

# Health Notes

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HEALTH

Zepp Wellness  
healing, naturally.



## Fall weather

By Dr Julie Zepp Rutledge ND

30 degrees during the first and last weeks of September? That certainly makes getting back into the usually welcome routine of fall that much more difficult! It was an amazing summer, weather-wise not since my childhood do I remember such a quintessential prairie summer. Long, hot, sunny days, warm evenings—and a notable absence of mosquitos! It is likely safe to say most of us have nicely optimized our vitamin D stores with all of the magnificent sunshine!

This “Late Summer” that we are experiencing represents that season in Chinese Medicine that relates to Earth energy. Earth energy is important for healthy blood sugar levels,

good motivation and energy. Read on to find out more about Earth energy and how to support it during this Summer-Fall transition. I’ve also included a brief article on hypoglycemia, some recipes and a few odds & ends.

As always, I sincerely hope you find the information useful and will work on incorporating it into your lives in the months to come. Good health is worth the effort! ♥



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## Late Summer: season of Earth energy

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) our organs are grouped into something called The 5 Element Theory. In this theory the elements: Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood represent different seasons Summer, Late Summer,

Fall, Winter and Spring respectively. The organs of the body are also grouped into an element, both a Yin (feminine/solid) and Yang (masculine/hollow) organ are represented and all organs have a relationship with one another.

These organs are spelled with a capital letter to indicate their difference from our “western” variations of these same organs. For the most part the same functions are attributed to the organs in Chinese and

## Late Summer: Season of the Spleen and Stomach

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Western medicine; however the Chinese system also relates energetic and emotional aspects to each organ in addition to its physiological attributes. The organs within the 5-element theory, grouped Summer to Spring, include: Heart/ Small Intestine; Spleen/ Stomach; Lung/ Large Intestine; Kidney/ Bladder; Liver/ Gallbladder. Come mid-September we are in the season Chinese Medicine would consider “Late Summer”. This is a transitional season that starts in late August during which the days are still warm but the nights are cool. Plants are no longer in bloom but they haven’t yet begun their preparations for winter. Leaves are starting to change color but have not yet fallen from the trees. Harvest is under way and there is a feeling of “fullness” and ripening of life force—these are characteristics of the Earth element in Chinese Medicine (think “Mother Earth”). One source describes the Earth element as follows:

The taste of late summer is sweet, its color is yellow, the sense is taste, the smell is fragrant, the sound is singing,



and the mental quality is clarity. It governs the mouth and muscles and its negative emotion is anxiety and its positive emotion is empathy. In the Chinese cosmos, the Earth lies in the center of the five elements, and to the other directions (north, south, east and west) are the other 4 elements or seasons, in direct relationship to the Earth. The Earth element supports nurturing, abundance, centering, and conservation. The Earth is the balance of the yin and yang, the feminine and the masculine principles and strives to bring harmony, grounding and stability

Regardless of the season that we’re in—be it Spring relating to the Liver and the importance of detoxification or Fall/ Lung season and the importance of boosting immunity in order to protect lung health—the Chinese medical system understands the importance of supporting the organ system dominant in that particular season in order to ensure smooth and healthy transitions from one season to the next.

Relating these concepts to Late Summer it is important to support the Spleen and Stomach energies. In Chinese

Medicine the Yang organ, the Stomach, takes in food and fluids (same as Western Medicine!) and stores and partially digests them and in this way influences our digestive capacity. A healthy Stomach energy means good digestion, weak Stomach energy might mean heartburn, feeling of fullness, belching, gas-siness. On a metaphysical level the Stomach is responsible for “digesting” life—how we take in and process our experiences. In this way an unbalanced Stomach energy can make us feel ungrounded, disconnected, confused, unfulfilled.

The Yin organ of the pair is the Spleen and its function in Chinese Medicine differs slightly than its function in Western Medicine in that it includes both the characteristics of the western spleen but also those of the western pancreas. The Chinese Medical paradigm did not recognize an organ called the pancreas and thus its functions are lumped in with those of the Spleen. Physiologically the Spleen is responsible for taking those foods that the Stomach has received and processing them into energy. Thus it is helpful for energy production and continued healthy digestion. When we are deficient in

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## Late Summer: Season of Earth

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Spleen energy we can feel sluggish and fatigued, both physically and mentally. The Spleen is also said to house the thought processes and if we think too much (over-thinking/ worry) the Spleen will suffer. The opposite is also true and weak Spleen energy leads to the inability to think properly. This is what happens when our blood sugars drop and our brains starve without their fuel—fatigue, weakness, dizziness, panic and brain fog. Metaphysically the regulation of blood sugar has to do with our capacity to enjoy the “sweetness of life” and when this energy is imbalanced we no longer find life to be sweet and we may feel weak, worried, isolated and depressed and lack the sense of connection to others.

Stomach and Spleen energy relate to *nourishment* in all senses of the word—physical, and metaphysical (energetic, psychological). We see this in its relation to the Earth that provides nourishment in the form of foods, and Mother Earth that provides nourishment in the very feminine nurturing sense. In order to achieve healthy digestion and blood sugars, to have good

physical and mental energy, to feel connected to others and have a sense of belonging and inner peace it is important, especially in this season of Late Summer, to support Spleen/ Stomach (Earth) energies.

Since the energy of these particular organs are so sensitive to excessive worry it is important to find ways to relax, like guided visualizations or meditation and to incorporate them into your daily routine. Going to bed on time and getting enough (8 to 9 hours) of sleep every night is important. Talking about your problems with others and resolving issues before they become unmanageable will help you feel healthier and more energetic.

How we eat is also important. If we have irregular mealtimes, eat while on the go, working, studying or engage in business or serious discussions at mealtime Earth energy will be damaged. Try to relax over meals, chew food well, listen to your body’s signals to stop just before you’re full and eat only when hungry. Create ambiance: put on nice music, sit at the table and concentrate on your meal—savour the flavours and textures. Do this even if

you are alone!

The type of foods eaten is also important. Cold, raw foods, dairy, sugary sweet foods and greasy foods all damage Earth energy. So while the Fire of the Summer may have allowed us to consume ice cream (cold, raw, dairy and sugary-sweet!) and burgers and fries (greasy foods), to continue to do so will dampen our energy, interfere with healthy blood sugar regulation and may result in foggy thinking, depression and low motivation as we transition through the seasons.

Foods that support the Earth energy include root vegetables, well-cooked grains and small amounts of animal protein. In Chinese medicine beef, ham, rice, potatoes, yams and string beans are noted for their ability to help the Spleen. Eliminate processed foods like flour and sugar found in baked goods (breads/ cookies) and replace them with whole grains and natural sweeteners.

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## Late Summer: Season of Earth

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The Spleen loves touch. Anything we can do to feed ourselves at this fundamental level will strengthen the Spleen. Deprived of touch, the human being shrivels up and sinks into depression.

Touch is as fundamental a need as food. To receive bodywork, cuddle with friends and family are all ways to strengthen the Spleen. Often we focus on food when in fact this other fundamental need, the need for contact, is the secret cure.

Nourishing your Earth energy requires you to take a simpler and more relaxed approach to life. Take care of yourself and you will find you have more energy, more clarity of thought and improved physical health.♥

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### Hypoglycemia: interpreting Spleen energy

For those of you perhaps a little more scientifically-minded I thought I would include some of the physiology behind low “Spleen” energy. It is fascinating to me how the scientific knowledge we have gained gives us a physiological explanation for what traditional medical cultures (like TCM among others) have observed for centuries.

For instance the low Spleen energy resulting in sugar/ carbohydrate cravings that may be a result of a need for closeness or touch can be explained through a deficiency in the neurotransmitter serotonin. This is our “feel good” hormone and when low causes us to feel isolated, lonely, unmotivated or depressed. Sugar or carbohydrate cravings are also a survival tactic when blood sugars are low. It is this concept that I want to fo-

cus on in this article: that of low blood sugar also called *hypoglycemia*.

Hypoglycemia is more of a state or condition rather than a disease in and of itself.

When we eat foods, they enter the digestive system for absorption into the bloodstream. Once in the bloodstream, depending on the type of food eaten and the molecule it breaks down into, the molecule is used for a specific function. Protein foods (eggs, animal products, beans) break down into amino acids that are used for muscle repair and recovery, the production of enzymes, making antibodies (immune cells) and building blocks for neurotransmitters (chemical messengers like serotonin, melatonin, dopamine, etc.). Fats are used in the manufacture of various

steroid hormones (estrogen, progesterone, etc) and they make up the cell membranes of all of our trillions of cells. Thus we really are what we eat, when it comes to fats! “Good fats” (olive oil, flax oil, raw nuts/ seeds, fish) make flexible healthy cell membranes where “bad fats” (shortening, lard, “trans” and “hydrogenated” fats) disrupt healthy membranes. Starchy foods—both the healthy and less healthy ones (whole grains, breads, muffins, etc) are broken down into sugar molecules (glucose) and used for fuel for our cells. Other molecules that may be absorbed include things like food colorings or preservatives or chemicals from pesticide residue, etc. These are more problematic for the body as our bodies have no useful purpose for

## Hypoglycemia: interpreting Spleen energy

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these and instead have to expend energy to break them down and make them less harmful to the body and eventually try to eliminate them. This extra burden and energy expenditure of trying to detoxify our foods can be avoided by removing such non-natural foods from our diet.

I am going to focus on the energy source from carbohydrates (glucose) and describe the state known as hypoglycemia. The various symptoms that characterize this state include:

**.Nervousness, panic attacks, anxiety, sweating, dizziness, fatigue, weakness, irritability, heart palpitations, forgetfulness, mood swings, lack of concentration, depression, sugar cravings, among others.**

Notice the similarity in these symptoms to those of a Spleen energy deficiency as described in my previous article.

Glucose is a source of physical (muscle) and mental (brain) energy. If we are not consuming a balanced diet (too many carbs/ sugar, not enough protein to balance

excess carbs, or not enough carbs as is the case with many low-carb diet fads) or if we have improper pancreatic production of glucagon or insulin, our brain or muscles may be deprived of their fuel source resulting in the symptoms listed above. To make matters worse if our brains are starving for fuel this is a danger situation for the body and the body produces extra adrenaline from the adrenal glands in attempt to raise sugar levels. Adrenaline is an acute stress hormone that will cause and/ or exacerbate the symptoms as listed above. Substances (caffeine, nicotine, allergens and stress!) that raise adrenaline can therefore interfere with healthy glucose levels.

To make matters worse when the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline are released, serotonin production drops (remember that “feel good” hormone I referred to at the beginning of this article?). With dropping serotonin comes increased sugar cravings—giving in to these will worsen the hypoglycemic state thereby increasing adrenaline further and feeding the vicious cycle.

Working on maintaining

healthy blood sugar levels is an essential part of our health and well-being. Unaddressed, recurrent/ chronic hypoglycemia may develop into diabetes years down the road. Three rules of thumb to follow:

1. Avoid sugar, pop, caffeine, nicotine, refined carbs (white bread, white rice, cakes)
2. Consume a high protein + complex carbohydrate meal or snack every 3 hours to provide a slow release of glucose and to prevent blood sugar drop.
3. Supplement your diet with an anti-stress B vitamin complex that includes chromium, zinc and vitamin C; in addition to a good quality fish oil and extra vitamin D.

Also important is stress reduction as this reduces the production of stress hormones that have a detrimental impact on blood sugar stability.

Activity helps normalize blood sugar levels, however high intensity exercise will increase adrenaline; therefore moderate, lower intensity exercise is best for maintaining healthy blood sugar, stress hormone and serotonin levels.

By incorporating these strate-

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## Delicious fall recipes, by Hayley Stobbs of NOURISH

Hayley Stobbs, Registered Holistic Nutritional consultant, has been at it again! Creating new recipes, organizing cooking classes and inspiring individuals and families to get creative and healthy in their snack and meal preparations. Hayley will consult with clients out of space within our clinic but her special area of interest lies in

consulting with clients in the comfort of their very own kitchens, or in helping to demystify grocery shopping for them by meeting at a “conventional” grocery store or one of our many wonderful health food grocery stores. For more information on Hayley’s services, find her business NOURISH on Facebook or contact her at [hayley@nourishconsulting.ca](mailto:hayley@nourishconsulting.ca)♥

### Festive Fall Salad

*This salad makes a fantastic light lunch or dinner accompaniment that tastes great served cold or warm. Try adding beans such as adzuki; when combined with grains and seeds, the vegetarian protein ingredients configure to complete protein synthesis.*

2 cups millet, cooked  
1 cup purple carrot, fine diced  
\*Use purple cabbage as a substitute if necessary  
1 cup mixed greens  
¾ cup fresh cilantro, chopped, loose packed  
¾ cup dried cranberries  
½ cup pumpkin seeds

Cook millet then set aside to cool. Combine with the remaining ingredients in a medium sized salad bowl. When ready to serve, toss with *olive orange dressing*.

#### *Olive Orange Dressing:*

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 small orange, fresh squeezed juice  
+ zest from half an orange  
1 tablespoon brown rice vinegar or lemon juice  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
2 teaspoons unpasteurized honey, melted  
2 teaspoons Bragg soy seasoning  
¼ teaspoon turmeric  
¼ white pepper

Melt butter and honey over low heat and whisk with the remaining ingredients. Serve over salad, chicken, fish, or grains..♥

## Apple Plum Crisp

### Apple Plum Crisp

with hazel-oat topping

5 plums, fine sliced  
1 green apple, fine sliced  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ginger  
¼ teaspoon clove  
¼ teaspoon nutmeg

1/2 cup butter  
+ 2 tablespoons

1 1/2 cups *only* oats rolled oats  
3/4 cup hazelnut (filbert) flour,  
or almond  
1/4 cup maple sugar or sucanat  
1 tablespoon arrowroot flour, optional  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon sea salt

With a food processor blade attachment, finely slice apple and plums then set aside in a large bowl. Alternatively, use a knife to slice thin pieces. Melt the butter over low heat in a small fry pan. In the meantime, mix together the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Preheat oven to 350F.

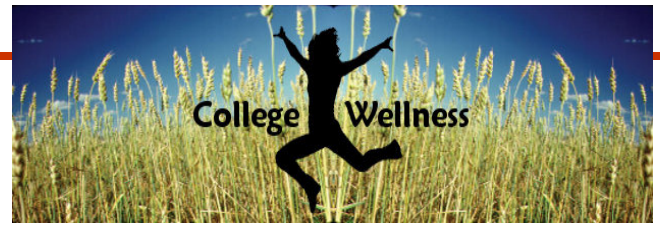
Add the 1/2 cup butter to the oat-flour mixture and mix thoroughly. Pour the two tablespoons of butter over the apple and plum slices. Add the spices to the fruit and toss. Layer the apple and plum slices in a medium sized casserole dish and then top with the oat-flour crumble. Bake for approximately 45 minutes or until the crisp appears golden brown. Serve with plain organic yogurt or coconut ice cream.♥



*“Step out of the story and realize that you are the director, choreographer, the hero, and the protagonist of your own life. Step out and realize that there are different ways of writing the story... more creative, imaginative, fun...”* – Deepak Chopra

## What the heck is in that building?

Our eclectic little house on College Avenue is constantly in flux. To help take the guesswork out of whom you might find working within its walls our own Dr Marika Geis has put together a website to help you sort through and access our various services. It serves as a menu to link you to our various practitioners and includes contact information for the clinic. Find this site at [www.collegewellness.ca](http://www.collegewellness.ca). We currently house NDs: Julie Zepp, Marika Geis,



Jonathan Bablad (one week per month), ND candidate Allison Ziegler, RMT Kimberly Hollinger and RHN Hayley Stobbs. Visit us online or in person!♥



## A social media presence for the SANP

I am so grateful for those whom are technologically inclined! It saves me from having to learn these skills myself. Three of Saskatchewan's more recent members of the Naturopathic profession: Dr Amy Hiebert, Dr Eileen Suwanda and Dr Christian Gleisberg (all practicing in Saskatoon) make up the SANP's Social Media Committee. This summer they launched our Facebook and Twitter campaigns.

### The SANP's goals for Social Media:

- To reach more people across the province
- To keep these people informed about naturopathic medicine
- To allow people to sample the service via health tips
- To sell the service by directing to licensed NDs in the province.
- To have content that people pass along to friends
- To engage our fans to encourage continued interest.

So find us on:

Facebook - SANP - Saskatchewan Association of Naturopathic Practitioners  
Or Twitter - @sasknds

And, as always, on the web at [www.sanp.ca](http://www.sanp.ca)

And tune in for health tips, become a fan, and/ or feel free to leave your comments and questions.♥



**Your Naturopathic Doctor is a Licensed health care professional**

To be sure your "natural health doctor" is regulated please contact the Saskatchewan Association of Naturopathic Practitioners

Naturopathic Medicine is a regulated health profession in Saskatchewan.

**Play it safe**

306-522-0095 or visit [www.sanp.ca](http://www.sanp.ca)

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