



Spring Cleaning

A springtime cleanse helps overcome the winter blues

Chinese medicine states that there is a specific energy that corresponds to each season of year. In summer it is the bubbling energy of the Fire element; in fall the downward, inward energy of Metal; in winter the deep silence of the Water element. Springtime is associated with the upward-welling, bursting energy of Wood. After a period of deeper, slower activity in the winter, the whole world seems to speed up in springtime, almost as if we, along with all the plants and animals, are trying to make up for lost time.

After a good night's sleep, we often need to stretch and "get the blood going." In the same way, after a winter of lower levels of everything from light to physical activity, we often need to "rev the engine" a little bit in order to "clear the gunk out of the system." So, spring seems to be a time for cleaning. We open the windows and "air out" the home and clean out the accumulations of winter to make room for new life and activity. It's also a great time to clear out the toxins that may have accumulated in the body during the more sedentary winter months. When we do this, we not only feel better immediately, we also set the stage for a healthier, more energetic and productive year.

The organs that correspond to the springtime and the Wood element according to Chinese medicine are the liver and the gallbladder. It should come as no surprise that these are two of the primary organs involved in detoxifying the body. In particular, the liver functions to build and clean the blood. So, herbs that support the liver are often called blood purifiers.

Many of the young greens that start sprouting in the springtime like dandelion, nettles, burdock, etc. are blood purifiers. At one time, people took herbs like these as "spring tonics" to cleanse the blood from the effects of winter. With all the chemicals we're exposed to on a regular basis, using herbs to clean out the blood in the spring is a good practice in modern times, too. Herbal formulas that can do this include: I-X, BP-X, Enviro-Detox and Milk Thistle Combination.

The colon is obviously another major organ of detoxification. If waste is not completely cleared from the colon, it can be reabsorbed and can sensitize various tissues in the body to a wide variety of "trigger" compounds that can cause allergies and hay-fever later in the year. If you suffer from these problems during seasonal changes, cleansing the colon and liver will reduce your environmental sensitivities.

The Tiao He Cleanse program is an ideal "spring cleaning" program for both the liver and the colon. It contains the Chinese Liver Balance (Tiao He) formula, which calms down the wood element in Chinese medicine. Since the wood element is strongest in spring, this formula tempers the excess energy of spring,

helping the body have better balance during this transitional period.

The Tiao He cleanse also contains burdock, a traditional western liver herb and blood purifier; one of those spring tonic herbs that cleanses the blood from the accumulations of winter. All Cell Detox is another ingredient in the cleanse. All Cell Detox is a general cleansing formula that helps the tissues detoxify while supporting organs of elimination like the kidneys, liver, colon and lymphatics. The laxative formula LBS II and the antiparasitic herb, black walnut, are also part of this cleansing program.

The Tiao He Cleanse is a conveniently packaged 10 day cleansing program. Taking some fiber like Psyllium Hulls Combo or Irritable Bowel Fiber first thing in the morning with some water or juice while on the Tiao He Cleanse will make it even more effective.

Dietary change is also helpful during the springtime. During the winter, one needs heavier, or more "acid-forming" foods to stay warm. In summer, one needs lighter, more alkaline foods, which help keep the body cool. It's time to shift the body to a milder, simpler diet emphasizing fruits and vegetables over grains, meat and dairy. A short, three-day fast can be beneficial for some, but for most people a short (3-7 day) juice "fast" using raw fruit or vegetable juices works best.

If we want to "rev the motor," another logical "step to take" is to get some exercise. The skin is another major eliminative organ and inducing perspiration is a great way to cleanse it—that's one of the reasons why exercise is so beneficial. There's no need to set one's sights on harsh or unrealistic exercise goals here, all that is really necessary is to do something gentle and moderate—a 15-minute walk several times a week during your lunch break will help you a lot more than an ambitious gym routine that you drop after a week. Just get outside and do something. In other words, find an activity that you *enjoy* and reward yourself for sticking with it.

Spring is a wonderful time for new beginnings. So, now is a great time to establish habits that will support our health over the coming years. Take the process one step at a time and, above all, enjoy the results of the efforts that you make. It's a time to renew yourself. Happy spring cleaning!

For additional information on cleansing, consult a local herb specialist. Additional information on cleansing can also be found in *The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products*, *Dr.Mom-Dr. Dad* and *The ABC+D Approach* by Tree of Light Publishing.

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