



## SPRING - THE SEASON OF RENEWAL

Mon, 03/05/2012 - 07:51 — [dmelanson](#)

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Spring – The Season of Renewal begins March 20th

I remember Spring break 2009 with my son: We were back East on a skiing vacation eating out most nights, and playing hard during the day. I could feel my body was tired, sluggish in need of re-tuning. When I came back to Oregon I put myself on a Spring cleanse. I chose Thorne Research's product, MediClear, a powder of all the vitamins and minerals one should get from their daily intake of food (but most of us don't). The elimination diet cleanse excludes all inflammatory foods and gives your body an opportunity to detoxify. I felt amazing after two weeks and even better by the fourth. I was sleeping more soundly, had way more energy, lost weight and I swear my skin even glowed! It was hard at first, but once I started feeling so different I began telling all my clients the benefits of doing a Spring cleanse. We all are resistant to do our Spring cleaning but once the house is mopped and the fresh air comes swirling through the home we are glad we made the effort. The same holds true for our

bodies. During the quiet of Winter we become sluggish, in need of our own Spring cleaning.

In Chinese medicine, each season is associated with one of the five elements. Spring is paired with the Wood element, and is the time for new growth. Seeds begin to sprout, and flowers bloom as the sun warms the Earth. In this season of renewal. Spring is the long awaited change from Winter.

Very much like the plant and animal worlds, we too are emerging from a time of darkness and introspection into a time of new life. Simply look around as you stroll any sidewalk in town: little green sprouts pushing, struggling towards the warmth of the sun for nourishment. The trees come back to life with the abundance of new blossoms holding hope for Summer's harvest of fruit. We emerge from the Yin time of Winter into the youthful Yang energy of Spring. While Winter was a time to conserve energy and reduce activity, Spring is a time of regeneration, new beginnings and a renewal of spirit.

Wood exemplifies the energy of growth, change, and pushing through obstacles. It's a very active energy that allows for a lot of movement and progress, both internally and externally. When this energy is denied the opportunity for growth or is constrained in some manner, it becomes a source of frustration, anger and stress. At this time of year we may have more energy to get moving on projects, evaluating our inner and outer worlds and making plans for change i.e.: the classic "spring cleaning." The Wood element brings thinking into action and helps us make decisions. At the same time, areas of "stuck-ness" and irritability can be especially apparent. Spring is a really good time to work through these blockages, and get things moving so we can have access to our growth potential and to bring life back in balance. Our mental and spiritual vision is equally important. When more in balance, we can clearly see our goals, and with the strength of Wood, carry out our vision.

In Chinese medicine, the organ system that represents Wood is the Liver. The Liver governs the sinews and tendons, the eyes, and the fingernails, and plays a key role in the functioning of the blood of the reproductive system. The Liver also governs our emotional well-being. The Wood energy of the Liver can be thought of like a tree. If we imagine ourselves as trees, we are at our best when our tendons and sinews (branches and limbs) are supple, flexible, and strong. The Liver also has a connection to blood. Like sap in a tree, our blood must nourish our tendons, sinews, and eyes, so that we can clearly see and achieve our goals. On a physical level, we hope to bend and not break. On a mental and spiritual level, we seek a flexible mind that can be strong and imaginative.

Issues that bothered us in the Winter begin to feel better with the returning of the light, the warmth of the sun and longer days, and we find we have a different vitality. However, not all of us will feel this way – the transition can be a bit bumpy for some, who may feel more stagnant or stuck.

Although, Spring can be a hard time for some health issues, including stress, digestive disorders, migraines, and menstrual irregularities, don't be discouraged. Spring is a good time to work with these conditions, because the patterns are most accessible and responsive to lasting change.

For the 5th season I am doing and I am recommending the six week Thorne Research Medi-Clear cleanse to be combined with weekly acupuncture and sauna time to begin the season of renewal. A cleanse is a safe way to re-set our metabolism and lose weight with support. And I truly am a convert to recalibrating my body during this time of year.

Here are a few ideas for you to make your cleanse complete:

Get outside. Outdoor air helps the Qi flow, as does exercise. If you find yourself feeling irritable, lethargic, or stuck, find some time for an outdoor activity.

Stretch. According to Chinese medicine, the Liver stores blood during rest and releases it to the tendons and muscles in times of activity. Taking a few minutes to stretch or do yoga in the morning can help you move more fluidly through the day.

Taste Sour. Foods and drinks with sour tastes are thought to stimulate liver Qi. Put lemon slices in your daily water.

Eat Green. Not surprisingly green is the color of Spring in Chinese medicine. Eat fresh leafy greens, the young sprouts of new plants can improve the Liver's overall function and help in the smooth flow of Qi.

Rest your Eyes. The liver opens into the eyes. Remember to take breaks from looking at your computer screen for extended periods of time. Enjoy Chinese herbal tea bags to soothe tire eyes at the end of long days or long weeks.

Get Acupuncture. Needles and Chinese medicine can help improve the overall health of your Liver. Even if you only have acupuncture a few times a year, the change of seasons is a good time to do it. Treatments are designed to harmonize your body, Especially if you are feeling stress, anger, or frustration, which are associated with Liver disharmony, just one session can help you start the season out right.

Drink Chinese herbal Tea. Drink Ju Hua (Chrysanthemum) and Go Qi Zi (Goji berry) tea to invigorate Yin and liver blood. Soothe irritated, dry, itchy eyes due seasonal allergies and get an overall sense of calm.

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