

# HEALING JOURNAL



ABBOTT  
NORTHWESTERN  
HOSPITAL  
*Allina Hospitals & Clinics*

Institute for Health and Healing



A newsletter from Abbott Northwestern's Institute for Health and Healing

March/April 2006

Volume 4 Number 2

## CHINESE HERBAL PHILOSOPHY

~ By Bobbee Bee Vang, LAc, MOM

Chinese herbs are the major therapeutic component of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), a holistic medical system that considers the individual's mental, spiritual and physical health.

At the core of TCM is the theory that a type of life force, or energy, known as qi (pronounced "chee") flows through energy pathways, also called meridians, in the body. Each meridian corresponds to one specific organ, or group of organs, that governs particular bodily functions. Illness is viewed as an energy imbalance due to blockages or disruptions of the meridians. The goal of TCM is to restore the balance and flow of energy.

Traditionally, TCM uses techniques such as acupuncture or massage as adjuncts to herbal therapies. But in the U.S. it is more common to use acupuncture or massage as the main therapy, with herbs as an option.

Chinese herbalism has been practiced for more than 4,000 years. While in the West, doctors learned about physiology through surgical procedures, TCM doctors learned about physiology through centuries of observations that different foods and herbs affected functions of the body. After the first Chinese medical school was established in A.D. 629, TCM practitioners began standardizing their curricula and examinations. As part of this effort, herbal prescriptions were collected and written down in encyclopedias.

Practitioners of Chinese herbalism look for particular patterns in the signs and symptoms reported by or observed in their patients. This indicates which herbal remedies may be helpful. Every herb of the **Materia Medica** (the evolving herbal identification publication dating back to the Qin Dynasty) has unique properties, as summarized below.

Chinese herbs are the treatment of choice in many parts of the Far East. Chinese herbalism has evolved from food and home therapies because it offers safe and inexpensive treatment for health problems of all kinds. In some ways, it is similar to today's nutraceutical and whole foods industry.

In recent years, herbalism has been modernized with the introduction of standardization and quality control. Used correctly, many herbs are considered safer than conventional medications. However, herbal products are not regulated by the Food and Drug Association and some may be mislabeled or contain undeclared additives. Also, some herbs interact with conventional medications or are associated with allergic reactions. Self-prescribing herbal products will increase your risk, so it is important to consult your doctor and an herbalist before taking herbal medicines.



For more information, contact Bobbee Bee Vang, LAc, MOM, acupuncturist, 612-863-5777 or [Bobbee.Vang@allina.com](mailto:Bobbee.Vang@allina.com).

Property	Energy	Flavor	Movement	Corresponding Meridian
<b>Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ cold</li> <li>✦ cool</li> <li>✦ warm</li> <li>✦ hot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ pungent</li> <li>✦ sweet</li> <li>✦ sour</li> <li>✦ salty</li> <li>✦ bitter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ upward toward the head</li> <li>✦ downward toward the lower extremities</li> <li>✦ inward toward the organs</li> <li>✦ outward toward the superficial regions of the body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ kidney</li> <li>✦ heart</li> <li>✦ spleen</li> <li>✦ liver</li> <li>✦ lung</li> </ul> <p>(Each meridian represents an organ system, not just an individual organ.)</p>

## MASSAGE THERAPY – DON'T BE OVER-PRESSURED

~ By *Jeremy E. Miller, LMT, NCTMB, BS*

Massage therapy is most effective when it is tailored to suit the individual. For example, the degree of pressure applied during massage may vary depending on the patient's comfort, health condition and therapeutic goals.

Many people benefit from massage because it can relax the body, help loosen specific muscles and tendons, improve sleep, relieve pain, reduce anxiety and improve mood. But too much massage pressure can actually do more harm than good. Instead of relaxing the body, it can cause muscles and tendons to contract or tighten.

Massage pressure is more than simply a matter of comfort – there are some conditions that require a lighter touch. For example, people being treated for cancer often have a low platelet count, which affects blood clotting. To avoid bruising, they should not get a deep massage. However, a light massage can be very beneficial for pain, anxiety and mood. People with fibromyalgia should also avoid deep massage. They may assume that a deep massage will help to relax tight muscles. While it may feel good during the massage, a rebound effect can occur later and leave them feeling worse for several days. Lighter massage can help the body relax physiologically and bring better sleep patterns and less pain.

Other conditions call for greater amounts of pressure or specialized techniques. In these cases, the therapist should always warm up and relax the tissues before applying deeper pressure. Many patients who receive massage therapy in the Outpatient Center are in generally good health but are experiencing pain or restricted mobility. To be most effective, the massage pressure must be just right. The therapist relies on the patient's feedback before, during and after the massage to ensure the best possible results.

Soreness lasting more than 24 hours after a massage and visible bruising are signs that too much pressure was used. Massage therapy patients should expect their therapist to listen to their concerns and address their individual needs. If this does not happen, the patient should look elsewhere for treatment.

Massage therapy is a great way to help you relax and relieve pain, but only if it is adapted to your needs and comfort level.



For more information, contact **Jeremy Miller, LMT, NCTMB, BS**, massage therapist, 612-863-3333 or [Jeremy.Miller@allina.com](mailto:Jeremy.Miller@allina.com).

## HOLISTIC CARE NURSING EDUCATION PILOT UNDERWAY

This month, the Institute for Health and Healing is launching a pilot project to provide holistic care education to 13 staff nurses at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. The nurses come from eight areas of the hospital: cardiovascular, neurosciences, rehabilitation, oncology, medical/surgical, orthopaedics, spine and WomenCare®. Directors and managers have chosen nurses to participate who have demonstrated an interest in holistic health care.

Integrative medicine (IM) nurse clinicians from the Institute will instruct the staff nurses on holistic

nursing, guided imagery, massage, relaxation, acupuncture and aromatherapy. Nurses will learn general information about each topic and how they can incorporate these elements into their daily practice. The IM nurse clinicians will partner with the nurses at the bedside to assist in the integration process.

This pilot was made possible by philanthropic donations to the Institute for Health and Healing. If the pilot is successful, there will be further education opportunities for staff nurses throughout the hospital.





## FITNESS CORNER

News from our exercise physiologist

### STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING: USE IT OR LOSE IT?

~ by Jeana Beberg, MA, RCEP

If you have taken a break from your usual exercise routine, will you lose all of your hard-earned cardiovascular endurance or muscle strength? Perhaps you are recovering from an injury, or simply have not had time to exercise. Regardless of the reason, some fitness loss is inevitable – the amount depends on how fit you were when you stopped exercising. Also, cardiovascular and strength conditioning decline at different rates.



Those who are extremely fit, such as highly trained athletes, experience a rapid drop in cardiovascular fitness in the first three weeks, which then tapers off. But the athlete will retain a significant level of fitness (higher than an untrained individual) for about 12 weeks. People at low-to-moderate fitness levels show little change in cardiovascular fitness within the first few weeks, but their fitness declines rapidly in the weeks following.

To strengthen and tone muscles, most of us have to participate in ongoing strength training sessions. During an inactive period, the highly trained athlete again has the advantage: the effects of training remain evident for weeks and even months. Among lesser-trained individuals, muscle strength and conditioning decline at a faster rate, though not as quickly as seen in sedentary individuals.

Fitness professionals agree that the best way to avoid losing much of the health and fitness benefits you have worked so hard to attain is to simply *do something*. Don't assume that choosing another activity means you are doing less and is not worth it. If you are not motivated to run your usual miles, try walking instead. If you are sidelined by an injury, try cross training. Bike or swim if you are a runner, or use an elliptical trainer if you are swimmer. A change in your routine

– doing something rather than nothing – can provide a psychological lift. In addition, cross training can:

- ❖ reduce boredom
- ❖ decrease the risk of injury
- ❖ maintain or increase your level of fitness.

The key is to keep your heart and muscles challenged even if you are taking a break from your usual routine.



For more information, contact Jeana Beberg, MA, RCEP, exercise physiologist, 612-863-5178 or [Jeana.Beberg@allina.com](mailto:Jeana.Beberg@allina.com).





**March/April  
2006**

**INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND HEALING: MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

Registration is required for all classes unless otherwise noted. To register or for more information, call 612-863-3333.

***Special Events***

**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction**

- ❖ 8-week series, beginning April 3 or 4
- ❖ Mondays, 9:30 a.m.-noon; Tuesdays, 6-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ \$300 (plus \$45 for book and tapes, available at the class)

***Series Programs***

**Restorative Yoga**

- ❖ 6-week series, beginning March 13
- ❖ Mondays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- ❖ \$79

**Continuing Yoga**

- ❖ 6-week series, beginning March 15
- ❖ Wednesdays, 5:30-6:45 p.m.
- ❖ \$79

**T'ai Chi**

- ❖ 8-week series beginning March 8
- ❖ Wednesdays, 7:30-9 p.m.
- ❖ \$99

***Weight Loss Surgery Education***

**Changing Body Image**

- ❖ Wednesday, March 22, 1-2 p.m.
- ❖ 1 CEU for nurses
- ❖ \$10

***One-Time Classes***

**Tui Na for Fertility**

- ❖ Thursday, March 2, 7-8 p.m.
- ❖ 1 CEU for nurses
- ❖ \$20

**Nutrition for Acid Reflux**

- ❖ Tuesday, March 7, 1:30-3 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$20

**The Metabolic Syndrome**

- ❖ Tuesday, March 7, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$10

**Community Drum Circle**

- ❖ Thursday, March 16, 7-8 p.m.
- ❖ \$5

**Nutrition and Cancer Prevention**

- ❖ Tuesday, March 14, 1:30-3 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$20

**What You Need to Know About Herbs**

- ❖ Tuesday, March 21, 7-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses
- ❖ \$10

**Heart Health and Nutrition: Cholesterol and Beyond**

- ❖ Tuesday, March 21, 1:30-3 p.m.
- ❖ 1.5 CEUs for nurses

**The "Art" of Meditation: Collage and Clay**

- ❖ Collage – Tuesday, March 14, 7-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ Clay – Tuesday, March 28, 7-8:30 p.m.
- ❖ \$30 each