TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE HEALING CENTER

Bill Biao Lu, O.M.D., L.Ac.
Shiaoting Jing, O.M.D., L.Ac
Florence Lim, DAOM, L.Ac.

12304 Santa Monica Blvd.
Suite 120
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Phone: (310) 826-5288
Fax: (310) 826-7178
Email:
contact@tcmhealingcenter.com

www.tcmhealingcenter.com

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Got Qi?

Spring 2013

Annual 2-Week Liver Cleanse Program

Spring is in the Air!
Are you ready for some Spring cleaning for your body and mind?
Let us show you how!

Here at TCM Healing Center, we host an annual Liver Cleanse Program during the Spingtime. Spring is a transitional season between the cold of Winter and the heat of Summer. It is marked by increasing warmth and Yang energy, when all things in nature wake up, blossom out, grow, and become active once again. From a physiological perspective, the warmth of Spring often brings improved circulation and blood flow, and elevated metabolism. Spring also corresponds with the Wood element and Liver system in the body. The Liver is responsible for the smooth flow of energy through the body, as well as the body's detoxification processes. If the Liver Yang energy becomes stuck or excessive during the Spring-time, symptoms such as high blood pressure, dizziness, emotional stress, excess anger, and other Liver-related health conditions can occur. Furthermore, the weather during the Spring can also be unpredictable and fickle—sometimes warm, other times cold and windy—which is why it is easy to get sick during the Spring, particularly for people with weakened immune systems, who are sensitive to the cold, or who do not take care to cover themselves adequately when the weather becomes chilly. Spring is therefore the best time of the year to "clean house" and focus on cleansing and detoxifying the Liver in order to strengthen and balance all other bodily functions.

Our annual 2-week Liver Cleanse Program utilizes a combination of acupuncture, herbal medicine, Qi Gong meditation exercises, and specific dietary recommendations to open up the Liver channel, clear up Liver Qi stagnation, and aid in the Liver's detoxification processes to help our patients achieve optimal health.

Please ask our front desk staff for more details and to make an appointment.

Congratulations Expecting Mothers!

Holly T.
Anne-Marie R.
Stacy L.
Kristen G.
Erin O.
Holly H.
Julie P.
Gwen B.
Aghi K.
Rachel M.
Amelia N.
Janice C.
Giselle C.
Carolyn G.

"A moment in my tummy,
A lifetime in my heart."

Welcome to the World!

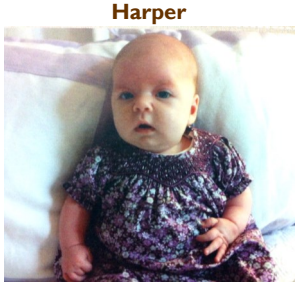
Owen

Born to Christina & Mike
On September 19, 2012
6 lbs. 2 oz., 19 inches

Juliet

Born to Chrissy & James
On January 29, 2012
8 lbs. 15 oz., 21 inches

Harper



Born to Suzanne & Luke
On October 22, 2012
9 lbs. 5 oz., 22 inches

Rosie

Born to Michelle & Jeff
On April 17, 2012
4 lbs. 15 oz., 18 inches

Asher

Born to Michelle & Jeff
On April 17, 2012
5 lbs. 5 oz., 21 inches

Devon

Born to Louise & Shea
On November 18, 2012
8 lbs. 8 oz., 21 inches

Beau

Born to Rebecca & Clay
On December 20, 2012
8 lbs. 5 oz., 20 inches

Brynna

Born to Manda & Brad
On November 21, 2012
6.6 lbs, 20 inches

Shaping Your Biology Part 2

Epigenetics Proves the Age Old Adage 'You Are What You Eat'

By Florence Lim, L.Ac., DAOM

In our Summer 2012 newsletter, we had touched upon the subject of epigenetics – that is, the study of how environmental factors such as diet and lifestyle affect cellular behavior and can silence or turn on specific genetic activity – and the overall benefits of positive thinking. In this issue, we will look more deeply into how our decisions on what we eat can 'shape' our genetic destinies, and ultimately, our health.

"天人合一" Nature and Man are Inseparable

Anyone who grows their own plants or vegetables understands the dedication, patience, and hard work that is needed to create a healthy, abundant crop. If you don't keep the soil damp, or if the soil is too dry, the plant may die. On the other hand, overwatering can also make the plant more prone to fungal overgrowth (what we would liken to excess Phlegm or Dampness in TCM theory). If the soil is not enriched with enough nutrients and minerals, your vegetables may end up looking withered and pale. In many ways, plants are just like humans, endowed with a complex vascular system, deciphering and

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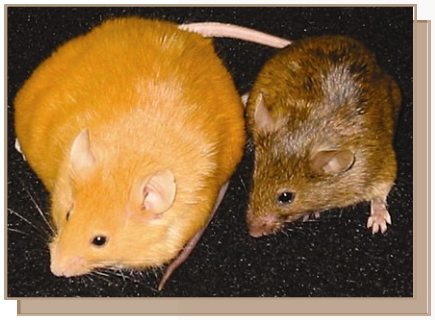
responding to signals from the environment 24/7, and requiring just the right amounts of sun, water, minerals, and nutrients in order to grow properly and produce healthy seeds for future generations. Just as the required amount of nutrients, sun exposure, and soil moisture vary between different types of vegetables, fruits, and plants, so are humans born individually unique, some being more or less prone to different health issues later in life, some thriving on protein while others on vegetables and grains, for instance. However, as we shall see in the following section, these genetic tendencies are more malleable and flexible than we may think. Living organisms can be resilient if given the growing conditions, but also fickle and frail if exposed to stress.

Agouti Gene, DNA Methylation, and Yellow, Obese Mice

A simple way of understanding "epigenetics," or the "epigenome," is that the "epigenome" literally means above, or in addition to, the genome (your DNA). Each cell within our bodies contains a complete set of DNA that makes us who we are—sort of like our genetic "hardware" - but there are many chemical compounds and proteins circulating throughout the body which attach to your DNA and send instructions and signals to the genes in each of your cells, "telling" them how, when, if, and to what extent they should be expressed. Besides our thoughts and beliefs, our exposure to pesticides, chemicals, and the foods we eat all have an epigenetic effect on the expression of DNA within our cells, thus lending credence to the age-old adage "You are what you eat" (or come in contact with)!



Recent studies have focused on specific metabolic pathways responsible for making methyl groups, which are chemical tags, or markers, known to regulate genes and silence specific genetic activity responsible for diseases such as obesity, cancer, and diabetes. One major study has looked at the impact of a common chemical, bisphenol-A (BPA), on the health of a mouse's offspring, and whether certain nutrients in the pregnant mother's diet can counteract the epigenetic changes caused by BPA. BPA is a common chemical found in many plastic household products such as food and beverage containers, baby bottles, dental sealants, and trashcan liners. In mice, there is a specific gene, known as the "agouti gene," that, when activated, leads to obesity and a yellow fur coat. The study found that mice born to mothers exposed to BPA had yellow coats and were more prone to obesity and disease later in life. What happened was that maternal exposure to this chemical turned *off* DNA methylation and turned *on* the agouti gene, causing their offspring to become yellow, obese, and have a higher incidence of cancer and diabetes as adults. The researchers of this study also looked at mothers who had been exposed to BPA but whose diet was supplemented with foods rich in methyl donors such as folic acid (found in foods such as green leafy vegetables, broccoli, cabbage, and kale) or genistein (found in soy). Despite maternal exposure to BPA, their offspring were slender and had normal brown colored fur. In this case, the addition of foods into the mothers' diets which promoted DNA methylation and silenced the expression of the agouti gene helped to offset the negative genetic consequences of BPA exposure. Scientists have found that certain nutrients besides folic acid and genistein, such as vitamin B12, choline, and betaine, are also known to contribute to the methyl-making metabolic pathway that turns off certain genes.

The results of the agouti mouse study may explain why there exists a correlation between high genistein (soy) intake in Asians and lower cancer rates compared to Westerners, and increased cancer rates in Asians who emigrate to the United States. For example, Japanese women, who experience a breast cancer rate of around 1% in Japan, inherit similar breast cancer rates as American women when they emigrate to the U.S.—about 13%. Evidence seems to suggest that certain food components found in foods such as soybeans, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, green tea, fava beans, kale, grapes, and turmeric may inhibit cancer in humans via their influence on DNA methylation. According to Trygve Tollefsbol, a biology professor at UAB College of Arts and Sciences, "compounds in many of these foods suppress gene aberrations that over

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time cause fatal diseases."

Inhibiting Prostate Cancer Genes through Diet and Lifestyle Modifications

In 2005, Dr. Dean Ornish, clinical professor of medicine at the University of California at San Francisco, published the results of his study on a group of 93 men with early-stage prostate cancer who had chosen, under the supervision of their oncologists, to postpone surgery and instead regularly monitor the tumor via measurement of PSA (prostate specific antigen) levels. PSA levels give a general idea of whether the number of cancer cells and size of the tumor are growing. The patients were divided into two groups. The control group simply continued to regularly monitor its PSA levels. The treatment group, on the other hand, was required to completely revamp its diet and lifestyle habits over the course of a year through the following means: 1) following a vegetarian diet, 2) supplementing with the antioxidant vitamins E, C, and selenium, and 1000 mg of omega-3 fatty acid per day, 3) incorporating 30 minutes of walking, 6 days a week, 4) practicing stress management techniques such as yoga, breathing exercises, mental imagery, or progressive relaxation exercises, and 5) participating in a weekly support group with other patients in the same program.

Twelve months later, six of the 49 patients in the control group experienced a worsening of their cancer and had to undergo ablation of their prostate, followed by radiation and chemotherapy; the PSA had increased by an average of 6% among this cohort. This suggests an increase in cancer cells and further growth of the tumors. Conversely, *none* of the 41 patients who had undergone lifestyle and dietary changes in the treatment group were required to undergo further invasive treatment; their PSA levels dropped by an average of 4% , indicating an overall regression of the tumors.

So the question is, how could such simple lifestyle and dietary changes that are not often promoted by traditional Western doctors create such significant and undeniable effects on the progression of prostatic tumors? Was there something going on at a deeper, cellular, genetic level that could explain the regression of these tumors? In fact, Dr. Ornish discovered that the blood of the men in the treatment group was seven times more capable of inhibiting the growth of cancer cells than the blood of men in the control group. Furthermore, he found that his diet and lifestyle modification program altered the expression of more than five hundred genes in the prostate. Genes that had a preventive effect against cancer were stimulated and turned on, whereas cancer-causing genes were turned off!

In Conclusion

As practitioners of Chinese medicine and advocates of a holistic approach to health and well-being, we hope that our patients understand the long-term impact which foods have on their health. It is not easy to change unhealthy eating and lifestyle habits, as we often do not immediately notice the impact which these changes have on our health. But like each grain of sand that makes up a mountain—each grain insignificant in and of itself, but deserving awe and respect when united together to form mountains like the Himalayas—everything we put into our bodies helps build a foundation of either health or disease, depending on what we feed it in the long term. So as Hippocrates once said, let your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food. Let food be a way of nourishing your body, mind, and soul. Happy eating!