
winter



energy of the season

Take cues from Mother Nature this winter. It's cold and dark, so slow down, stay inside, and rest. The ancient Chinese believed that human beings should live in harmony with the natural cycles of their environment.

Winter is also ruled by the water element, which is associated with the kidneys, bladder and adrenal glands.

In nature, winter represents yin; it is inactive, cold and damp. Reflect on your health and consolidate your qi throughout the season to prepare for the spring renewal and rise in energy. In traditional Chinese medicine, the kidneys are considered the source of all energy within the body. They store the reserve qi so that it can be used in times of stress, fear and change, or to heal and prevent illness. With the harsh elements of a Wisconsin winter, your qi can easily become depleted, so nourish your kidneys to preserve your qi and prevent an imbalance in your body.

organs

Kidney & Urinary Bladder

5 elements chart

Organs/Tissues: Ears

Taste: Salty

Color: Black

Emotion: Fear

Environment: Cold

Stage: Storage

Direction: North

Personality: Loyal, but few friends, smart, loves to play

When the water element is healthy: a person respects virtue, discretion, and authority. They enjoy structure and discipline. They revere beauty, ceremony, and refinement.

When the water element is weak: a person becomes indifferent, distant, and inhibited. They are autocratic, strict, and persnickety.

foods

You might be feeling a little heavier from holiday indulgences and chasing that New Year's resolution, but winter is the worst time of the year to diet. Winter is a time when the body can easily become depleted of many nutrients, especially vitamin D. If you listen to your environment and slow down your activity level, your body won't require as much food.

Black/Dark Colored Foods

Algae, black bean, kidney bean, beetroot, blackberry, black current, red cabbage, cherry, eggplant, red grape, plum, molasses, mulberry, kelp, black sesame seed

Salty Foods

The salty flavor is cooling, moistening, down bearing, softening, and loosening. Introduce a few of these in winter.

Barley, bass, borage, carp, caviar, celery, cheese (goat, sheep), Crayfish, duck, ham, herring, lobster, marigold, marshmallow root, milk (goat, sheep), miso, mussel, octopus, oyster, pork, pigeon, salmon, sardine, sea salt, seaweed, shrimp, soy sauce, squid, tuna

Common Complaints & Imbalances

Kidney Qi/Jing Deficiency: Lower back pain, knee pain and weakness, problems with urinary retention, fatigue, shortness of breath, vertigo/dizziness, excessive fear, sexual problems, slow development, poor memory, softening of bones, loss of hair, or blurred vision. Almond, beef kidney, bee pollen, chicken, egg (chicken, duck, pigeon, quail), ghee, lamb kidney, microalgae, milk (cow), mussel, nettle, octopus, oyster, parsley, pork kidney, raspberry leaf, rose hips, royal jelly, sesame seed (black, white), spirulina, walnut, wheat berry.

Yin Deficiency Dryness: Dizziness, ringing in the ears, dry throat, dry mouth, low backaches, spontaneous searing, agitation, nervousness, insecurity, and red cheeks. Millet, barley, tofu, black bean, blackberry, blueberry, mulberry, water chestnut, potato, seaweed, spirulina, chlorella, crab, eggs, marshmallow roots, asparagus, aloe vera gel.

Cook: nourish with hearty soups and stews, whole grains, root vegetables, beans and roasted nuts to help warm the body's core.

supplements

Cod Liver Oil: Provides vitamin A and D, supports immune response function, bone and tooth health, the body's natural inflammatory response, and provides omega-3 fatty acids.

Cataplex D: Supports bone health, mineral absorption, the immune system, and cellular processes by encouraging healthy calcium absorption from the intestinal tract into the blood, supporting healthy immune system response function, supporting and maintaining bone density, and providing vitamin D.

Calcifood Powder: Supports calcium absorption and helps the body build strong, healthy bones.

essential oils

8 Branches' signature Water blend uses the benefits of lavender, lime, petitgrain, cedarwood, clary sage, and roman chamomile. This blend tonifies the Kidney, fortifies the yang, and harmonizing the mind (shen). It is beneficial to kidney qi and yang deficiencies, especially with timidity, insecurity, apprehension, fearfulness, fatigue, low back aches, and/or weakness.

Petitgrain: Revitalizing, balancing, restoring, and clarifying to the intellectual aspect of the mind.

Lime: Refreshing and uplifting. Beneficial to fatigue, anxiety, and depression.

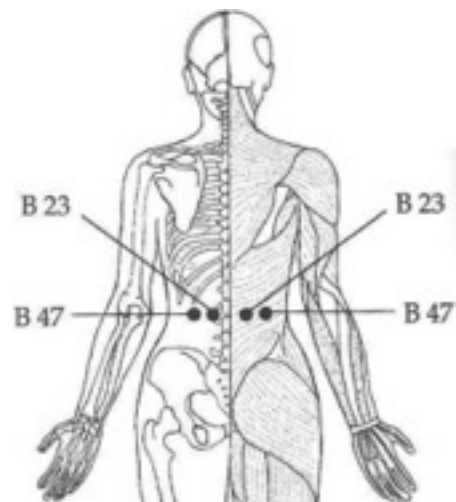
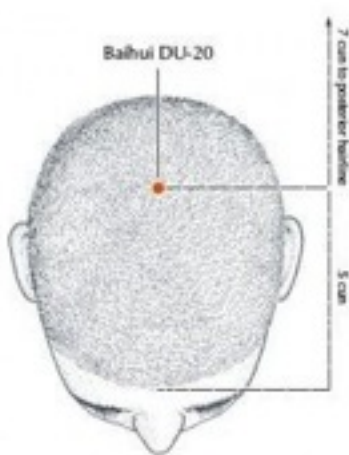
Cedarwood: Warming, harmonizing, soothing, and grounding. Boosts the Qi and dispels cold and damp pathogens.

acupressure

Governing Vessel 20: Absorbs the energy of the heavens, raises yang, and nourishes the Sea of Marrow.

Kidney 1: Roots us to the energy of the earth, calms the spirit, and relieves insomnia. It is important to wear warm socks in the wintertime and keep your feet warm. When KD1 becomes cold, pathogenic cold can trace its way up the channel and cause problems such as weak knees or a sore lower back. Try WARM WATER FOOT SOAKS

Urinary Bladder 23: Tonify the Kidneys, boost the yin and yang of the Kidneys, strengthen the lumbar region, and benefit essence. Try ROUND RUBBING UB23 (lower back) to create friction and warm the Kidneys to keep them strong in the winter months.



self care

Sleep – Achieve better sleep by retiring to bed before 10 p.m., turning your electronics off at least an hour before. Keep a notepad by your bed and make a list if you find your mind wandering or ruminating on tasks. Focus on deep breathing and massage sore spots to allow your body to slip into maximum relaxation.

Water – During the winter months, drink water at room temperature or warmer. In the morning, enjoy warm water with lemon and honey to cleanse, lubricate and prepare the body for digestion. Drink tea for warmth (chai or jasmine are great for winter).

Breathe – Focused breath work throughout the day can help you relax and focus. It seems so obvious, but learning to breathe effectively can really change your health. Build your qi by resting one hand just below your belly button and guiding your breath deep into your abdomen. Begin with a count of five breaths in and out, allowing your belly to fill and empty. Visualize taking in clean, pure, nourishing air and then exhaling any turbid, heavy or negative energy you carry.

Reflection – Winter is a time to relax and reflect, set goals and put pieces in place for the spring. Meditate, breathe and develop a strong, focused mind-body connection to help you better achieve those goals. Use a journal to track your health, emotions and progress.

Movement – Focus on slow and gentle movements and move with purpose. Join restorative or yin yoga classes offered at Saffron Yoga or Healium Hot Yoga. Try a new practice like Tai Chi or Qi Gong with Y.M.A.A. – classes offered at the Bay View Community Center.

Moxibustion – In addition to warming foods and herbs, moxa is great for the wintertime. Cold trapped in the body can cause tightness and pain. The warming nature of moxa helps to relieve symptoms of pain and stagnation, but more importantly it strengthens and warms the body to prevent the effects of cold.

Salt Bath – Baths and/or foot soaks with sea or Epsom salt is a great way to keep the body warm and gently increase circulation. Salt also nourishes the body in the wintertime.

Skin Brushing – Brush away dead skin with a coarse-bristled body brush on dry skin to invigorate the lymphatic system. It helps to reduce sluggishness and improve immune function, not to mention it makes your skin feel alive again in the dead of winter. Once you slough off all the dead skin, nourish with warming oils; like sesame, avocado or walnut.

recipes

Bone Broth

When making bone broth, it is best to make it in large batches. Once it is cooled, skin the fat off of it, and freeze whatever you are not going to eat for the week. Regardless of if you use a crock pot or stove, just remember: low and slow.

Cook Time: 8 hours

Prep Time: 25-30 minutes

Ingredients:

3 lbs Grass Fed Beef Bones
Filtered Water
3 large chopped carrots
2 large celery sticks
5 cloves garlic
2 bay leaves
½ tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper

On a baker sheet, lay out your beef bones, bone side down. Bake at 375 for 25-30 minutes.

Place the rest of the ingredients a large pot or crock pot and add the bones on top. Add the filtered water until everything is completely covered. Turn on low and let cook 8+ hours.

Vegetarian “Bone” Broth

Ingredients:

12 cups filtered water
1 tbsp coconut oil
1 red onion quartered (with skins)
1 garlic bulb smashed
1 chili pepper roughly chopped (with seeds)
1 thumb of ginger roughly chopped (with skin)
1 cup greens such as kale or spinach
3-4 cup mixed chopped vegetables and peelings (carrot peelings, red cabbage, fresh mushrooms, leeks, celery, root vegetables (with skins)
1/2 cup dried shiitake mushrooms
30 g dried wakame seaweed
1 tbsp each peppercorns, ground turmeric and coconut aminos
A bunch of fresh coriander or other herb of your choice

1. Simply add everything to a large pot. Bring to a boil then simmer, with the lid on, for about an hour.
2. Once everything has been cooked down, strain the liquid into a large bowl.
3. Serve immediately with some fresh herbs or cool for later. It also freezes well.