

Health WellNews

Fall

Better Breakfast Month: *Healthy Breakfast* Ideas for Fall

Originating during the first 2 world wars, September was promoted as 'National Breakfast month' to encourage citizens to eat a healthy meal before work or school to help concentration throughout the day. Better Breakfast Month, was again encouraged by the Cereal Institute in 1951, but we've come a long way since corn flakes and grape nuts. The message to take in quality nutrients in the morning to prepare us for the day makes sense in Chinese Medicine terms as well, but we can adjust some of the suggestions to fit TCM nutritional and seasonal guidance.

Timing: According to the 'qi clock' the stomach channel is most active between 7-9 am. This is an ideal time to take in nutrients, while 9-11am is spleen time when the spleen function of transforming food into qi takes over. 12 hours later these organs are in their resting phase so it makes sense to have a light dinner. This resounds with the old adage:

"Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a pauper."

Warming food and drinks: TCM reminds us that it's best to start the day with warm foods as they are easy on digestion. Try a warming herbal tea such as ginger. Or if you can't go without caffeine in the morning, opt for green tea which, despite being cool in nature, balances out the stimulant effect of caffeine with theanine, an amino acid that improves cognition but also soothes and calms the nervous system.

Don't let your leftovers go to waste! Dinner for breakfast is a great way to have a warm cooked meal in the morning, such as a soup or stew. Proteins can be sourced from legumes & white meat, non-processed dairy (goat/sheep), pungent, fermented foods, and free-range organic eggs.

Eat for the season! Autumn is a time to support the metal element in the body, which is associated with the color white as well as root vegetables and slow cooking methods such as roasting and baking. Consider white-colored foods such as cauliflower, potatoes, turnips, parsnips, almonds, daikon, apples, pears, rice, oats, sesame seeds, onion, garlic and white peppercorns. But don't be shy with leafy greens, just be sure to cook them well.

Breakfast Bowls! Breakfast bowls are a great way to bring together elements of a healthy breakfast and can be savory or sweet depending on your preference. An example of a savory breakfast bowl could consist of mashed cauliflower with sautéed spinach, mushrooms, and an egg. If you crave a cheesy bite you can sprinkle a little sheep's milk feta on top.

Grains are also very important in TCM as they have a positive effect on digestion and make a great base for a breakfast bowl, however wheat flour is considered difficult to digest and known to drain the qi. Hot rice cereal can be a quick and easy option for a warm breakfast bowl.

An old classic: Oats have long been associated with breakfast and are actually one of the best grains for breakfast as they are considered warm and sweet in nature and help to build qi and blood. They are also classified as belonging to the metal element so offer a tonifying effect on lungs and large intestine and especially appropriate for the fall season, which is the season of metal. Here's a sweet breakfast bowl to start your day with a seasonal boost and a smile:

Overnight Oats with Pear & Walnuts

- ½ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup plant-based milk
- ½ Pear diced (asian pears have the most moistening quality to nourish lung yin for the fall season)
- 1 tablespoon chopped Walnuts
- Cinnamon and other warming spices
- Sea Salt
- drizzle diced pears with maple syrup, sprinkle with cinnamon and other warming spices (such as cardamom, ginger and nutmeg) and bake @ 375 for 5-7 minutes
- combine all ingredients into dish or jar that can be closed with a lid
- stir well
- refrigerate overnight
- *heat up in the morning while you set your daily intentions and enjoy!

**Get a good
breakfast
and then give
us a call to
schedule your
seasonal
tune-up!**

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Pumpkin Pie

The Perfect Dessert for Times of Change

Late Summer, according to the Chinese Lunar Calendar and Chinese Medicine, belongs to a 5th season that is collectively defined by the 2-3 week periods of seasonal shifts throughout the year. A time of transition, it is associated with the Earth element organs: the Spleen and Stomach and when it is extra important to prioritize digestive function. Our digestion is linked to our core stability and power to handle change with grace and flow.

The spleen, responsible for the transformation of food into qi and blood, takes center stage during this time and is known to prefer simple, warm, and slightly sweet sustenance. It's a great time for warm soups and stews, a gentle balance of flavors, and naturally sweet foods. Squash soups tend to get all the credit as an example of a traditional late summer dish that caters to the spleen's preferences. But since the flavor correlating with the Earth Element is sweet, let's talk dessert!

Pumpkin pie is a perfect dessert for late summer and times of seasonal change as the ingredients support the spleen's affinity for slightly sweet (pumpkin) and warming (traditional pumpkin pie spices) qualities. The yellow-orange color of pumpkin also hits the mark with the color associated with the Earth element. To make it a bit healthier, we can adjust some of the ingredients without sacrificing any of the deliciousness of this comforting treat. The nut crust helps us avoid the



refined flours typically used in pie crust, while the nuts are a warming, tonifying and satisfying spleen-approved alternative. The coconut milk and coconut butter serves as a delicious replacement to dairy, helping to prevent a build-up of dampness in the body. For the sweet flavors, we stick with natural sources: dates, maple syrup and the pumpkin itself.

A dessert such as this, which respects the body's balance, enjoyed in moderation helps to make life sweeter and assists us in greeting life's transitions with a smile.

Crust:

- 1 cup walnuts
- ½ cup pecans
- ½ cup almond flour
- 4 tablespoons (room temperature or warmer) coconut butter
- 5 medjool dates
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt

Filling:

- 1 15 oz can pumpkin puree
- 1 cup full fat coconut milk
- 5 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup coconut butter
- 2 tablespoons arrowroot powder
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice (ginger, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon)
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt

- Preheat oven to 350°
- Place all crust ingredients in a food processor and pulse until forms dough like consistency
- Press into a 9 inch pie pan
- Blend all filling ingredients in blender or food processor, blend well (if coconut butter is solid, I like to warm it in a glass jar in a hot water bath on the stove)
- Pour filling into crust and bake for 40 minutes.
- Check it at 30 minutes, if it is browning too quickly, cover the whole thing in foil for the remaining time.
- Let cool, then place in the fridge for at least 3-4 hours.
- Serve with coconut whip and enjoy!

For more guidance on how to put together healthy meals, snacks and even desserts that support seasonal energies, come see us for some acupuncture and customized nutritional support!

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Autumn Immunity ARMED & READY

Autumn is the season for strengthening our immune system! According to the 5 Element theory of Chinese Medicine, Autumn is the season of the metal element. The metal element is all about structure and boundaries and this is why it is the perfect time to reinforce our defenses when it comes to health and immunity.



Organs of the season: Lung & Large Intestine are the organs of the metal element and the Autumn season. Together these organs form a protective layer against pathogenic factors that often enter through the respiratory and digestive systems. Their Chinese medicine function further explains their role in immunity. Lung commands the qi in the body and has a strong influence on what is called the wei qi or protective qi. Lungs also control skin, the biggest and most outward organ. They regulate the pores, controlling the opening and closing of the pores and help us to sweat when we need to push pathogens and toxins out of our system.

The Lungs are paired with the large intestine, which in western medicine is closely associated with immunity due to the role of the microbiome in preventing infections. In Chinese Medicine the large intestine function of elimination is the main focus. The process of eliminating body waste is crucial to prevent auto-toxicity and a sluggish system that can not defend itself efficiently. In addition to eliminating food waste and toxins, the large intestines are thought to help us move long-standing emotions out of the body. It is the organ that helps us let go.

The emotion of the season is grief as this is the time to shift more inward and release any excess. It is a time in nature when the bright fire of summer life and activity slows down and things begin to die as part of the cycle of nature. This brings with it an instinctual feeling of sadness as we mourn the loss of that life and begin to prepare for the quiet of winter. Any feelings of loss we have felt in our lives can present themselves during this time if we have not fully processed and released them.

Immune Support Tips:

The best way to support the body's defenses is to bring it into a natural balance with itself and its environment. So, during the fall season, making sure to support the function of the Lungs and Large Intestine will have a lasting effect on immunity year-round.

- **Breathwork:** cultivate your qi and enough oxygen to power your life by applying a little more awareness to your most intuitive function, your breathing. Breathe slow and deep and with loving intention.
- **Gentle exercise:** will help strengthen your lungs and open your pores for sweat.
- **Dry-brush:** your pores are breathing too. Help keep them clean by implementing a dry-brush routine for your skin before showers.
- **Sleep:** the transition from summer to fall is a transition from yang to yin and therefore a time to slow down and get to bed earlier as the days get shorter. Your organs need the rest for repair and will thank you.
- **Avoid cold, damp (like dairy) and raw foods** that slow the digestion and can create phlegm that burdens the lung function.
- **Eat healthy sources of fiber** (nuts, seeds, lentils, legumes, whole grains, veggies and fruits) which assist the large intestine's job of elimination and help to prevent constipation.
- **Stay hydrated:** both the lungs and large intestines need the right balance of fluids to function properly and can be prone to dryness during the fall season.
- **Probiotics:** Enrich your gut flora and mucosal immunity with fermented foods and probiotic supplements.
- **Feel and release grief:** allow yourself to mourn loss in your life. Think: less judgement and more compassion. The more you make room for actually processing your feelings the easier it is to let them go and move on.
- **Chinese herbs:** Immune boosting herbs like Ginseng, astragalus, cordyceps, and schisandra can lift the qi, nourish the lungs and help fight infections when needed.

*Get ready for
a fresh start
in September
with some
immune-boosting
acupuncture and
Chinese herbal
therapy! Give us a
call today!*

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Breathwork in Lung Season

Breath is the link between the universal life force and our physical existence. It is thought of in ancient traditions as our link to the divine. The rhythm of the

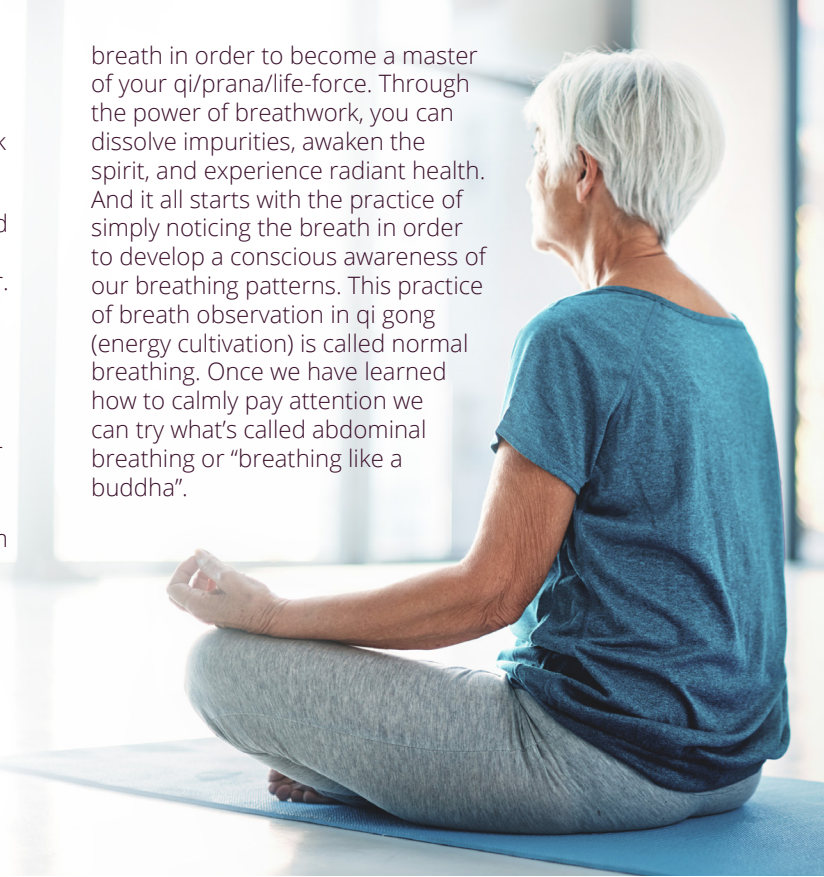
breath mimics the primal rhythm of the universe, the natural ebb and flow, the yin and yang. It is one of the most important tools we have in life and Autumn is the perfect season to tap into this sacred power.

Autumn is the season of the metal element which highlights the important functions of the Lung and its TCM counterpart, the Large Intestine. The Metal element is about refinement and elimination, taking in what the earth gives us, refining it and then releasing what is not needed. Breath is a perfect example of this as we inhale the air and purify it for use in the body. We then exhale carbon dioxide and other waste gases, which will in turn be used by the environment. The large intestine has a similar role in that it separates the fluid from processed food waste, and recycles that fluid back into the body while eliminating the leftover impurities.

In Chinese Medicine, the lungs open into the nose, where the refinement of air begins. Cells in our nose trap debris to prevent it from entering the lungs. Further purification of the air we breathe happens in the lungs as the oxygen is separated out, transferred to the blood and converted to the qi that the body uses for all activity.

Mystics of many traditions talk about the practice of controlling your

breath in order to become a master of your qi/prana/life-force. Through the power of breathwork, you can dissolve impurities, awaken the spirit, and experience radiant health. And it all starts with the practice of simply noticing the breath in order to develop a conscious awareness of our breathing patterns. This practice of breath observation in qi gong (energy cultivation) is called normal breathing. Once we have learned how to calmly pay attention we can try what's called abdominal breathing or "breathing like a buddha".



ABDOMINAL BREATHING

First of all, posture is important in breathwork, so as you've noticed the pattern of breath while simply observing yourself, you may have also noticed your posture. Now is the time to make slight body adjustments to open up your own internal flow. It's a good idea to gently stretch your whole body: legs, neck and back with special attention to your arms as the lung meridian runs along the inside of your arms.

You may have also noticed that normally your breath is shallow. Most adults tend to breathe from their chest. The purpose of abdominal breathing is to allow for a full breath, bringing more oxygen into the body to nourish the tissues and organs. It also slows the heart rate and calms the mind. This helps to bring the whole body/mind/spirit complex into harmony.

Now sit or stand up in a comfortable but not hunched position and start with some slow breathing. Place your right hand on your lower belly (called the lower dantian in qi gong) and your left hand on your chest. Relax any tension in the body, and listen to the sound of your breathing. Inhale deeply from your diaphragm, while expanding your belly to allow air to sink down, allowing your chest and ribs to expand. Relax your abdomen while you do this, and gently, without force, breathe through your nose while lips are lightly touching, and the tongue rests against upper teeth and palate. Exhale completely

through the mouth. Continue this slow breathing for at least 9 inhaled and 9 exhaled.

Qi gong offers more breathing techniques such as reverse breathing, complete breathing, and alternate nostril breathing but abdominal breathing is a great place to start to support your metal element during the Autumn season and throughout the year.

For more guidance with your building your qi this Fall, schedule an acupuncture session to open your channels and get the most out of the season!

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