



TAO OF WELLNESS

ACUPUNCTURE
CHINESE MEDICINE
NUTRITION

SPRING 2008

1

SECOND SPRING
SENSE OF SELF

2

TEN WAYS TO BETTER
EYE HEALTH

3

THE TOUCH OF LIFE
AND HEALING

4

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR
SENSE OF SMELL?

5

5 SENSES = 5 TASTES
= 5 ELEMENTS

6

SENSE OF HEARING
ANNOUNCEMENTS

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SECOND *Spring* SENSE OF *Self*

BY HELENE SHAW

At the onset of menopause I felt like a mack truck had hit me. It started with night sweats, then my skin got very dry all over my body, especially on my face. I couldn't put enough crème on to moisten the ever increasing scales. My energy plummeted, which came as a huge shock as this was not my normal modus operandi. Then my waist started to get bigger, and I mean bigger, with a 50 pound weight gain I grew from a size 10 to a size 16. My breasts, went the same way and grew from a B to a DD in just one year. To add to the "glory" of my ever expanding frame I could not seem to curb my cravings for fats, sugars and of course fried foods. Finally, let me briefly mention my moods. They made PMS seem like a minor affliction. And my anger! The difference between mountains and mole hills was nonexistent. I would snap at the slightest provocation and the most insignificant issue. To put it simply, I spiraled down into a deep depression. I had lost my looks, my youth, my vitality, and life as I knew it was over.

Being the single mom of a teenager did not help the situation; our life experience at the time could not have been more different. My daughter, who was 17 at the time, was in her prime, buying clothes to fit her beautiful body, going out with friends and having the time of her life. I was happy for her, but at the same time it became a bitter reminder of how "over the hill" I had become. With my daughter having to wear a hooded sweatshirt in the house at all times because of my need to have the air conditioner blasting out cold air 24/7, I realized we were both suffering.

As my body suffered so did my spirit

The most poignant feeling throughout this experience was how I felt like a prisoner of my own body. I could not control my weight, cravings, sweating, flaking and most importantly my emotions. Keeping it together around family and in the work place became a constant and exhausting struggle. With such alienating behavior and the inability to look at myself in the mirror came a deep feeling of unwor-



"A feeling of well-being began to well up from inside as I found a true sense of renewed hope."

thiness. I always believed in God and a power greater than myself, but with my confidence receiving such a blow, the notion of faith became a real challenge to me. It was during that time that I went in to see Dr. Mao, as I remembered that he had helped me years earlier.

I met Dr. Mao through my dear friend Gary Dontzig. This was 19 years ago when I was suffering with asthma that I had had since a child. Although Gary was not a patient of Mao's at the time, he had heard about his

practice and felt that he could help me. Since Dr. Mao began treating the physical, emotional and spiritual elements of my menopausal experience, I have undergone a true renaissance of the heart and soul.

Initially he treated my physical symptoms by putting me on a specific food plan, which targeted my weight gain and hot flashes, along with the bloating and non-specific aches. In addition to the diet, Dr. Mao added Chinese herbs, which were tailored made for my condition. After a short period of time I began to feel lighter and more energized, which in turn allowed me to have the willingness to exercise. When I first started exercising, I could only walk about five blocks. These days I walk six miles a day during the week and about 8-10 miles a day on the weekend. The food cravings vanished, my appetite normalized and I lost almost 60 pounds. I was doing very well with this program, but I must say that a deeper, more profound result began to manifest when I decided to take this to the next level and started on Dr. Mao's Detox program. I can safely say that through the detoxification process I regained my sense of self, and most importantly started to appreciate myself for who I am at this stage of my life. A feeling of well-being began to well up from inside as I found a true sense of renewed hope.

The biggest contributing factor to these changes was the combination of Dr. Mao's intuitive gift of healing and the heart energy he put into my treatments. Not only did he get my chi moving in

Continued on page 5



Ten Ways to Better EYE Health



DR. DAOSHING NI

In today's modern age we increasingly rely on our eyes in our daily lives. We constantly stare at computers, TVs, cellular phones, PDAs, papers, etc. Consequentially, by staring at small prints and spending more time reading from this type of medium, we are straining our eyes. This has created much eye fatigue and an increase in the incidence of age related eye problems. Since good eye health provides us with better life quality, it is important for us to examine ways in which we can improve our eye health and keep our eyes healthy for many years to come. The following are ten ways to improve our eye health and prevent eye diseases.

Regular Eye Checkups

As a general rule of thumb, eye exams should be done once every two to four years under age 40 and once every two years after age 40. If you have an active eye problem or condition such as near-sightedness and far-sightedness and are noticing changes, it would be good to have eye exams once yearly. This way, you can detect issues before they get severe. Earlier treatment usually means better prognosis.

Adhere to Good Vision Habits

Prolonged use of your eyes can cause weakening of your vision. Take frequent rests during the day if your work is focused on reading a lot. I would recommend resting for 10 minutes for every 50 minutes of reading activity. Better yet, intersperse your reading activities with exercise oriented activities so you can irrigate your eyes with renewed blood flow. Good lighting is also important. If you find your eyes straining when you read, you should change, or move, or increase your light source. Make sure there is minimal glare when you are reading.

Maintain a Healthy Sleep Schedule

An adequate and sound deep REM sleep schedule will help your eyes recover from the strains of the day. This is the only continuous period of time when your eyes totally rest, repair and recover. Not having enough sleep will reduce your vision and weaken your eyes in the long term. If you have insomnia issues, get them managed or treated.

Eat a Healthy Balanced Diet

A balanced diet that incorporates ample amount of vegetables and fruits is essential to good eye health. Our eyes require a lot of different type of nutrients to function well. Vitamins such as A, C, E, beta-carotene, minerals such as copper and zinc, and oils such as omega-3s are all important nutrients and they can be obtained from your vegetables, fruits and fish. Current research shows that eating yellow and green vegetables may help people avoid age-related macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness. These vegetables are rich in the nutrients lutein and zeaxanthin, and include spinach, kale, turnip greens, collards, mustard greens, squash, green peas, broccoli, pumpkin, and corn. Taking a vitamin supplement in addition to a healthy diet can be an extra insurance to help our eyes. Stay away from smoking and limit the use of caffeine as these substances directly affect optic pressure.

Hydrate Regularly and Frequently

Water is an essential nutrient and proper eye function requires proper hydration. Drink water frequently and regularly, this is better than drinking a lot of water in a short time which your body will mobilize to excrete faster. A slow and regular intake of water creates a constant supply of water to lubricate and nourish our eyes.

Exercise Regularly and Have an Active Life Style

Blood circulation is an important key to bringing nutrients and lubrication to the eyes, at the same time this flow ensures the excretion of toxins and build-up in the eyes. Regular exercise ensures our blood vessels stay elastic and all of the microcirculations to the eyes are free flowing without obstruction. This can keep a check on intraocular pressures and prevent or delay glaucoma situations.

Manage Stress Well

It is proven that stress beyond what we can manage weakens and ages our body sooner. In order to start managing stress, we need to cultivate a good perspective on life. It is important to practice some kind of spiritual cultivation, which may include meditation, a religious ceremony, or healing movements such as yoga, Tai Chi and Qi Gong. This helps us create a guidepost, gives us a

sense of the direction in our lives, and ultimately allows us to go through our days with a better purpose, more presence and awareness. Needless to say, having renewed awareness and ease will result in reduced stress levels.

Wear Eye Protection

There are many glass and glaring surfaces in the world. Strong light and prolonged exposure to UV and glare will damage our eyes. Wearing eye protection is a wise move for this reason. Please do not forget to protect your eyes when doing sports. If you are outdoors with sunlight, make sure to wear UV blocking sunglasses.

Practice Eye Exercises Regularly

There are many forms of eye exercises you can practice and most are very helpful. At Tao of Wellness, we have a specific eye exercise program based on the ancient Taoist healing movements of Qi gong. Please ask your practitioner for this program.

Frequent Exposure to Nature

You may also want to spend more time in nature where there is ample fresh air and wide open space. Being present in nature and greenery is very good for your emotional well-being, it will reduce stress levels and help you breath. Better air quality is very healthful for your eyes. If you can, find some time on the weekend to walk in a forest or on a beach. Take a break from reading and look into the distance, the change in focus will bring greater clarity of mind and of sight.

In addition to these ten ways, you may also want to try Acupuncture treatments. When your eyes are strained or inflamed, acupuncture is proven to temporarily bring better localized blood flow to the entire eye region, thus reducing inflammation and irritation. Traditionally, Acupuncture has been used for blurred vision, eyestrain and eye injuries for thousands of years. Together with Acupuncture, an important part of our practice is the prescription of herbs that can be used internally or topically for eye conditions. The use of these herbs is specific to each eye condition, so if you have an eye condition you wish to address please consult with your Tao of Wellness practitioner for further information. ■

THE TOUCH

of Life and Healing

THE IMPORTANCE OF TACTILE SENSE FOR HEALTH
AND NATURAL SOLUTIONS FOR NEUROPATHY



DR. MAOSHING NI

Did you know that orphaned babies stop growing and even die from the lack of touch and love? Similarly, researchers have long observed that unconscious patients who are regularly touched recover faster than those who do not receive touch. I can confirm this through my own personal experience of being in a coma for a month, after an accidental fall from the rooftop of our three-story house when I was a kid. The loving touch from my parents kept me alive and fighting for my life. So, touch literally saved my life.

Snuggle, cuddle, hug— it's good for you

Human touch is an essential part of our health and well-being. Throughout the ages, hands-on healing has been recognized as a powerful therapeutic technique. Human touch elicits elevated production of endorphins, growth hormone, and DHEA, all of which lengthen your life span. Touch also lowers levels of stress hormones which can shorten your life. If you want to improve the quality and length of your life, heart felt touch is the way to achieve this. Grandparents cuddling their grandchildren, friends hugging one another, and spouses snuggling up to each other all achieve this beneficial effect.

The stress of losing your sense of touch causes loss of tactile sense.

Touch is not only important for the receiver—it is equally important for the giver. So, what happens when you lose your sense of touch or suffer from neurological damage? How do you overcome or make up for that loss of tactile sense? The loss of normal tactile sense may appear as symptoms of numbness, tingling or burning pain. The first thing you will want to do is look at the medication or substances you are taking. Some types of medications can cause peripheral nerve damage such as chemotherapy drugs, hormonal blockers or drugs to treat Parkinson disease, while other seemingly benign substances like alcohol, nicotine and diuretics can also diminish tactile function. The next step is to go to your internist and rule out a more serious neurological disease or cancer. There are many conditions that may lead to a loss of tactile senses, ranging from diabetic neuropathy, multiple sclerosis, brain or spine cancer, to

carpal tunnel syndrome, shingles and panic attacks.

Natural help to get you back in touch

Once you determine the cause of your condition, a plan of action is necessary to start healing your tactile functions. Begin by avoiding the medications and substances that cause or aggravate it. Obviously in some cases these medications are a necessary part of a treatment protocol and cannot be discontinued, but in other cases they can. Look to your diet for natural healing agents.

Foods that help nerve regeneration and reduce inflammation include:

papaya, pineapple, cherry, grape, blueberry, dried plums, avocado, Shiitake mushroom, asparagus, fish or flax seed oil, seaweed, and spices like cayenne pepper, turmeric and ginger.

Foods that aggravate numbness include:

alcohol, caffeine, sugar, deep fried fatty foods, red meat, dairy products, and icy-cold beverages and foods.

Supplements that are helpful for nerve regeneration efforts include: vitamin B1, lecithin, chromium picolinate, and vitamin E.

Gentle mind-body exercise

Mind-Body exercise, including Chi Gong and Tai Chi has been found to be beneficial for restoring normal neurological functions. Studies have confirmed Chi Gong and Tai Chi's physiological effects, which include measurable changes in EEG of the brain, EMG of nerve conduction, respiratory movement, heart rate, skin potential, skin temperature and finger tip volume, sympathetic nerve function, function in stomach and intestine, metabolism, endocrine and immunity systems. In a nutshell, these deep breathing, mind-calming meditative exercises are among the most powerful self-healing techniques that help you balance and restore your health naturally.

Acupuncture helps neuropathy

Over the years the doctors at Tao of Wellness have treated many patients with varying forms of neuropathy. Side effects from chemotherapy



drugs, viral infections, post-surgical damage and diabetes are just a few conditions that can result in neuropathy and have been treated by our practitioners. The growing number of research studies focused on the treatment of neuropathy with acupuncture point to what we have already witnessed over the years in our clinic—acupuncture works incredibly well at treating neuropathy. Please refer to our website if you wish to read some of these studies

The invisible touch that connects people

Tactile touch is one of the five senses, it is the sense that most gives us the feeling of being connected with others. That connectedness and sense of belonging, brings us joy and opens our hearts and minds. Just as we seek to create a healthy, positive, flowing environment in our bodies and our homes, building a human community with similar characteristics will benefit our lives. Being surrounded by family, friends, and associates who are loving, uplifting, and helpful to your well-being can add years to your life. If you seek health and longevity, surround yourself with people who are supportive and share positive values, and above all please remember to snuggle, cuddle and hug—it's good for you!!! ■

Have you *lost* your sense of **SMELL**?

IS YOUR NOSE PLUGGED UP? OR ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE TURNING OFF THE RUNNING FAUCET THAT'S LEAKING FROM YOUR NOSE?



JESSICA CHEN

Did you know that Chinese medicine can help you knock that cold on the head? Acupuncture and Chinese herbal therapy are second to none in their effectiveness at treating the common cold and the flu. When I started formally studying Chinese medicine I was amazed that we had to study a 400 paged classic called the *Shan Han Lun*, which explains how to treat the common cold at its various stages, 400 pages on the common cold! Together with acupuncture, Chinese herbal therapy is used very effectively to combat the infection and inflammation produced by those wretched bugs. At the Tao of Wellness we use formulations with antiviral and antibacterial herbs in much the same way your regular doctor would prescribe an antibiotic, but it goes way beyond that and this is why.

How does this all work?

To further understand how acupuncture and Chinese herbs help combat colds and flu, let's take a brief look at how traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) views the common cold. The external pathogens responsible for cold and flu symptoms in a body are seen as invasions of *wind*. Say what? Growing up, my mother would always tell me to put on more clothing before leaving the house, or not to go out with wet hair, so I wouldn't catch *wind*. It was not until later when I started my studies of TCM that the theory of *wind* unfolded itself to me.

Wind

Wind is considered to be one of six external pathogens that can invade the body and produce symptoms. Our body is protected by what is known as the *wei qi* (defensive *qi*) also known as our immune system. This is our body's first line of defense. When we are strong and healthy, our *wei qi* stands guard, keeps the pores of our skin closed and prevents *wind* from entering. However when we are over-worked, highly stressed, lack appropriate rest, eat poorly or are simply inappropriately dressed for certain weather conditions, our defensive Chi becomes compromised, our pores open and *wind* enters the body. This explains why when we

experience the beginnings of a cold we feel chills, sensitivity to the wind and body aches as this wind enters superficial meridians and blocks the flow of energy in them. Chinese herbs used to treat the common cold work as anti-viral and antibacterial agents and also have a diaphoretic action which repels *wind* out of the body. Furthermore wind can carry another pathogen with it and can thus present as *wind heat* or *wind cold*, which would be treated with two very different sets of herbs and acupuncture techniques.

Wind-Cold

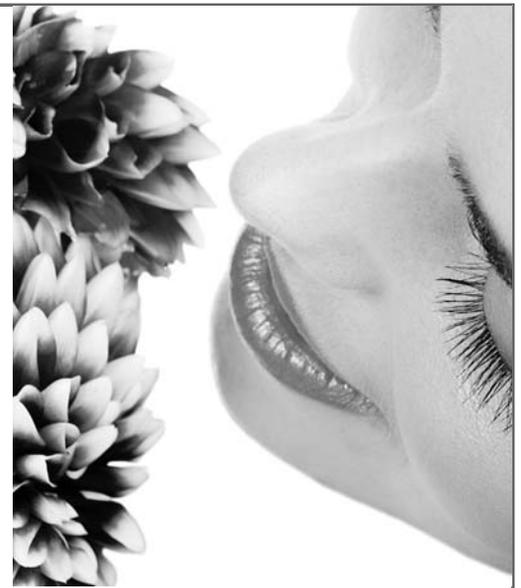
This form is the milder of the two and appears when the cold is just in the beginning stages and there are not many heat symptoms. The "bug" at this time is slightly dancing and teasing you on the surface of your skin trying to feel its way and see whether you are vulnerable for an attack or not. Some of the symptoms may include:

- Sensitivity to cold or wind
- Shivering
- Sneezing
- Cough
- Running nose with white-watery mucus
- No fever or slight fever
- Body aches
- Stiff neck
- No sweating
- No thirst

This is a good time to load up on vitamin C, drink plenty of room temperature water, rest and stay away from icy cold beverages. Drinking miso soup with tofu and scallions is also excellent during this time. Taking a hot bath and immediately covering yourself up to "sweat off" the pathogen is also helpful. But please make sure to change your clothes if they get damp and continue to cover up. This is also the **BEST** time to visit your Chinese medical doctor to get acupuncture to strengthen the immune system and start on medicinal herbal teas to ward off or to fight the beginnings of the cold.

Wind-Heat

Many of you wouldn't even see a *wind cold* condition, as symptoms present immediately as *wind heat*. The virus in this case invades the body quickly and its defensive response is to increase the body temperature in order to literally kill off the bugs. Some symptoms include:



- Sensitivity to wind
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Swollen tonsils
- Sneezing
- Slight body ache
- Cough and running nose with yellow or green mucus
- Slight sweating
- Thirst

During this time, plenty of rest and water are essential. Cover up especially the head and neck area. Mint or chrysanthemum flower teas are helpful. Try to avoid stimulating foods like spicy, greasy, fried foods and sugar, as these foods create mucus and will further exacerbate the condition. Again, at the slightest hint of a sore throat or swelling of the glands around your throat, come and get some acupuncture and herbs.

At this point you may already understand how effective Chinese medicine is at treating the initial stages of a cold, but you are probably asking yourself, "what if I have already had a cold for a week or I have not managed to shift the cold I caught last month?" Herein lie the sophistication of Chinese Medicine as mandated by our 2000 year old classic *The Shan Han Lun*, which indicates a clearly defined treatment protocol for colds and flu at every single stage of manifestation, from the full blown fever and chills at the initial stage, to the low grade sniffles that can linger for months.

As a form of preventative medicine get regular acupuncture treatments during the flu season, or the changing of the seasons (yes we do have seasons in LA!). Prevention is the key. If you are susceptible to catching colds easily, know that studies have shown how acupuncture helps increase white blood cell count resulting in a boost to your immune system. Finally if you feel just the slightest indication of a *wind invasion* such as slight body aches or a scratchy throat, or if everyone around you is coming down with something, get some acupuncture, take the herbs and see how the TCM magic works. ■



JAMES EVANS

Cravings are natural?
Why do they occur?
How can I reduce them?
What benefits do I get
from the foods I crave?
Is sugar an addictive
substance? How do
cravings relate to addiction?

There are five tastes as recorded in *The Yellow Emperor*, a famous Taoist and medical text written over 5,000 years ago. The five tastes are sweet, pungent, salty, sour and bitter. Each taste corresponds to a different organ system, pathology and element.

Each taste corresponds to a different organ system, pathology and element.

Sweet = stomach and digestive system = **Earth**

Bitter = heart and cardiovascular system = **Fire**

Sour = liver and nervous system = **Wood**

Salty = kidney and endocrine = **Water**

Pungent = lungs, lymph and immune system = **Metal**

For those of you who have a sweet tooth you may be wondering why it corresponds to the digestive system and the earth element. The digestive system is responsible for absorption and distribution of nutrients from food and is the source of much of our body's energy. When we lack energy it is natural to crave sweet foods, but the foods our body is really craving are foods like sweet potato, pumpkin, apples and corn, not chocolate. We have created super sweet foods that appeal to one's desire for energy and instant satisfaction, but these food types do not meet the body's needs. Consuming very sweet foods delivers only temporary satisfaction, because when sugar enters the blood stream rapidly it is removed just as rapidly by a hormone called insulin. This sugar is then put into storage in two ways, one as glycogen in the liver and the other as fat (and we all know where that likes to sit!). This is the nature of sugar and the addictive behavior it encourages.

The storage that takes place not only leads to weight gain, but to many other problems relating to sluggish digestion and what we call in Chinese medicine damp accumulation.

In Chinese Medical and Nutritional therapy, sweet foods in the form of complex carbohydrates are central food for most traditional diets. Complex carbohydrates energize the body while nourishing and relaxing the brain and nervous function. Sweet is a harmonizing flavor as it reduces the harshness of stronger flavors such as bitter. Sweet also generates fluids or Yin and strengthen weakness or deficiency. However, sweet foods consumed in excess without the balancing characteristics of bitter foods such as dark leafy green vegetables can cause a build up of fluids and what we refer to in Chinese Medicine as Dampness.

The accumulation of dampness in your body is detrimental to your health as it promotes the build up of fluids and mucus and promotes the growth of pathogenic bacteria and candida (yeasts) in your digestive tract. Excess

sweets act as inhibitors of calcium, an important mineral for muscle strength and bone density. Calcium absorption is particularly important for women in the pre and postmenopausal ages so here is another reason to reduce dependence on sweet foods. It is important to note that refined carbohydrates including predominantly wheat in the form of white breads, pastries and pasta act like sweets in the accumulation of dampness. Excess consumption of sweets and refined carbohydrates has been directly linked to many disorders including hypoglycemia, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and obesity.

So remember, when you get the craving for something sweet, what your body is really asking for is not sugar or refined wheat products but sweet vegetables and whole grains. So prepare ahead and give yourself a sweet potato. I have also seen many of the participants in our regular Detox retreats successfully get off their addiction to sugar, diet soda and even chocolate. ■



SECOND *Spring* SENSE OF *Self* continued

harmony, his herbs restored balance to my life and his loving guidance gave me hope and encouragement. The hardest part of this process was coming to a place where I could forgive myself and be gentle and patient. I needed to recognize that menopause and the life changes it brings, are an inexorable part of existence. A woman's second spring means a second chance to experience life's richness. It means the best years of your life, because you have the wisdom that only comes through age and experience. Having come through this experience I feel proud. I feel

entitled to occupy my body and my space on this planet. I feel God's love and immense GRATITUDE. I feel that I have much to contribute to the world and am now taking steps to fulfill my goals and destiny.

My heart felt recommendation for all women approaching their second spring is to bring Chinese medicine into your life! Chinese medicine is about healing, not medicating. It is about tuning into our own inner wisdom and living in balance and harmony. Aging becomes a gift, not a curse. I never

thought I would feel this good about getting older, NEVER. This country promotes youth and everything is geared toward that. As women we can welcome the change of life, we can embrace the flowing into maturity and venerability with grace, rather than dread. We can revel in the flow and balance that comes from loving ourselves, rather than viewing aging as a slow descent into death. There's a calming empowerment that comes from the wisdom and understanding that ONLY comes with age and experience. I am now ready to take my place on the throne that I have created for this part of my journey. ■



BAN B. WONG

It is around 2 a.m. in the morning. Your child is crying even though you notice the diaper is clean and you have just finished feeding not too long ago.

The agonizing scream overwhelms your sense of hearing and strikes a painful cord in your heart string. You then notice that your child is pulling her ear. If this sounds familiar to you, then you are not alone. Ear infection is one of the most common conditions that affect babies and children.

For years, the standard Western medical treatment for children with middle ear infections, also known as Otitis Media, has been antibiotics and in some severe cases ear tube surgery. Now, a growing number of pediatricians upon evaluation of the child's age, history of recurrent ear infections and other underlying medical conditions, choose to monitor the progression of an ear infection first before resorting to antibiotics. In most cases ear infections resolve on their own, and the fact that antibiotics have been so widely prescribed in the past could have overshadowed the child's self-healing potential.

The treatment of middle ear infections with Chinese medicine (TCM) involves the use of



SENSE OF HEARING

Enjoy affection, stop ear infection

herbal teas or tinctures that are tailored to both your child's constitutional make-up as well as the specific condition being treated. The therapeutic focus when treating middle ear infections with TCM is threefold. First the infection is treated using antiviral herbs, and second, herbs are included to strengthen the immune system and promote the body's own self-healing process. The third major focus is to drain the excess accumulation of fluid that builds up in the ear as a result of the infection. In order to reduce or totally eliminate the need for an ear tube surgery. The added benefit of using Chinese herbal tinctures is that your child will not have to deal with the side effects of antibiotics, which

include gastrointestinal upset and mucus production. While in some cases antibiotics have their place and are necessary, you may still use herbal tinctures in tandem to help boost the immune system and prevent future distressing episodes of ear infections.

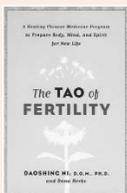
Besides herbal therapy, our practitioners of Chinese medicine offer nutritional and dietary advice as another important step in preventing ear infections in your child. For instance, we recommend to avoiding dairy products and sweets and to adding more leafy greens and fresh fruits to your child's diet. With your child having fewer ear infections, you will have time to enjoy more affection. ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 15th: A FERTILE BITE
Nutrition for Fertility with Jessica Chen

May 20th: TUINA CHINESE MEDICAL MASSAGE FOR CHILDREN with Andrea Thorpe

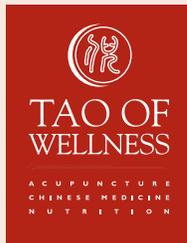
June 12: LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR DETOX PROGRAMS
with James Evans



Dr. Dao's book, *The Tao of Fertility, A Healing Chinese Medicine Program to Prepare Body, Mind, and Spirit for New Life*, is available now through

Amazon.com and at the Tao of Wellness. Co-authored with Dana Herko, *The Tao of Fertility* brings forth Dr. Dao's clinical experiences through the eyes of many of his patients sharing their experiences on how to prepare for the journey of pregnancy.

See Dr. Dao speak about his new book on NBC's "TODAY SHOW" Friday April 18th.



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