

## Community Acupuncture

John Schmieder & Bryan Wagner  
2006 South 39th Street  
St. Louis, MO 63110  
314-772-4325

### Summer and Chinese Medicine

According to Chinese medicine's five element theory, summer is ruled by the fire element. The fire element corresponds to the heart and small intestine, the southerly direction, the climatic condition of heat, the color red, the emotion of happiness or joy, the sound of laughter, the taste of bitterness, and the odor of burning. Fire controls the blood vessels and is reflected in the face and complexion.

**Element:** Fire  
**Nature:** Yang  
**Organs:** Heart, Small Intestine, Tongue and Complexion  
**Emotion:** Joy

*Fire is symbolic of maximum activity or greatest yang, which means that it is a time of heat, outgoingness, and moving outward in nature and in our lives. This is the season to nourish and pacify our spirits while maximizing our potential as we find joy in the hot summer days and warm summer nights.*

Signs that the fire element is in balance include a strong and healthy heart, a calm mind and the ability to sleep soundly. When the fire element is imbalanced, we may either lack joy (depression) or have an excess of joy (mania). Indicators of an imbalance in the fire element also include agitation, nervousness, heartburn, and insomnia.

**This is a great time to schedule your acupuncture seasonal tune up! Call us for more information.**

### Tongue Diagnosis

Tongue diagnosis is an important part of the Chinese medical assessment. During an examination, the overall tongue coating, shape, and color is taken into account.

The tongue reflects the health of the internal organs and blood circulation. Changes in the tongue color usually reflect chronic illness. As your health changes, the condition of your tongue changes as well.

A normal tongue is pink in color, medium thickness, has no cracks, ulcers, or teeth marks and has a light white coat on it.

#### A Red Tipped Tongue

Different areas of the tongue are believed to reflect the health of the different organ systems. If there is an unusual color, coating, and/or shape in a certain area, special attention is paid to the corresponding organ system.

The tip of the tongue is related to the heart and fire element. When the tip of the tongue is red, it is an indication that emotional distress is causing an imbalance. Today's fast paced lifestyle has created an epidemic of stress and anxiety. It is very common to see red tipped tongues in our culture.

In addition to a red tipped tongue, other symptoms of a heart imbalance can include insomnia or frequent nightmares, restlessness, agitation, mouth ulcers, heat sensation in the chest, palpitations with anxiety, dry mouth and a rapid pulse.

As with any assessment method, acupuncturists never rely on tongue diagnosis alone, but use it to provide a complete picture of a person's health.

Tongue diagnosis can be a subtle art. To try it yourself, observe the variations of your tongue's shape, color, size, and coating and compare it to that of friends or family members. After you have looked at a few tongues, you will see that they differ widely, and with a little study can tell you a lot about the overall health of a person.

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### Watermelon (Xi Gua)



In ancient Egypt, watermelon juice and its seeds were traditionally offered to quench the thirst of travelers. If you are looking for a healthy choice to quench your thirst this summer, make it a delicious and refreshing watermelon!

Chinese Medicine uses the fruit (Xi Gua) and the seeds (Xi Gua Ren) for dehydration and summer heat symptoms, which include thirst without desire to drink, a band-like headache, nausea, irritability, low appetite, heavy, weighted body sensation, low motivation, sluggish digestion, increased body temperature and sticky sweat.

Because of watermelon's cooling nature it is often recommended to reduce your body's inflammatory response. Research indicated that the effects of chronic, low-grade inflammation can contribute to conditions such as arthritis, asthma, atherosclerosis, diabetes and certain forms of cancer.

Watermelon is also an excellent source of vitamins C, A, B6, B1, magnesium, thiamine and potassium.

## Study: Blood Pressure Lowered by Acupuncture

A German study published in the June 2007 issue of *Circulation* found that acupuncture significantly lowers both systolic and diastolic blood pressure. The extent of the blood pressure reductions by acupuncture treatments was comparable to those seen with antihypertensive medication or aggressive lifestyle changes, including radical salt restrictions.

For the study, 160 outpatients with uncomplicated, mild to moderate hypertension were randomized to six weeks of acupuncture performed by Chinese medicine practitioners or to a sham procedure. Patients underwent 22 sessions, each 30 minutes in length. By the end of the six weeks, 24-hour ambulatory systolic and diastolic blood pressures were significantly reduced from baseline in the acupuncture-treated patients (5.4 mm Hg and 3.0 mm Hg, respectively). No significant changes were seen in the sham acupuncture group.

After six months the blood-pressure reductions disappeared, leading investigators to conclude that ongoing acupuncture treatments would be required to maintain the blood-pressure reductions.

Source: *Circulation*, June 2007

## Words of Wisdom

*Do not race your heart like a horse, or you will exhaust its energy. Do not fly your heart like a bird, or you will injure its wings. Never frantically move things around just for the sake of seeing what will happen. If you move things around you dislocate them from their proper place. If you will be calm and patient, everything will come to you by itself.* - **Guanzi (Writings of Master Guan) circa 26 BCE**

## Watermelon Gazpacho

**The delicate flavors of cucumber and watermelon go hand in hand to create this sweet-and-savory chilled soup, perfect as a first course or as an appetizer on a hot summer night.**

### INGREDIENTS

8 cups 1/4-inch-diced watermelon  
1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely diced  
1/2 red bell pepper, seeded and finely diced  
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil  
1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley  
2 tablespoons minced shallot  
2 medium garlic cloves, minced  
3 tablespoons red-wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
Black pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Mix ingredients in a large bowl. Puree about half of the mixture in a blender or food processor to the desired smoothness. Stir in the remaining diced mixture.

Chill for at least one hour, to allow flavors to combine, and stir well before serving.

Serve chilled and enjoy!