

Acu News

"Trade your expectations for appreciation and your whole world changes in an instant." - Tony Robbins

Potent Organs for Winter

Winter is just one of the five seasons acknowledged by Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The ancient Chinese followed the belief that humans should live in harmony with the cycles of nature. During the winter months, the darkness and cold indicate that we should slow down, take care of our health, conserve our strength and replenish our energy for the upcoming spring and summer months. This is observed in the animal kingdom, and it should also be considered a good rule of thumb for human beings.

Each season has multiple associations that help us adjust our habits as things change, which makes it easier to keep the body and mind balanced.

Winter is ruled by the water element. The water element is associated with the **kidneys and urinary bladder**. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine philosophy, the kidneys are the source of all energy found within the body. This energy, frequently called qi (pronounced "chee"), is what keeps us alive and allows our bodies to function properly. During the winter months, it is vital that we nourish and nurture our kidney qi.



Winter is typically a time when we decrease our daily activities. Because of this, we should also decrease the amount of food that we eat to avoid gaining excess weight. It is also recommended

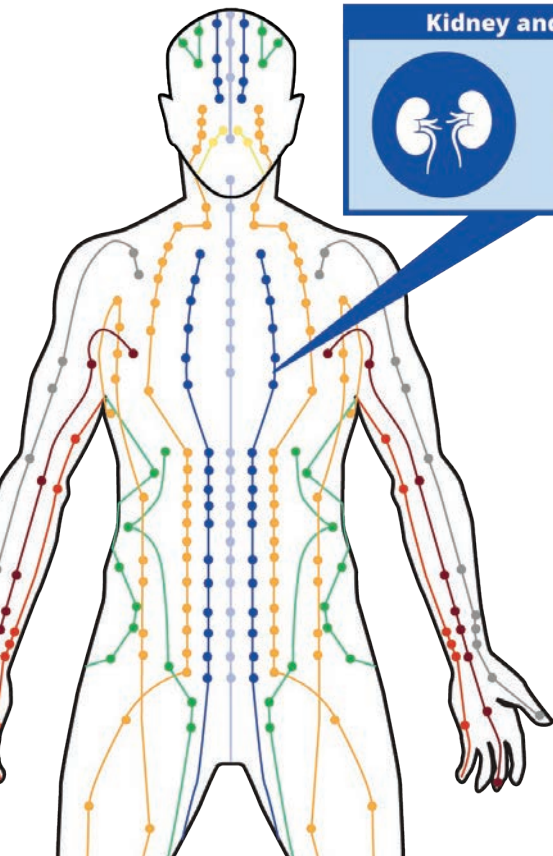
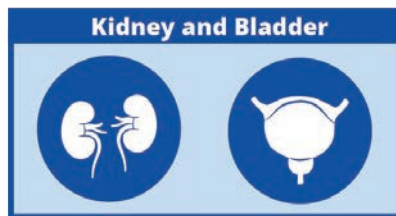
that excessively cold and raw foods be avoided or at least countered with things like hot tea. Cold and raw foods can deplete the kidney energy over time. This can lead to problems with digestion, sleep and much more.

It is suggested that during the winter months, we should **emphasize foods that are warming to the body**. This includes things like soups, stews, root vegetables, beans, garlic and ginger. Also foods like whole grains and roasted nuts can help keep the body's core warm, while providing healthy nourishment.

The second organ associated with the season of winter is the urinary bladder. The urinary bladder is a reservoir where water in the body collects for disposal. The urinary bladder receives impure or dirty fluids from the small intestine and then further transforms these fluids into urine. The urinary bladder then stores and excretes urine as needed. This function also plays an important role in helping to regulate a person's blood pressure. The ability to transform the impure fluids depends on the energy of the kidneys.

One of the most important things anybody can do during the winter months to stay healthy is **drink plenty of water**. Winter, in most places, literally drains the moisture out of the body. It is recommended that we drink at least 64 ounces of water per day, even during the winter months. However, the thought of drinking cold water in cold weather is a concept that tends to keep a lot of people **clinically dehydrated during the winter months**. This is why warm water with lemon or hot tea are good substitutes. We are still ingesting water, while avoiding the cold that could potentially damage our core.

By following the guidelines set forth by nature, we can also remain in balance with the natural world around us. This is how our ancestors did it and it served them quite well. Perhaps there is something to be learned from the wisdom our elders passed down through the generations.



TCMWORKS

87 Spadina Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1Y 2B9
613-729-6678
www.tcmworks.com

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