

# NURTURE YOUR HEALTH NEWSLETTER

FROM THE OFFICES OF NURTURE YOUR HEALTH INC.,  
 NATUROPATHIC HEALTHCARE BY JACKIE YURKO B.Sc., N.D.

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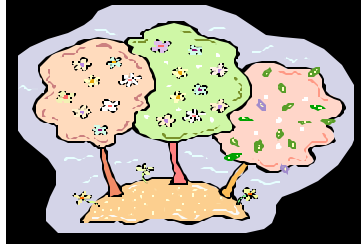
## INFRARED THERMOGRAPHY: AN ADDITIONAL WAY TO SUPPORT BREAST HEALTH

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As was mentioned in the previous issue of Nurture Your Health Newsletter, there are a number of different steps we can take to reduce our risk of developing breast cancer. To further support the overall health of our breasts, we also need to integrate regular breast screening methods into our routine. In this regard, monthly self breast exams and yearly physicals are essential. Mammograms are also important diagnostic tools. However, mammograms can be less accurate in detecting breast changes in women with fibrocystic breasts or smaller breasts. Mammograms also introduce x-ray radiation into our bodies, which has the potential to damage breast tissue (especially for women under the age of 50).



Although it does not replace the need for regular mammograms (especially for women above the age of 50), infrared thermography can offer an additional screening method to monitor our overall breast health. Infrared thermography is a breast screening process that utilizes a digital infrared thermography camera to take pictures of breast tissue. The camera is connected to a computer that stores the image. The image is then sent away to a specialist, trained in reading infrared thermography scans, for interpretation. Over the past 20 years, the accuracy of infrared thermography scans has improved and the analysis of the scans has been standardized. As a

result, infrared thermography can provide us with an accurate idea of our overall breast health. Unlike mammograms that detect anatomical changes in breast tissue, infrared thermography detects physiological changes. It is believed that infrared thermography can detect abnormal changes in breast tissue 5—8 years before they would be seen on a mammogram.

The image that is created with infrared thermography is a highly detailed picture of the levels of heat in breast tissue. The first set of images are taken after the individual has acclimatized (unclothed from the waist up) to the temperature of the room. The second set of images are taken after the individual has placed their hands in cold water for 1 minute. This results in surface blood vessel constriction throughout the body. With normal breast tissue, the second image will show lower levels of heat than the first. With abnormal breast tissue, an increased level of heat will remain. Increased heat levels reflect that there

are cellular changes occurring in breast tissue, which may lead to future health concerns such as the development of breast tumors. By detecting these increased heat levels early, infrared thermography scans allow us to integrate changes into our routines that can strengthen our overall breast health and prevent further breast tissue changes from developing. Infrared thermography also offers additional benefits. The scanning equipment emits no harmful radiation, so there is no concern of creating breast tissue changes from the test itself. Infrared thermography scans can be done on women of all ages and are accurate for all sizes of breasts and types of breast tissue. The scans are also very thorough as the entire chest, breast, and armpit area are examined. Infrared thermography is also non invasive. There is no direct contact between the technician or the camera and the individual's breast tissue, resulting in no pressure or pinching of breast tissue. Currently, there is no clinic in Alberta performing infrared thermography scans. However, the Ontario based company, Medical Thermography International, will be setting up a clinic in Edmonton on **May 19**. The fee for a scan is \$250.00 (not covered by Alberta Healthcare). If you are interested in setting up an appointment, call **1 866 242 5554**. You can also see [www.medthermonline.com](http://www.medthermonline.com) for

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### MONTHLY NATUROPATHIC INFO SESSIONS AND COOKING DEMOS

The next free info session will be held on **Monday, June 7**. The topic will be **'Basics of Food Combining'**. During this session, we will look at how different food combining choices can affect our overall digestive health. If you are interested in attending this

session, please call 430 4553 or email [jjurko@telusplanet.net](mailto:jjurko@telusplanet.net) by Friday, June 4 to register. The info session will start at 7 PM and will be held at the Parkallen Community Hall (11104 65 Avenue, Edmonton). There will be no info sessions or cooking demos held

during the months of July and August. They will, however, start up again in September. If there are any topics you are interested in seeing covered in an info session, please contact me.

# NURTURE YOUR BODY

## ORGANIC FOOD BASICS

During each year of the last decade, the organic food industry in the United States grew by 20%. In the year 2000, organic food sales in Canada totaled 800 million. Both of these statistics reflect that more people are purchasing organically grown food. In addition, the incredible growth of the organic food industry in recent years has also resulted in confusion surrounding what organically grown means and what some of the health benefits of organic food are.

For food to be grown organically, it must be produced without the use of unnecessary pesticides (which includes herbicides, insecticides, fungicides), synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms, antibiotics, growth hormones, and the use of irradiation. For foods to be labeled certified organic, the farm the food is grown on must meet the above-mentioned parameters. In addition, the farm has to have been pesticide and synthetic fertilizer free for at least 3 years before being granted organic certification. The standard for organic certification in North America has been developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA formed the National Organic Program (NOP) in October 2002, and the NOP has been in charge of internationally regulating organic certification boards since this time. The organic certification boards are then responsible for inspecting farms and granting them certified organic status. Currently, Canada does not have its own federally regulated organic foods certification/regulation industry, but there are many separate provincial organic certification boards. Many of these provincial certification boards are recognized by the NOP. To ensure that we are buying certified organic food, it is important to look for a certified organic label on the food/product. Common ones are USDA organic and QAI - each of which are NOP accredited certifying agents.

There are numerous benefits associated with organic food. One of which is it has been shown to be more nutrient rich than non organic food. Although this has been a contentious

issue in the past, several recent reputable studies have shown that organic food is indeed more rich in nutrients than non organic food. Certified nutrition specialist Virginia Worthington's study, published in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, found that organic food contains 27% more Vitamin C, 21% more Iron, 29% more Magnesium, 13% more Phosphorous - all of which are vitamins and minerals that are important to our overall health. A University of Missouri study found that organically grown oranges contained 30% more Vitamin C than non organically grown oranges. In addition, a January 2003 study found that organic frozen corn had 52% more Vitamin C than non organic frozen corn. A recent Italian study found that organic peaches and pears contained higher levels of polyphenols (which includes bioflavonoids, isoflavones, proanthocyanidins - all antioxidants that support overall immune function and decrease inflammation in our bodies). A 2003 Danish study also found higher levels of polyphenols in organic vegetables. One reason that organic food may be higher in antioxidant nutrients, like polyphenols and Vitamin C, is that these compounds are produced by plants as a natural defense mechanism. Without pesticide use, organically grown plants need more self produced antioxidants to protect themselves. All of this evidence that organic food is more nutrient rich than non organic food is very significant from a naturopathic perspective - it is my strong belief that the food we eat has the greatest impact on the way that our health responds. When we eat organic food that is rich in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients, we greatly contribute to the strength of our overall health on a daily basis.

An additional benefit of organic food is that it greatly decreases our exposure to pesticides. Currently in Canada, 50 million kg of pesticides are used on crops each year. Many of the currently used pesticides were approved for use prior to fully understanding the impacts they have on our health. In fact, the Environmental Protection

Agency considers 60% of the herbicides, 90% of the fungicides, and 30% of the insecticides used currently to be potentially carcinogenic. In agriculturally dense areas of Canada and the U.S., increased incidences of various cancers have been noted, including breast cancer and lymphoma. Some pesticides have neurotoxic properties and can affect brain and central nervous system function. Many pesticides are xenoestrogens - which means they can bind to estrogen receptors in our bodies and exert estrogen like effects - leading to a disruption in endocrine function. In women, this can increase the risk of reproductive cancers, such as breast, ovarian, and uterine and the development of fibrocystic breast disease, endometriosis, and fibroids. In men, this has been linked to lower sperm counts and an increased incidence of testicular cancer and prostate concerns. By decreasing our exposure to pesticides through eating organic food, we have the ability to decrease our risk of developing cancer, central nervous system disruptions, and hormonal concerns. Studies done on men eating an organic diet found that they had higher sperm counts. Animal trials with organic food have found an incidence of improved reproductive health, better growth, and a better recovery from illness.

Although adults are negatively impacted by pesticides, even more important are the effects of pesticides on children. Children are more heavily impacted by pesticides because their bodies and their internal organs are growing and developing - their immune system and metabolic system are not fully developed and may offer less protection against the damaging effects of pesticides. It is believed that due to their neurotoxic properties, pesticides can lead to long lasting or permanent damage to the developing central nervous systems or brains of children. Pesticides are also linked to the development of brain tumors and leukemia in children. One of the most important steps we can take to support the long term health of our children is to integrate organic food into their diets on a regular basis.



**Farm Fresh Organics is an organic food delivery service now available in Edmonton. For more information call 1800 563 1517 or visit their website at [www.freshorganics.ca](http://www.freshorganics.ca)**



# NURTURE YOUR MIND

## THE EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH CONNECTION

As a holistic form of healthcare, Naturopathic Medicine is rooted in the understanding that emotional imbalances often underlie the physical concerns that we develop. If we focus only on the physical symptoms that we are experiencing, it is often difficult to affect a long term change in the way we feel. By exploring the state of our emotional health, we can begin to establish connections between how we feel emotionally and how we feel physically.

Traditional Chinese Medicine provides us with one perspective on how our emotional health is connected to the way we feel physically. From a Traditional Chinese standpoint, different organs are associated with different emotions. Our lungs are associated with sadness, our spleen (which, in Traditional Chinese Medicine, has a digestive function) is associated with worry, our liver is associated with anger, and our kidneys are associated with fear. When we have an excess of or a difficulty in expressing any of these emotions, their corresponding organ's function can become compromised.

Author Louise Hay has also done extensive work to further our understanding of how our emotions affect our physical health. In her book, [You Can Heal Your Life](#), Hay states that repeated thought or behavior patterns can eventually produce physical manifestations. She has drawn connections between many physical concerns and emotional imbalances (151).

There are many different physical concerns associated with our head, neck, and throat. Hay feels that **chronic headaches** result from a lack of belief in our selves and what we know to be true. If we do not trust the signals/messages our bodies give us, we may begin to develop frequent headaches. **Migraines** are associated with placing rigid expectations on our selves. If we expect our selves to always do everything perfectly, migraines may be a part of our health picture (154).

Our neck area is associated with being

open minded and having the ability to see situations/issues from other people's perspectives. If we are very set in our beliefs and are unwilling to learn from others, we may develop **neck stiffness or soreness** (154).

According to Hay, our throat is connected with our ability to speak our mind and our truth. If we have difficulty expressing how we feel and what is best for us, we may develop **throat concerns**. Hay links sore throats with anger. If we especially have difficulty expressing our anger, we may experience frequent sore throats. Our throat area is also associated with our ability to be creative. Creativity can include expression through art/music/dance, but can also include additional activities that nurture our selves. Someone who feels creatively blocked or never takes time for them selves, may experience throat concerns such as **imbalanced thyroid function**. The throat is also an energetic centre where change is processed or integrated. If we feel resistance to or are overwhelmed by changes that are happening in our lives, we may also develop throat concerns (155).

Our back health is also very closely affected by our emotional health. Our back/spinal column is the core structural support for our body. If we have back concerns, it may be that we feel a lack of support in our lives. **Upper back pain** is especially associated with a lack of emotional support. **Middle back pain** is associated with carrying around unresolved guilt. **Lower back pain** is associated with exhaustive fears and worries. If we are feeling burdened by guilt and worry and lack a well developed emotional support system, we may experience back pain (157).

Our stomach is responsible not only for digesting our food, but also for digesting/processing our emotions. If we are feeling confused by or are uncomfortable with our relationships and experiences, we may have stomach concerns such as **indigestion, reflux, or ulcers** (159).

Our large intestine is emotionally connected with our ability to let go of emotions/past experiences. If this is difficult for us to do, it can be reflective of us having difficulty in trusting the process of life. If we feel we need to hold onto everything we have experienced or felt, we may develop digestive imbalances such as **constipation** (165).

**Arthritis** is linked with a deeply ingrained tendency towards criticism. This includes both criticism of our selves and of others. If we always focus on the negative aspects of situations, we may be prone to arthritis. In addition, similar to migraines, if we have an unwillingness to accept anything but our idea of perfection from our selves and others, we may also develop arthritis (168).

**Inflammation** anywhere in our bodies is also linked with suppressed anger. **Pain** is associated with buried guilt. **Stiffness** is connected with an inflexibility in our thoughts. **Swelling** is linked with emotional stagnation. If we suppress or ignore our intense emotions and/or cling to a rigid way of thinking, we may develop any of these general body imbalances (169-172).

In order to begin to move our physical health concerns towards balance, Hay feels we must address the underlying emotional patterns. If we experience any of the above physical concerns, it is essential that we begin to explore any emotional connections there may be. Even if the specific links that Hay has made do not resonate with us, there are likely still some underlying emotions contributing to the way we feel. Once we have discovered these connections, Hay suggests we begin to focus on the emotion/thought pattern that is contributing to how we are feeling. Specifically, we want to focus on releasing the pattern, focusing on a statement like "I am willing to release the pattern in my consciousness that has created this condition" (175). By integrating a similar mantra into our daily routine and believing in the process of healing, we can take steps to holistically support the strengthening of our overall health.



The body, like everything else in life, is a mirror of our inner thoughts and beliefs. The body is always talking to us, if we will only take the time to listen

Louise Hay

[You Can Heal](#)

[Your Life](#)





# NURTURE YOUR SPIRIT

## THE BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR CHILDREN

We always ask kids to concentrate in school, but we never tell them how. Yoga can teach them those techniques. On a physical level it gives children a way to channel their energy; on a mental level it calms them down and sharpens their mind.

Abby Wills

'Om Schooling'

Yoga Journal

November 2001

A recent study published in the journal, Pediatrics, found that for children between the ages of 1 and 3, each hour of TV they watched per day increased their risk of developing ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) by 10 percent. In other words, if a child watches an average of 2 hours of TV per day, their risk of developing ADHD increases by 20%. This is believed to be due to TV's rapidly changing images being overstimulating and potentially damaging to children's developing brains (to find out more about this study and the effects TV has on children of all ages, see [www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org)). For me, this study highlights the importance of decreasing children of all ages' dependence on TV and instead introducing them to healthy activities that support their overall health and development.

Yoga is an activity that can offer numerous benefits for children. Unlike TV watching, which is a passive and sedentary activity, **yoga encourages children to actively move their bodies**. Yoga is known to increase children's strength, flexibility, and coordination. Encouraging children to integrate a regular yoga practice into their routine ensures that the child is also physically active. This can help to reduce the rates of obesity and early heart disease in children and strengthen their long term health.

When practicing yoga, we are encouraged to note how our bodies

feel in the different postures. For children, this can **help to support their ability to be in tune with their bodies and to listen to the messages that their bodies send them**. The benefits of this are far reaching—it can help children develop an ability to pay attention to their appetite (know when they are hungry or when they are full), their energy levels (know when their bodies need a rest or are full of energy to take on a new task), their physical health (know when their bodies feel strong or when/where their bodies are sore/hurt). By learning to listen to their bodies early on, children develop a life long relationship with their physical health.

In addition to supporting the physical health of children's bodies, yoga can also strengthen their emotional health. Yoga can **help children to release stress**. Many of us feel that stress is something that only affects adults. Unfortunately this is not the case, as many children also experience high levels of stress. Yoga can provide children with a technique to calm down, relax, and ground themselves. This can help them release stress they may otherwise hold onto. The benefits of yoga can also spill into their daily lives and may help them to deal with stress more pro-actively when it occurs.

Yoga can also **provide children with a stronger sense of their selves**. Through calming and grounding, yoga encourages children

to withdraw inward and to focus internally. This can provide them with an opportunity to develop a strong connection with their selves and their intuition. This is an especially important trait to develop early on as it can help children make healthy decisions for them selves, remain strong in what they believe, and know when a situation/activity does not feel comfortable.

Yoga has also been shown to **improve children's ability to concentrate and focus**. In the November 2001 Yoga Journal article, 'Om Schooling' by Stacie Stukin, teachers who integrated yoga into their classroom activities found that it was helpful to slow children down and refocus their attention on their schoolwork. Again, by encouraging children to calm and centre themselves, yoga can provide them with tools to improve their concentration.

To fully access the benefits yoga can offer to children, it is important to introduce them to a yoga practice that has been developed with them in mind. Marsha Wenig has developed a form of yoga specifically designed for children, called YogaKids. To find out more about YogaKids or to locate a certified teacher, see [www.yogakids.com](http://www.yogakids.com). There are also yoga classes for children offered in the Edmonton area. See [www.lionsbreath.ca](http://www.lionsbreath.ca) and [www.yogafortoday.ca](http://www.yogafortoday.ca) for more information.

ALL PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE NURTURE YOUR HEALTH NEWSLETTER ARE AVAILABLE AT [www.nurture-your-self.com](http://www.nurture-your-self.com) IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL, PLEASE CONTACT ME.

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.

### RESOURCES USED IN DEVELOPING THIS NEWSLETTER

YOGA JOURNAL NOVEMBER 2001

YOU CAN HEAL YOUR LIFE HAY

[www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop)—National Organic Program website

[www.panna.org](http://www.panna.org)—Pesticide Action Network of North America website

[www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)—a very informative website



### COUPON

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