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The Stomach & Spleen



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ORIENTAL MEDICINE



Stomach & Spleen

Conventional medical view

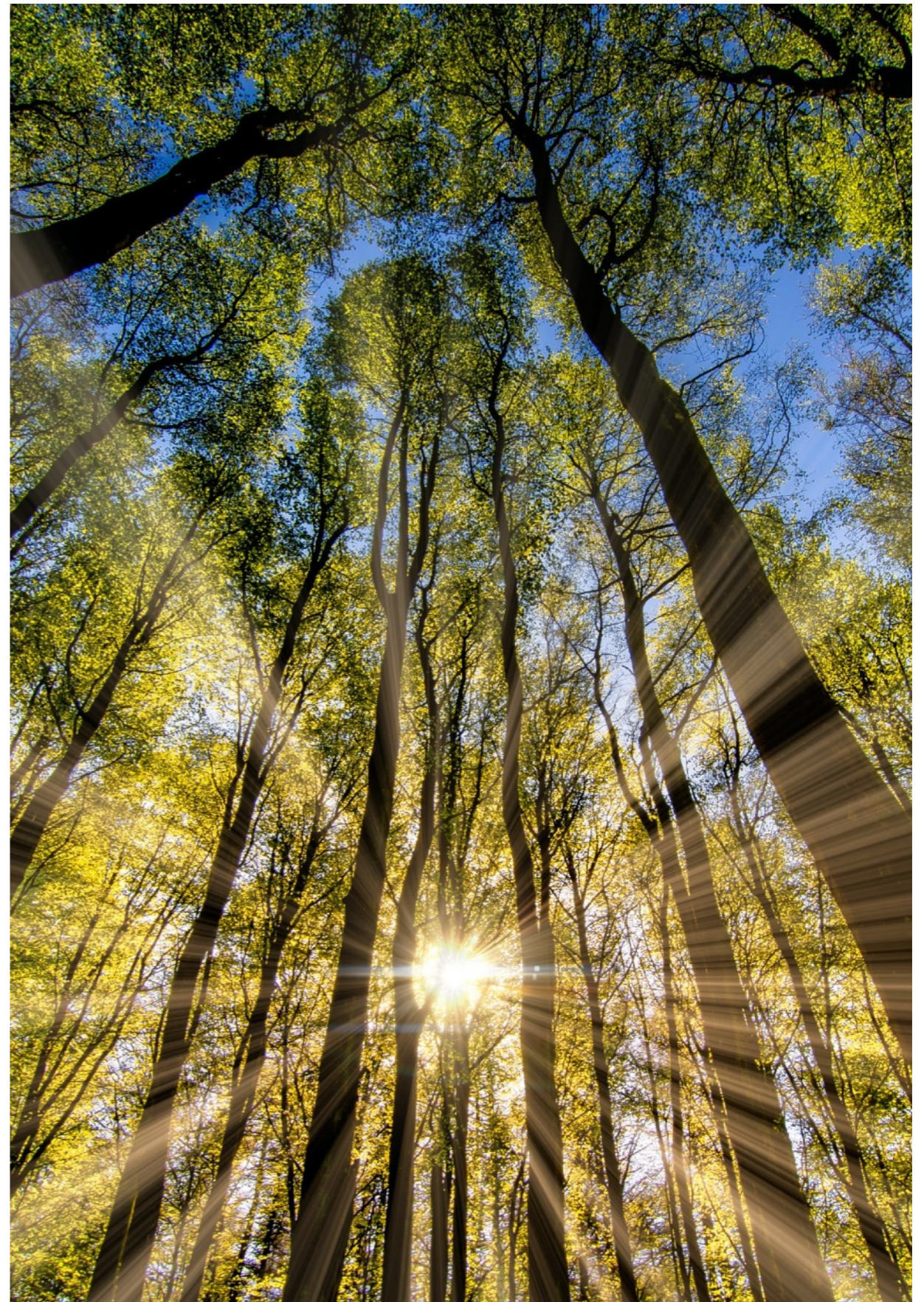
Digestion of carbohydrates begins in the mouth with Amylase enzyme. After chewing well, we swallow & food enters the **stomach**. The lining secretes Pepsin & Hydrochloric acid to destroy microbes & break down proteins. The stomach releases this acidic paste called chyme to the small intestine to sort out nourishment from waste.

The spleen is the largest organ in our lymphatic system. It acts as a blood filter, controlling our red blood cells & filtering out old & damaged cells. It also works with the lymph nodes to detect infection & produce white blood cells to boost immunity. The spleen is not considered an important organ in the west & as such a splenectomy is relatively common.

Oriental perspective

All the organs & the meridians named after them, have a greater role than just the physical as seen from western medicine - There is an energetic role effecting us on a mental, emotional & spiritual level as well. The energetic life force that flows within us is known as **Qi**. (Pronounced “Chee”)

Qi is seen to flow within channels throughout the body known as meridians, each one named after the internal physical organ to which it is connected. Qi is the energy that runs through all of us, it is what keeps us warm & every cell in motion - **Qi is life**. The quality and movement of Qi through the body determines our health. When you stimulate your blood flow or lymphatic flow it is the Qi that allows this movement - they are intrinsically linked. The ideal state is one of smooth flow with no imbalances or blockages, which are called stagnation or stagnant Qi. If you have stagnation, whether physical, emotional, mental or spiritual, this will eventually manifest as disease.





Oriental View:

Stomach & Spleen

In **Chinese medicine** the **stomach** is seen as the “**cooking pot**” in which one puts our food. The **spleen** is like the **chef** who takes the “**steam**” that rises from the pot & transforms it into **Qi & blood**.

The **stomach & spleen** belong to the **element earth**.

Stomach time is **7-9 am**

Spleen time is **9-11 am**

(This is why breakfast/Brunch is considered so important)

Colour - **yellow / orange**

Flavour - **sweet**

Emotion - **worry**

Emotional signs:

In Chinese medicine we recognise that each of our emotions is connected to a different organ.

Emotions are something we cannot see, you cannot dissect a body & find one - yet we all feel them, so take them to be real. The notion that different emotions could be connected to different organs is also not alien to us. We talk about being “worried sick” or “let me digest that for a minute”.

Spleen & stomach control **thinking**. The mind that goes - think, think, think, worry, worry, worry. **Too much worry “knots” the stomach Qi** - we may even feel this like a ball in the stomach. If stomach Qi blocks you will struggle to think clearly, may even feel nauseas. **This can lead to further worry, over-thinking, confusion, anxiety or depression.**





How to nourish the Stomach & Spleen

Eat foods that are yellow/orange in colour

Millet, Chinese yam, potatoes & noodles are all said to **soothe the stomach.**

Example of some foods to nourish stomach & spleen: Apple, apricot, beetroot, cabbage, carrots, celery, cherries, chicken, (free range) chickpeas, courgettes, corn, dates, grapes, grapefruit, honey, malt, milk (provided you have no mucous) mushrooms, oats, peach, pear, pineapple, plum, sweet potato, radish, raspberries, rice, chestnut, egg, turnip, pumpkin, spinach, strawberries, turmeric, ginger, saffron.

Sweet foods

The flavour of the stomach & spleen is sweet. **If taken in in correct quantities naturally sweet food** like rice, cabbage, carrots, pumpkins & honey **can tonify & strengthen.**

However extremely sweet foods (what we think of as sweet as in desert, cakes, biscuits) in large quantities weakens the stomach & spleen & creates dampness, even phlegm in the system.

People often crave sweets & chocolate because their stomach & spleen are deficient. This can often become a vicious cycle. The more weak the organ / meridian system is the more cravings you have which if you then eat “sweets” will weaken you further. Instead nourish with root vegetables, carrots, pumpkins etc. All have naturally occurring sugars present. **By eating these foods you will shortly stop craving artificial & refined sugars.**





What can you eat?

To help your digestive system always eat cooked meals, the warmth of the food enables the digestion to break down the food easier, you use less energy to digest, as you do not have to “cook” the food in your stomach. Generally to protect the stomach & spleen **raw food is not recommended.** Only eat raw food if your digestion is very strong - juicing is avoided as a meal substitute.

Overeating raw foods, juices & dairy products creates cold & damp (mucous) in the system & can extinguish the stomach fire impairing digestion. This means you use more energy you may not have spare to “heat & cook” or digest your food.

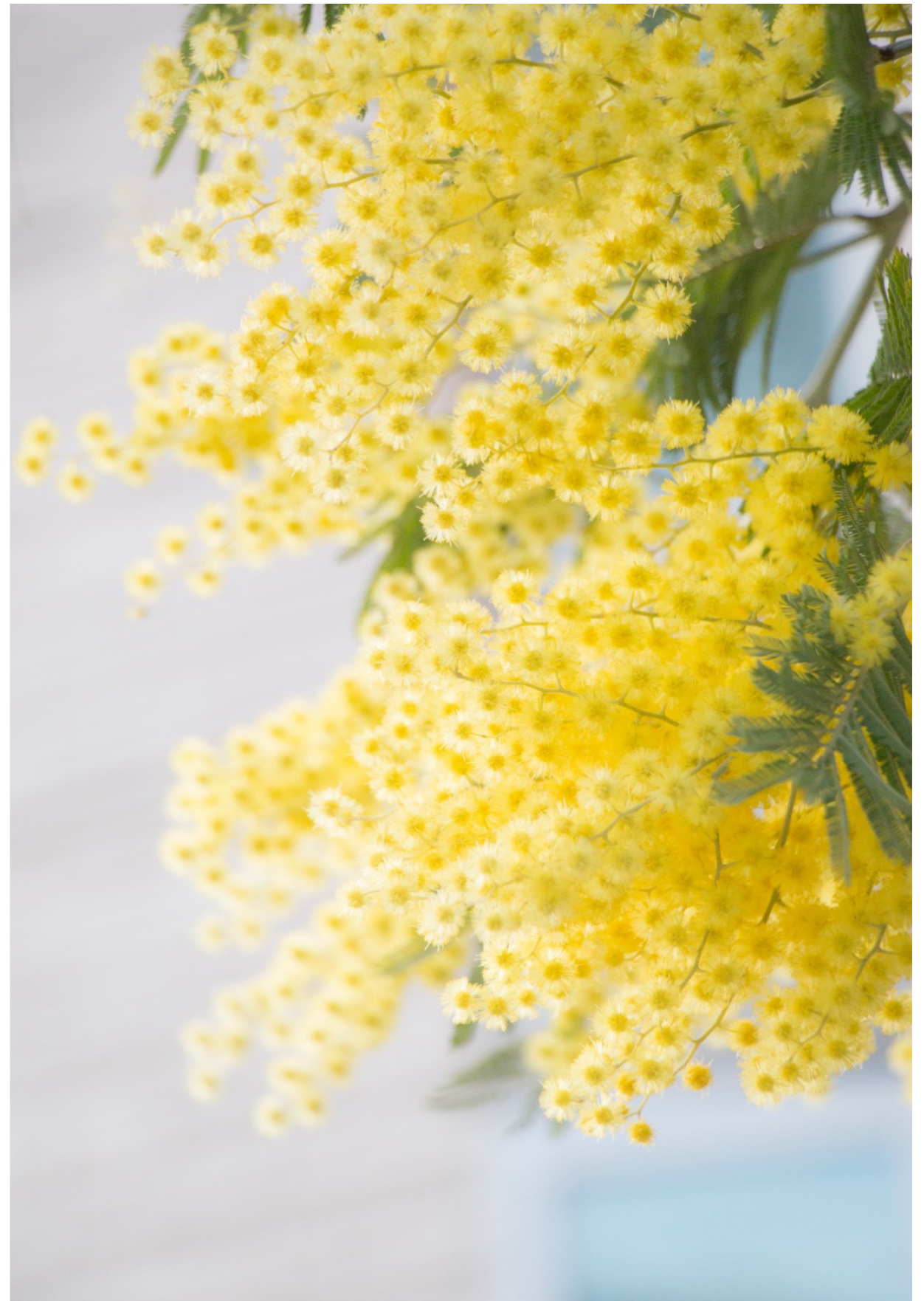
Avoid oranges / mandarins as these can produce dampness in the system.

Spleen is so much more

In Chinese medicine the spleen not only is seen as the “chef” who transforms the food we eat into Qi & blood but it also transports the blood around the body. It takes the “blood” to the heart where it is said the heart “stamps it red”! Of course the heart physically pumps the blood but it is said, the spleen holds the blood within the blood vessels, holds the vessels in place & the organs in place.

Deficient spleen energy can manifest with easy bruising, reckless bleeding, even haemorrhage. Maybe varicose veins, piles, hernias or even prolapse of an organ.

Strengthening & supporting the spleen energy can help to reverse these pesky symptoms.





The stomach

We are what we eat!

The stomach is considered the “sea of nourishment” & the “root of postnatal life” because it is the source for providing the entire body with energy. Our “current account” of energy comes from the food or “fuel” we put into our stomach & how we digest. Our “deposit account” of energy or reserve comes from the kidneys. But to replenish this reserve we must have a surplus from our digestion.

The stomach meridian is associated with our ability to assimilate new ideas, absorb information, as well as honouring & nurturing the self.

Stomach's worst enemies!

Worry, Over-thinking, Anxiety,

Eating while multi-tasking.

Avoid smoking, alcohol, caffeine, soft fizzy drinks (minerals), aspirin, ibuprofen, pharmaceuticals & pain medications.

Avoid wheat & gluten

Avoid overeating.

Never lay down after meals

Avoid eating 2-3 hours before bed.

Avoid diluting food with drink during meals. Instead drink between meals.

Anger, frustration, resentment

effect the stomach indirectly through liver Qi stagnation which then invades the stomach, knotting the Qi. This can even create nausea as stomach Qi cannot descend. **So never eat when angry!**



Self help techniques

How to support the stomach & spleen

- * Eat slowly & **chew your food well**, (50 - 100 times).
Creating saliva is an important part of digestion.
- * **Relax at mealtimes** & never eat on the run.
- * **Avoid distractions** while eating such as watching telly, reading, having a business meeting. **Just eat when you eat** so your digestive energy can just be concerned with digesting not “thinking” which will take energy away from digesting!
- * **Prepare food with love** - & then enjoy eating it.
- * **Food combining** - separating protein from carbohydrate in the same meal can help some people.
- * Try a high **protein breakfast** - 7-9 am is peak stomach time when the body is most efficient at digesting.
- * Digestive enzymes can be effective temporarily, but best to avoid long-term.
- * Mercury metal fillings are said to damage the stomach lining - some people find benefit from removal followed by a mercury detox program



Moxibustion on stomach 36

- * If your digestive fire is low - try drinking a cup of ginger tea before eating.
- * Rubbing your belly in a clockwise direction helps to warm & move the energy throughout the whole digestive tract - reducing bloating & wind.
- * Practice the healing sounds - For the stomach & spleen this is **Whooooooooooooo.....**
- * **Learn to Moxa stomach 36.** See demonstration video on my website www.nona-taylor.com : “How to light & extinguish a Mona stick” “How to Moxa stomach 36. This point strengthens the digestion, overall energy, boosts immunity, reduces bloating, wind, diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea, GERD. Also good for PMS, depression, nervousness & insomnia.

More self help techniques

How to support & balance your stomach & spleen

- * Don't underestimate the restorative power of **rest & sleep**
- * Create designated **worry free areas in your home**. If you work from home create a space that is just for work, a desk you can shut away, rather than working from your sofa!
- * Make a list of things that bring you **joy**. Plan to incorporate these things into your life regularly each week.
- * Go for regular **walks in nature** - notice what is around you, the changing season, light, plants. Or maybe just spending time in your garden or feeding the birds.
- * Listen to **calm music**, take up **knitting, tapestry or sudoko**.
- * Visit the **mountains**. Or change your screensaver to a view of the mountains
- * Wear something **yellow / orange** in colour
- * If you like jewellery - you could choose, citrine, yellow sapphire, lemon quartz or yellow topaz.



Mountains - earth is the element of the stomach & spleen

- * **Learn to tap the body** - The stomach meridian begins on the face, travels down the neck, the front of the body, the upper outside leg onto the top of the foot. The Spleen meridian begins on the inside of the big toe, travels up the inside of the leg, through the uterus then up through the body to the crown of the head.
By tapping the body lightly with a cupped hand you can stimulate & augment the the energy in all the meridians within a few minutes.
For the **stomach**, with finger tips lightly tap under the eye, around the mouth & down the outside of the neck. Then you can come down the outside of the body, over the buttocks, down the outside upper area of the thighs, then down to the foot.
For the **spleen** tap from the foot up the inside of the legs.
Rotating the ankles, clockwise then anti-clockwise a few times will also stimulate the channels.



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**“My wish is to
inspire you to
heal yourself
naturally.”**



www.nona-taylor.com