

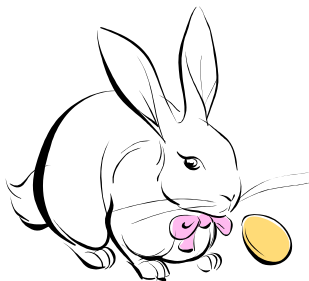


Getting the Point

The Women's Clinic @ Uxbridge Newsletter

Winter/Spring 2005

Springtime, Easter, and Myths about Eggs



This newsletter coincides with an early Easter. Judging by the weather, we may also be experiencing an early Spring, after what

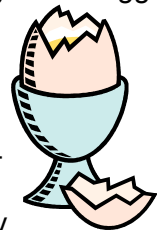
seems like a long and dreary winter. What better time then to contemplate the myths surrounding eggs?

In the early seventies, restrictions were placed on egg consumption due to the belief that they contributed significantly to raising dietary cholesterol. They were regarded as contributors to heart disease and stroke, and dietary advice restricted intake to a maximum of three per week.

Thirty years and much research later, it is the consensus – although not widely publicised – that eggs are not so evil after all. A recent study of over 117,000 adults in the USA has shown that consumption of one egg a day is unlikely to affect the risk of coronary heart disease or stroke in healthy men and women. The research also compared a sub-group who consumed two or more eggs a day with a group who never consumed eggs, and found no significant increase of risk of coronary disease. (However, the investigators found there was an increased risk for diabetics.)







So, what does this mean for the average person? Well, it suggests eggs in themselves are not a health risk, and we can enjoy them as part of a balanced diet – even on a daily basis.

As with many foods, it is not the substance itself but the company it keeps that may be the problem. Eggs are often prepared or served with other foods high in saturated fat – butter, bacon, cream, red meat, cheese. So, enjoy those eggs, but take care how they are cooked, and what they accompany!



This Easter, take time to re-evaluate the role of eggs in your diet. They are highly nutritious, are an excellent source of high quality protein, and provide significant amounts of a range of vitamins and minerals. In Chinese Medicine, they are used to help manage a range of conditions - consult your acupuncturist for further advice.

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Bed is the best place for you!

This winter has brought a lot of people for treatment because of persistent and recurring symptoms after a cold or flu. Symptoms may include persistent dry or productive cough, sinusitis, catarrh, swollen glands, wheezing, chest feeling weak, heavy or breathless, low grade fever, repeated attacks of tonsillitis.

In Chinese Medicine (CM) this is called residual pathogenic factor. It means that the body has not completely cleared out the original infection and that it lingers inside and disrupts the system.

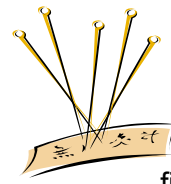
Why does this happen? The usual reason is that we have been under pressure to carry on working (or overworking) as normal, and have not given our body what it is asking for, i.e., to rest as much as possible so that it can fight off the infection.

Another contributory factor is when antibiotics are inappropriately prescribed, eg for a viral infection. Antibiotics often upset the digestive system, which can lead (according to CM) to the formation of Dampness or Phlegm in the system.

It can of course be very hard to take time away from all our responsibilities to look after ourselves and give our body time to recover. It is very important, however, to take a long term view of our health. Continuing to work through a severe infection is very commonly reported in the history of people suffering from ME.

Acupuncture can give a lot of relief during an acute respiratory infection, and patients who spend a few days in bed after treatment often report that their symptoms cleared up very quickly. Bed is the best place for you when you're ill!

Acupuncture for Lower Back Pain



Lower back pain is commonly seen in our clinics and there are many different causes. An osteopath should be the first port of call to rule out structural abnormalities. Acupuncture can be very effective in dealing with backs that seize up after overexertion, such as a day working in the garden.

If there are repeated attacks it often indicates underlying weakness and a longer course of treatment will necessary to help prevent future occurrences. There are many possible contributory causes, including:

- Muscle strain and weakness from heavy physical work or excessive exercise
- Cold in the back, e.g., outdoor exercise such as jogging in skimpy clothing can slow and block the energy leaving a chronic dull ache.



In CM, the Kidney energy is seen as responsible for the lower back area, and Kidney energy can be depleted by constantly working long hours, excessive sexual activity, especially when young, or not being able to rest sufficiently after childbirth.



A lack of physical exercise and a sedentary lifestyle can be as harmful to the back as too much exercise. This can lead to a weakening of the spinal ligaments and joints and can combine with bad posture this can predispose the person to disc problems. Ask your acupuncturist about suitable exercises.

You are What you Drink!

What do you drink and when do you drink it? We are used to the saying “You are what you eat”, but what we drink also plays a significant role in our health and well-being.

We are constantly admonished to drink a lot of fluid, preferably water, and the current popular advice is to drink at least 2 litres a day. But there is little advice given about how and when we should take in fluids.

Traditional Chinese culture sets great store on accompanying healthy eating with healthy drinking habits. Poor drinking habits can jeopardise health in many ways, from over stimulating our energies to contributing to weight problems.

There are many things we can do to ensure we are consuming fluids in a healthy way. Here is a selection for you to consider when thinking of making dietary and lifestyle changes:



Avoid cold drinks Cold slows down movement, and drinking cold or iced fluids will slow down the metabolism. This can contribute to weight

problems. Make sure to consume fluids that are warm or at room temperature. Avoid, as far as possible, iced or refrigerated fluids.

Sip, don't guzzle! The Chinese say “drink your food and chew your drink”. The previous newsletter discussed the importance of chewing food well. It is also important to drink slowly, deliberately, almost as if you are eating the fluid. This prevents flooding the digestive system and the energetic system as a whole.

Drink most of your fluids between meals This allows the digestive system to concentrate on digesting the food when it

is taken in, and enables it to extract the maximum value from it energetically. Chinese Medical theory says that too much fluid taken with food tends to flood the Spleen and give it too much work to do, making the digestive process sluggish and inefficient. Aim to take your fluids 20 minutes before and after meals. If this is impossible, sip a cup of fluid (preferably a warm drink) with your meal.

Avoid too many stimulants Coffee, tea, and many soft drinks contain stimulants such as caffeine, which may give us a quick boost of energy, but ultimately weaken the Qi. Take these in moderation, and try to limit consumption to the early hours of the day, especially if you suffer from sleep problems and insomnia. Alcohol, too, should be taken in moderation.

Avoid sugary drinks Soft drinks and sugary juices are also detrimental to the body's energy, and should be taken in moderation, if at all. Artificial sweeteners are also ideally avoided, as they stimulate our desire for sweet foods and drinks.



Aim to re-educate your taste buds Cutting out sugar or substituting water for sweetened drinks may seem difficult at first. However, it doesn't take long before one loses one's taste for these substances. And, there is the advantage that generally, we feel better without them in our diet!

NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Maggie Bavington, Liz Cook and Beverley de Valois

We are a group of practitioners who trained together at the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine. We are all members of the British Acupuncture Council. We practice both the Five Element and Traditional Chinese Medicine styles of acupuncture. We are all committed to ongoing supervision and training and sharing insights from our particular specialities in the interest of better care for our patients. These currently include women's health, fertility, pain relief, musculo-skeletal conditions, addiction and detox and acupuncture research.

Moxibustion for Turning Breech Position



Breech presentation occurs in 3-5% of deliveries and methods for turning the foetus are controversial.

External Cephalic Version (ECV) after 36 weeks gestation has become the standard procedure in some health trusts (Grabowska 2003). However, there are risks associated with ECV. It may cause membranes to rupture, or the placenta to separate. It is not suitable for Rh⁻ women, and mothers with high blood pressure or previous Caesarean section may be prone to complications.

Given these possible risks, it is useful to look at what Chinese medicine can offer to help to turn breech position. Moxibustion is the practice of applying a smouldering herb called moxa (*Artemisia vulgaris*) to stimulate acupuncture points. The practice is painless, producing a gentle warming sensation that patients often enjoy. Moxa has been used in China in hospitals, clinics, and by individuals in the home, and it appears to be effective in turning breech position. Midwives and obstetricians in the West have become very interested in investigating this method because it is inexpensive, non-invasive and free from complications (Budd 2000).

Cardini and Weixin (1998) report that the 34th week is the optimal time to carry out the procedure, and West (2001) reports success from 32 – 35 weeks, with some response as late as the 38th week. Studies carried out around the world have suggested success rates from 75.4% (Cardini & Wexin 1998) to 90.3% (Wei Wen 1979). If you or someone you know has a breech position, it is worth trying moxibustion. The technique can be learnt from an acupuncturist, and carried out daily at home with the assistance of a partner or friend. It is carried out by applying the heat from a moxa stick to an acupuncture point on the little toe. This is

done twice a day for 15-20 minutes each session until the foetus turns, after which the practice is stopped.

Taking Part in Research - opportunities for pregnant women

Would you like to take part in a study of the effectiveness of using moxibustion for turning breech position? This is being carried out by midwife and acupuncturist Christine Grabowska at Thames Valley University, and utilises the skills of acupuncturists who are members of the British Acupuncture Council.

Maggie Bavington would like to hear from women past their first trimester who would like to take part in a study of the benefits of Shiatsu in pregnancy. Shiatsu is a Japanese massage system, based on the principles of oriental medicine. Shiatsu is deeply relaxing, and can bring relief from some of the ailments that accompany pregnancy. Treatment takes place on an orthopaedic body supporter, so you get to lie on your front!

Contact the authors of the newsletter for further information.

The Women's Clinic @ Uxbridge

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For appointments, information on clinic hours, or information about treatment call:

07791 913 624

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now**

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