

# Acu News

"To insure good health: eat lightly, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness, and maintain an interest in life." - William Londen

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## Healthy Eating for Spring

Spring is a time of renewal, regeneration, growth and energy. Plants and animals awaken from their slumber during the cold winter months, and vital nutrients stored in the roots of plants come to the surface as life becomes more vibrant and fluid.

Human beings are no different. Humans stay indoors more during the winter months, and tend to pack on a little extra weight in the process. As the weather warms, humans become more gregarious and spend more time outside enjoying nature. This is just a natural process.



Therefore, it makes sense that what was observed by the ancient Chinese should still hold true today. Humans are supposed to take their cues from nature. As a species, humans should be more active during the warmer spring months. And to do this, we need proper nourishment. Qi (pronounced "chee") is sometimes translated into energy. This Qi is the vital substance that keeps our bodies functioning until the day we die. To keep the Qi plentiful, we need to eat the proper foods at the proper times.

During spring, we should be eating foods that have upward energies, such as green, sprouting vegetables. But we also need foods that will provide the extra nourishment for the increased amounts of activity that accompany the season of spring. This is where sweeter foods play a vital role. Foods such as fruits, nuts, yams, carrots and potatoes can provide the extra energy needed during the spring. But be careful not to overdo it. Too much sweet can overload the body and make it sluggish.

Sweets should be countered with pungent foods. Pungent foods aid in the movement of Qi upwards and outwards through the process of perspiration. Pungent flavored foods include scallions, onions, ginger, radishes, garlic, leeks and chives.

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine theory, spring is the season of the liver and the gallbladder. These organs regulate a smooth flow of energy throughout the whole body. However, they are prone to stagnation because we do not take proper care of ourselves. This can manifest as anger, irritability, depression, insomnia and even pain. Stagnation can occur when people eat too many poor-quality foods that may be full of chemicals.

Foods that help ward off stagnation include foods rich in chlorophyll, such as wheat grass, spirulina, chlorella, parsley, kale, Swiss chard and collard greens. All of these foods are abundant during the months of spring. It is also a good idea to have a glass of warm water with a slice of lemon first thing in the morning. This will help detoxify the liver and gallbladder to start the day off fresh. Lastly, foods that have a slightly bitter taste can help ward off heat in the liver. This includes foods like asparagus, quinoa, romaine lettuce and dandelion tea.

If you are curious about how to eat according to the seasons, talk to your acupuncturist. They will be able to guide you along your healing journey through the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine and nutritional counseling.

## Stir-fry For Your Health

If you are looking to spice up your family meal this spring, why not try a healthy chicken stir-fry. A meal that is colorful, warm, seasonal and easy to make.

In Traditional Chinese medicine and Five Element theory, food is medicine. Not only is food healthy and nutritious biochemically, but it also has properties in temperature, taste, color and shape that benefit specific organs. Colors and taste benefit certain organs, for example, sour and the color green go to the liver. Pungent flavors such as garlic, ginger and onions benefit the lungs. Dark and salty foods like seaweed benefit the kidneys. The best thing to remember is to eat fruits and vegetables that are in season and try to add color to your food to encourage the healthy actions the organs have in the body. Warm and cooked vegetables are easier on the digestion than cold and raw food. A terrific item to add to the cooking schedule is a colorful and tasty stir-fry.

A stir-fry has a healthy variety of colors, vegetables, meat, spices and seasoning. Typically what goes into a stir-fry includes chicken, soy sauce, oyster sauce, rice vinegar, honey, garlic, ginger, onion and rice.

Preparation is simple and you can find countless recipes by conducting an Internet search. Typically, a recipe will look like this:

<b>1 lb. chicken</b>	<b>1 tbs rice vinegar</b>
<b>1 tbsp cornstarch</b>	<b>1 tbs honey</b>
<b>2 tbsp soy sauce</b>	<b>3 cloves garlic</b>
<b>2 tbsp oyster sauce</b>	<b>1 tbsp ginger</b>
	<b>green onion to taste</b>

Marinating the chicken overnight adds richer flavor, if you so choose. Combine cornstarch, soy and oyster sauce, rice vinegar, honey and garlic. Stir fry in chicken until brown, set aside. Add vegetables and cook until crisp. Stir in chicken, add onion, peanuts or other things to taste. Serve over rice.

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