bile. The Liver is also seen as a reservoir for the Blood and therefore responsible for releasing it to other body tissues. The eyes are connected to Wood and bring vision to the process of planning and decision making, which relate to Liver and Gallbladder, respectively. The tendons are the body tissues of Wood and give the body its flexibility and the capacity to “bend with the wind”.

Element Season: Spring

It is in spring that the force of Wood can be best seen. There is a particularly moment in spring when shoots push up through the soil at a visible rate, a time when the rapidity of change all around can induce a feeling or disorientation.



Spring is a time of rebirth after the quiescence of winter; new growth cycles begin, and our adaptability and motivation are challenged.

For those whose individuality has been suppressed, and who feel themselves to be “dead wood”, the sap springing all around can be too much to bear.

Wood is associated with all times of beginning, not only with the spring season. Each morning is the beginning of a new cycle, and people who feel out of sorts at this time may be experiencing a Liver or Gallbladder disharmony. Wood is linked to the menstrual cycle and also to the menopause, which is a beginning as well as an end, the time when a woman “gives birth” to her mature self.



DID YOU KNOW?

The time of the Wood element in the Chinese clock is 11pm – 3am. An individual with a Wood disharmony can be wakeful at these times. This tendency to stay awake late, combined with malaise in the morning, often leads to a sense of being a “night person” and a lifestyle which accommodates this preference.

The Liver plans when to store energy and nutrients and when to release them for distribution. If distribution is poor, the individual will experience bursts of motivation and hard work, followed by periods of extreme fatigue.

Wind is the aspect of the weather which most resembles Wood, in its force and ability to change direction. Trees respond to wind, which shakes, strips, prunes and strengthens the strong ones, while the weak trees fall. People with an imbalance in Wood often suffer in windy weather.

Someone with harmonious Wood energy:

- Is a creative person, who brings creativity into their life.
- Has a flexible body and is able to bend and stretch.
- Has a flexible mind, which is not prejudiced and is always open to new ideas.
- Is confident at making decisions and functions well in a crisis.
- Has a good liver, so is able to digest rich food and the occasional alcoholic drink.

Symptoms of Wood Element Imbalance:

When Wood is out of balance, the liver and gallbladder organs may have disorders, and detoxification of the body may be compromised. Vision problems and eye problems relate to the Wood element, such as blurred vision or dry or painful eyes. Tendon issues such as repetitive motion injuries may occur with a Wood disharmony, and a lack of flexibility or stiffness in the muscles may also be present. Pain may also exist in the neck, the sides of the body, or the hips. Migraine headaches are often associated with a Wood imbalance because they usually affect only one side of the head and or vision. Anger is the emotion of wood, and it can be especially toxic when held in and not expressed.

Self-care for Wood:

- Write down a goal and plans to achieve that goal.
- Find healthy ways to express anger (e.g. pounding a pillow).
- Exercise regularly. Dancing is fun, good exercise and helps to balance Wood energy. Stretching is also beneficial for the Liver and Gallbladder.
- Spend time in nature, particularly in the woods.
- Avoid excesses e.g. food, drink and exercise.



The Wood Element relates to:

- Freedom and flexibility
- Creativity and control
- Expression and effectiveness
- Detoxification and decision making

How does Wood energy get out of balance?

Control

Over control of the body or of the environment will upset the free nature of Wood energy.

Not enough movement

Keeping the body in a rigid posture, or simply lack of exercise, can damage Wood energy and lead to stiffness.

Repression of strong emotions

Everyone has feelings and everyone gets annoyed, all of which is healthy. When people don't admit these feelings, may be even to themselves, then problems can occur.

Over-indulgence

Drinking too much alcohol or eating fatty foods regularly will weaken Wood energy.

Stress

Stressful situations, where decisions are continually being made, can easily upset Wood energy. Delegation and support our essential at these times.