

Continued from page 7

1. Sweet food and drink - in TCM sweet flavours taken in excess tend to produce fluids in the body which damage the digestive system over time. These fluids can often be seen as excess fat in Western terms. Sweet things can often be craved by people experiencing stress. Consequently a TCM practitioner may give additional lifestyle advice to reduce stress.

2. Saturated fats and oils - again in TCM these are thought to create excess fluids and also heat which within the digestive systems can congeal into obstructions anywhere in the body, as the heat condenses the fluids. In Western terms these are often seen as hardening of the arteries, gallstones and cancers.

3. Alcohol - in TCM has similar effects to fats and oils, and leads to similar digestive disturbances and other conditions.

Conversely very cold foods and drinks (ice cream, cold drinks out of the fridge and raw food) can also create heat in the digestive system. In TCM, this is because the stomach requires more energy to digest cold, rather than warm foods and so becomes hyperactive or overheated. This will lead to the person feeling easily hungry, as their food is quickly 'burnt-off' and crave more cold foods and drinks to douse their stomach fire. Yet if consumed, these foods and drink will exacerbate the problem even further. This begins a self-perpetuating cycle of disharmony.

Chinese Medicine is a wise system whose knowledge base has been built over centuries and it is founded upon the astute observations of the minutiae of human health and illness. This tradition continues today and the knowledge from recent advances in China in the treatment of diabetes and other disease offers the West an opportunity to benefit too from this knowledge if we remain open-minded.

The reported 86% take-up rate of acupuncture by NHS pain-clinics in 1999

Tale end**Oral Health**

(British Medical Association) suggests we are starting down the path of integration.

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An Important note

Complementary approaches should always be used to *support* the medical treatment your doctor has recommended, and should never be used instead of normal medical care. Only take supplements/start therapy with the full permission of your doctor. Always monitor blood glucose levels carefully when starting to take a supplement/start a therapy and discuss any changes in your glucose control with your GP. Only use herbal remedies under the supervision of a medical herbalist or doctor if you are already taking drugs to lower blood glucose levels –this is important to avoid hypoglycaemic attacks.

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