



Tony Burris

## Welcome to TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) & summer

By Tony Burris

EAGLE – Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) associates the season of summer with the element of “fire”. This is the season when the expression of the *yang* principle is at its peak. Characteristics of *yang* are expansion, growth, lightness, outward activity, brightness, creativity and heat. This is true also of how most of us experience summer, a time of fun, travel, bright and intense sunlight, new activities and light-heartedness.

Indeed, one of the purest expressions of *yang* energy is our sun. The long hours of sunlight and heat during this time of year reflects the deep correlation of summer and yang energy. So, get out there, be busy and have fun. It’s the natural thing to do.

Here are some traditional remedies that will help guide you through the summer and ease into the fall:

**1.) Stay cool and hydrated.** This seems obvious. *Yang* energy is natural but too much of it depletes our fluids causing us to over-heat and exhaust ourselves. Take advantage of shade when you get it and drink enough water to keep your urine output “clear and copious”. Refrigerated beverages are optimal. Try to avoid too much ice as this can be hard on your digestive system. Salads and fruits are good food choices to keep the body cool, especially things like watermelon. Leaf-teas like mint, chamomile and chrysanthemum can also ease heat-related discomfort.

**2.) Get spicy.** It may seem contrary to most of us, but eating moderate amounts of hot-flavored spices can help cool us down. At first, their effect is to increase warmth, but ultimately they bring the heat out of our body with mild perspiration which our bodies’ mechanism to cool us. Red and green peppers, cayenne, fresh ginger, horseradish and regular black pepper are all suitable foods in summer. The key is moderation.

**3.) Go lighter.** Most of us tend to eat less in the summer. This reflects the emphasis on activity and lightness associated with *yang* energy and summer. Honor this tendency and try to avoid the heavy, comfort foods we enjoyed in the winter like casseroles and stews which tend to make us sluggish. Steam and simmer foods as quickly as possible.

**4.) Press your acupoints.** Several acupuncture points can help us cool down and relieve symptoms of heat-aggravation and illness. One is the fourth point of the Large Intestine channel, located on the top of your hand, in the webbing between the base of the thumb and index finger. Pinch and massage this area with your opposite thumb and index finger to stimulate the point. This can be done several times a day if you wish. You may find this region to be tender, so 30-seconds of moderate stimulation are enough.

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