

NURTURE YOURSELF NEWSLETTER

FROM THE OFFICE OF JACKIE YURKO, DOCTOR OF
NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

SUMMER 2003

SUMMER: AN EXCELLENT TIME FOR GROWTH

**NURTURE YOUR
BODY**
PAGE 2

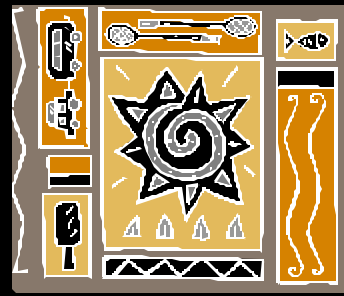
**NURTURE YOUR
MIND**
PAGE 3

**NURTURE YOUR
SPIRIT**
PAGE 4

Summer is the season of growth. We see this reflected all around us in the green grass, the colorful flowers, and the beautiful trees. Summer can also provide us with the motivation and inspiration to nurture growth within our selves. The energy and life of the surrounding nature provide us with the initial nurturing source to draw from. The long days, warm weather, and (for some of us) increased free time provide us with excellent opportunities to direct more energy towards nourishing our selves.

This nourishment of growth can take many forms. It can include nurturing our selves from a physical perspective. Summer can be an excellent time to increase our **physical activity**. Exercising in the outdoors allows us to connect with nature and draw from the healing energy of the earth. Going for a 45 minute bike ride, brisk walk, or swim 3—4 times per week also helps to release stress and support heart and bone health.

Summer also provides us with an abundance of **delicious fresh foods** to support our overall health. During the summer, we have a huge variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs to choose from, all of which are filled with vitamins and minerals that sup-



port our immune, skin, and joint health. By purchasing food from local farmers markets, we are eating foods that are still fresh and are filled with the goodness of the people who have lovingly grown them. Fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs that we have grown within our own gardens are infused with our own energy which even further supports the growth and development of our overall physical health.

Growing a garden not only nourishes our physical health, it can also be incredibly supportive on an emotional level. Gardening can provide us with time to be alone, to reflect on our lives, to release stress. It also directly connects us to the earth and it's healing energy. Even if we do not have space for a garden, we can still **nurture our**

selfes through nature by reading, meditating, relaxing, outside, on the grass, soaking up the power of the earth.

We can also nourish growth during the summer by **learning something new**. Taking a class, joining a group, borrowing thought provoking books from the library can all expand our knowledge base and support self growth and development.

Another way we can nurture self growth during the summer is to **slow down**. If we have holidays during the summer, it is important to take some time for only our selves. Planning our holidays with at least one free day, where there are no specific activities or trips scheduled, can provide us with a chance to regenerate. Slowing down and taking time for our selves provides us with numerous opportunities for self growth.

Nourishing growth during the summer does not have to be complicated or boring. Instead, it should be absolutely enjoyable and fun. During the remaining part of the season, I encourage us all to search for ways to synchronize our own self growth with the growth of the life that surrounds us in nature.

Inside this issue:

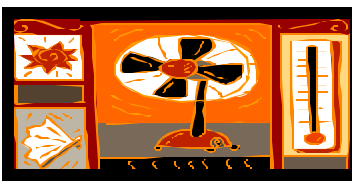
THE EFFECTS OF REFINED SUGAR	2
YUMMY SUMMERTIME RECIPES	2
SUPPORTING OUR OVERALL HEALTH WITH MUDRAS	3
BALANCING OUR CHAKRAS	4
DAVID SUZUKI NATURE CHALLENGE	4
COUPON	4
RESOURCES	4

MONTHLY NATUROPATHIC INFO SESSIONS AND COOKING DEMOS

There will be no information sessions or cooking demos during the summer months. They will, however, start again in September. The first fall session will be held **Monday, September 15 at 7 PM**. The topic of this free info session will be **'Menopause—A Naturopathic Approach'**. The talk will focus on different Naturopathic approaches to support and build our health during menopause. If you are interested in

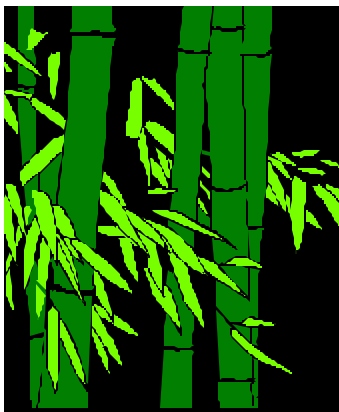
attending the info session, please call 430 4553 by Friday, September 12 to register. The info session will be held at the Parkallen Community Hall (11104 65 Avenue, Edmonton). Starting in October, the monthly sessions will be moving from the third Monday of the month to the first Monday of the month. The sessions will continue to be held at the Parkallen Community Hall and will continue to start at 7 PM. The October session will be a cooking

demo held on Monday, October 6. Watch for more info in the Autumn 2003 newsletter. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in the monthly sessions, please feel free to contact me.



NURTURE YOUR BODY

THE EFFECTS OF REFINED SUGAR



People who stop eating sugar nearly always experience higher spirits, emotional stability, improved memory and speech, restful sleep and dreams, fewer colds and dental problems, more endurance and concentration, and better health in general.

Paul Pitchford

Healing With Whole Foods

The average North American consumes 135 pounds of refined sugar each year. This may seem like an impossible amount; however, refined sugar is insidious in many of the foods that we eat. It is obvious that refined sugar is found in all sweet foods, such as cake, cookies, pop, and ice cream. It is less obvious that refined sugar is also found in most processed foods, such as cereal, pasta sauce, salad dressing, bread, peanut butter. What this results in is many of us eating refined sugar several times throughout the day.

Refined sugar includes both white sugar and brown sugar (which is white sugar with molasses added). On ingredient labels, refined sugar may also be listed as glucose, fructose, sucrose, lactose, maltose, galactose, mannitol, sorbitol, monosaccharides, and polysaccharides.

A high consumption of refined sugar is troubling because it is linked to numerous health concerns. Refined sugar is **void of all nutritional value**. When eaten, it causes vitamins and minerals, such as Calcium, Magnesium, Chromium and the B vitamins, to be depleted from our bodies, impacting our nutritional foundation. The leaching of Calcium is especially concerning as it contributes to the development of osteoporosis.

Refined sugar is also high in **empty calories** and can contribute to weight gain, which can lead to heart disease and joint pain.

Refined sugar can **increase mucous**

production, leading to a worsening of allergies and breathing difficulties.

Refined sugar also **encourages the overgrowth of candida**, a yeast in our bodies that can cause digestive disturbances, skin concerns, and fatigue.

Refined sugar causes a **rapid increase in our blood sugar**, leading to a burst of energy. However, this raised blood sugar level is generally followed shortly by a lowered blood sugar level, which can cause low energy and difficulty concentrating. In an attempt to level out our blood sugar level, we may then crave dense protein, such as meat. This can lead to an over consumption of meat, which is linked to high cholesterol, heart disease, and the development of osteoporosis.

The initial raised blood sugar level caused by refined sugar also leads to a **high amount of insulin** being released into our bloodstream. This places stress on our pancreas and can encourage the development of adult onset Diabetes.

Refined sugar consumption is closely linked to **behavior imbalances and concentration difficulties** in both children and adults. On an emotional level, it can also contribute to **anxiety, irritability, and depression**.

Refined sugar also directly decreases the strength of our **immune system**. An intake of 100 grams of refined sugar (average daily intake is greater than 150 grams) causes the functioning of our active immune components to decrease by up to 50 percent, for as

long as 5 hours. This can lead to decreased immune resistance, resulting in more frequent and longer lasting infections.

In order to support our health from a number of different perspectives, it is important to work towards decreasing our refined sugar intake. One way we can work towards this is by increasing our intake of fruit. Fruit is rich in a variety of nutrients that are essential to vibrant health and can also satisfy a sweet craving. Aim for 4 servings of fresh fruit per day (with 1 large fruit or 1/2 cup of smaller fruits equaling 1 serving). There are also a variety of non refined, natural based sweeteners that can be used to replace white and brown sugar. Brown rice syrup and barley malt are the non refined sweeteners that place the least stress on our health. They both contain vitamins and minerals so they are less disruptive to our nutritional balance. They also contain complex carbohydrates which results in a less rapid rise and fall in our blood sugar level. Pure maple syrup, blackstrap molasses, cane sugar, and stevia are also excellent choices for non refined sweeteners. Each of these natural sweeteners and foods prepared with these sweeteners are widely available in natural food stores or sections. Decreasing our consumption of refined sugar and integrating more fruit and natural sweeteners into our daily routine can have a huge impact on both our current and future level of health.

YUMMY SUMMERTIME RECIPES

ALMOND RICE SQUARES

This recipe is an excellent alternative to refined sugar rich treats. These squares are sweet, but also have protein to ensure our blood sugar remains balanced. Enjoy!

Ingredients

1/2 cup brown rice syrup/maple syrup/
barley malt
1/2 cup almond butter
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/4 tsp sea salt
2 cups natural crispy rice cereal
1/2 cup raw, unsalted almonds, sliced

Directions

Place sweetener and almond butter in a large saucepan. Cook over low heat until bubbles begin to appear. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla extract. Add crispy rice cereal and mix thoroughly. Add sliced almonds and mix thoroughly. Place mixture in a lightly olive oiled 9' X 9' pan and pack down. Chill for at least 30 minutes and serve.

YUMMY CHOCOLATE SHAKE

This recipe is also an excellent alternative to refined sugar rich summer drinks. It, too, also contains protein to help keep our blood sugar balanced.

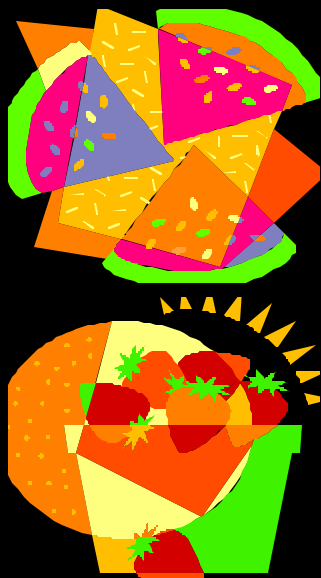
Enjoy!

Ingredients

2 cups frozen bananas, chunked
1 cup rice/soy/oat/almond milk
1/4 block soft tofu
3 tbsp carob powder
2 tbsp brown rice syrup/maple syrup
1 tsp vanilla extract

Directions

Place all ingredients in blender and blend until smooth (2—3 minutes). Serve chilled.



NURTURE YOUR MIND

SUPPORTING OUR OVERALL HEALTH WITH MUDRAS

Mudras are specific hand positions that are found throughout both Hindu and Buddhist culture. Mudras are also an integral part of a variety of yoga practices. There are many different mudras, each of which have a significant meaning and effect on our mind, body, and spirit. When we form a mudra, it is believed that we are making a seal or an agreement with our inner selves. We are sending the energy of the mudra to our vital force, encouraging our body to integrate and benefit from the mudra's message. By connecting us with our inner selves, mudras can also help us to slow down and relax. From a number of different perspectives then, mudras can be an excellent support for our overall health.

Mudras can be done while lying on the ground, while walking, or while sitting in a chair or a meditative position. It is essential each time we form a mudra, that we first focus our energy internally. This can be facilitated by exhaling vigorously several times prior to starting a mudra. This allows us to clear our bodies and make our selves more open to grounding and healing. It is important that we continue to work on our breath while holding a mudra, inhaling and exhaling fully and deeply throughout. Integrating visualization and/or repeating an affirmation/mantra can also further support the effects of a mudra.

When forming a mudra, we want to exert light pressure between the parts of our fingers/thumbs that are touching. By increasing the pressure when we inhale and decreasing the pressure when we exhale, we refresh and regenerate our bodies and our energy. By decreasing the pressure when we inhale and increasing the pressure when we exhale, we calm and relax our bodies. Our health will benefit from holding a mudra for either a short or a long period of time. However, to most effectively support our overall health, we should aim to hold a mudra for 10—15 minutes, 2—3 times per day.

The energy of a mudra is affected by the individual fingers/thumbs that are involved in the hand position. Each of our digits are believed to have differ-

ent energetic characteristics. Our thumb nourishes the energy of our other fingers and is a symbol of universal consciousness. Our index finger (beside our thumb) is a symbol of our human consciousness and is also associated with our ability to reflect on our lives and our experiences. Our middle finger connects us with our spiritual guidance and is associated with our ability to direct our own lives. Our ring finger (in between our middle and little finger) is associated with our overall stamina, will power, and fortitude. Our little finger is associated with our ability to form healthy relationships and our ability to communicate.

In her book, Mudras, Gertrud Hirschi describes a number of individual mudras that can be integrated into our lives to support our overall health. The **pran mudra**, also known as the life mudra, increases our overall vitality and stamina. This can support us in achieving our goals. The pran mudra also helps to build self confidence. The pran mudra involves placing the tips of our thumb, little, and ring fingers together and extending our middle and index fingers. The pran mudra is done with both hands. If we are experiencing fatigue, lack of motivation, and low self esteem, we may benefit from holding the pran mudra (70).

The **apan mudra**, also known as the energy mudra, supports the functioning of our liver, allowing our body to more effectively remove toxins. It also helps to bring peacefulness and harmony to our emotional health. The apan mudra is formed by placing the tips of our thumb, middle, and ring fingers together and extending our little and index fingers. The apan mudra is done with both hands. If we are feeling emotionally imbalanced or if we are doing a liver cleanse, it may be helpful to regularly form the apan mudra (74).

The **prithivi mudra**, or earth mudra, helps to build and strengthen our root or first chakra. This allows more stability to enter our lives. The prithivi mudra is formed by placing the tips of our thumb and ring finger together and extending our index, middle, and little

fingers. The prithivi mudra is done with both hands. If we are feeling ungrounded or unsafe in our lives, we may benefit from integrating the prithivi mudra into our daily routine (84).

The **rudra mudra** is associated with our solar plexus or third chakra and helps to center and strengthen our core selves. This allows our sense of self to build. The rudra mudra is formed by placing the tips of our thumb, index, and ring fingers together and extending our middle and little fingers. The rudra mudra is done with both hands. If we are experiencing a disconnection from our inner selves, it may be helpful to regularly form the rudra mudra (100).

The **mukula mudra** is a regenerating mudra that brings our bodies into a relaxed state. The mukula mudra also allows us to direct healing energy towards our selves. When forming this mudra, we can hold our hands on the body part/area that is in need of support and focus on bringing balance to that area. The mukula mudra is formed by placing the tips of all four of our fingers on the tip of our thumb. The mukula mudra is done with both hands. If we have a specific area of our body that is under stress, we can utilize the mukula mudra as an additional form of support (130).

The **kalesvara mudra** helps to calm our minds and decrease anxiety. It can help us gain clarity and balance in our lives. The kalesvara mudra is formed by joining the top pads of our 2 middle fingers, the entire outer sides of our 2 thumbs, and the middle pads of our 2 index fingers. We also want to curl our ring fingers towards each other and our little fingers towards each other, but avoiding them actually touching. While holding this mudra, we also want to point our thumbs towards our bodies and point our elbows away from our bodies. If we have concerns surrounding anxiety, we may benefit from forming the kalesvara mudra on a regular basis (134).

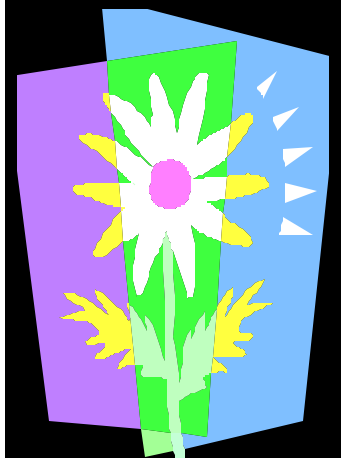
Over the next while, I encourage us all to integrate some of these mudras into our lives as an additional support for our overall health.



Mudras can truly
be practiced
almost anywhere
and at anytime,
but only when we
can also withdraw
ourselves almost
anywhere and at
anytime.

Gertrud Hirschi

Mudras





NURTURE YOUR SPIRIT

BALANCING OUR CHAKRAS

Most of us react to unpleasant experiences by blocking our feeling and stopping a great deal of our natural energy flow. This affects the development and maturation of the chakras, resulting in inhibition of a fully balanced psychological function.

Barbara Ann Brennan

Hands of Light

THE DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION HAS RESEARCHED THE TOP 10 WAYS CANADIANS CAN CONSERVE NATURE. THE CHALLENGE IS TO PICK 3 AND DO THEM OVER THE NEXT YEAR. GO TO www.davidsuzuki.org/WOL/challenge for details.

ALL INFORMATION IN THIS NEWSLETTER IS INTENDED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS, PLEASE DROP BY THE MONTHLY INFORMATION SESSIONS.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Chakras are charged centers through which energy flows in and out of our bodies. There are 7 major chakras associated with our bodies. Each of these chakras are interconnected with different emotional and physical aspects of our health. If our chakras are imbalanced, we can experience numerous emotional concerns. If our **first** chakra is imbalanced, we may experience a lack of feeling safe or grounded in our lives. With an imbalanced **second** chakra, we may have an unhealthy need for power over our lives, goals, or individuals. If our **third** chakra is imbalanced, we may feel overwhelmed with feelings of low self esteem and low self worth. With an imbalanced **fourth** chakra, we may have difficulty forming loving relationships. If our **fifth** chakra is imbalanced, we may have difficulty with personal expression, speaking our mind or our truth. With an imbalanced **sixth** chakra, we may have a lack of belief in our own intellectual and intuitive abilities. If our **seventh** chakra is imbalanced, we may have difficulty discovering a greater purpose to our lives. If our chakras are blocked, we can also experience various physical concerns. If our **first** chakra is blocked, we may develop concerns with our lower body (chronic low back pain, sciatica, varicose veins). With a blocked **second** chakra, we may experience disruptions in our reproductive health (painful periods, infertility, bladder infections, prostate concerns). If our **third** chakra is blocked, we may develop concerns

with our abdominal organs (liver concerns, irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes, adrenal fatigue). With a blocked **fourth** chakra, we may experience chest concerns (chest pain, heart attack, asthma, allergies). If our **fifth** chakra is blocked, we may develop throat concerns (chronic sore throat, thyroid imbalances). With a blocked **sixth** chakra, we may experience concerns involving our head and central nervous system (headaches, anxiety, learning difficulties). If our **seventh** chakra is blocked, we may develop concerns that affect our whole body (multiple sclerosis, paralysis). For many of us, we experience at least one concern that is reflective of a lack of balance in our chakras. In her book, Hands of Light, Barbara Ann Brennan explores a simple method to support the clearing and balancing of each of our 7 chakras (191). To effectively balance our chakras, it is important that we are able to focus our intention internally. To facilitate this, we need to find a comfortable position, with our spine perpendicular to the ground (on a chair or a cushion). We want to begin by focusing on our breath, taking at least 10 deep inhales and exhales, allowing our mind to slow down. Once we feel focused, we want to direct our energy to the area of our **first** chakra (located at the base of our spine). We then want to visualize the area of our first chakra as a vortex of red energy, spinning clockwise (from the perspective of looking toward our body from the outside). On the in breath,

we want to breathe in and focus on the color red. On the out breath, we want to simply observe what color of red is visualized. If the red is lighter then the red initially visualized, it is reflective that we need to direct more red energy to our first chakra on our in breath. If the red is darker then the red initially visualized, it is reflective that we need to direct less red energy to our first chakra on our in breath. We want to repeat this process until the red is the same color for both the in and out breaths. Once our first chakra is balanced, we can repeat the same process for all remaining chakras, focusing on the specific locations and colors of each chakra. Our **second** chakra is located approximately 2 inches above our pubic bone and is associated with the color orange. Our **third** chakra is located at our solar plexus and is associated with the color yellow. Our **fourth** chakra is located at the level of our heart and is associated with the color green. Our **fifth** chakra is located at the middle of our throat and is associated with the color blue. Our **sixth** chakra is located in the middle of our forehead, just above our eyes, and is associated with the color violet. Our **seventh** chakra is located at the crown of our head and is associated with the color white. Over the next while, I encourage us all to integrate this chakra balancing exercise into our routine. It will then be interesting to see whether any of the current health concerns we are experiencing begin to resolve or shift.

RESOURCES USED IN DEVELOPING THIS NEWSLETTER

HANDS OF LIGHT BRENNAN

HEALING WITH WHOLE FOODS PITCHFORD

THE CREATION OF HEALTH MYSS & SHEALY

MUDRAS HIRSCHI

COUPON

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FOLLOW-UP VISIT

THIS COUPON EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 30, 2003

