



In Traditional Chinese Medicine, we have a healing methodology called the *5 Phases* (Elements). Summer is ruled by the Fire element and is expressed in nature as well as in the body. Growth, joy, and spiritual awareness between the heart and mind are the focus during this season. Summer heat belongs to the **element of fire**.

The Fire Element

The element, Fire is associated with the summer season and with heat, as well as with the heart, pericardium, small intestines, and the tongue.

Emotionally, this element is associated with the mind and its stability. The heart is the "seat" of the mind and therefore, it's highest expression is love, through enthusiasm, warmth in human relationships, and conscious awareness.

The heart Chakra is in the center of the Chakra system and is the integrator of opposites in the psyche: mind and body, male and female, persona and shadow, ego and unity.

When imbalanced, we may either lack joy (depression) or have an excess of joy (maniac condition). Fire is symbolic of maximum activity or greatest Yang; nature at its peak of growth, and the motion is upward. Agitation, nervous exhaustion, heartburn and insomnia are other indicators of imbalance in this area.

Physically, when the fire element is balanced, the heart properly governs and circulates the blood and insures proper assimilation of the beginning breakdown of food in the small intestines.

Emotionally, when the fire element is balanced, sensitivity and expression, true fulfillment and the equilibrium between heart and mind are our greatest rewards.

Late Summer

Late summer is when the days are damper, rich in humidity, and you get a feeling of heaviness in the air. This is often the way our bodies feel during this period.

Dampness is associated with the element earth and is most active in late summer. Ailments of excessive dampness can be induced by sudden exposure to fog or mist, immersion in water or exposure to rain, and living in excessively damp locations or climates. The surface pores on the body are open. Because summer is humid, the pathogenic factors, which cause diseases in this season, always mix with dampness. The symptoms include abdominal pains, vomiting, intestinal spasms, diarrhea, lethargy, aching joints, and heaviness in the chest. These symptoms are characteristically heavy and sluggish in nature and tend to block the flow of energy throughout the body.

"Inner-dampness" is caused by excess cold consumption of liquor, tea, cold melons, and sweet, greasy foods. These impede spleen functions.

Consider a healthy, nutritional diet, getting good quality sleep, and moderate exercise the way to keep our physical form at its best, always. Need help? Consider Traditional Chinese Medicine, herbal medicine, or homeopathic medicine.

Remedies for Heat Exhaustion

The summer heat can sneak up on you and not only zap your energy, while you are outdoors, but it can cause dehydration, sunburn and actual exhaustion! Children under four, people over 65, and those who are obese, already ill, or taking medications can especially be affected very easily. Prolonged exposure to heat and insufficient body fluid can result in heat exhaustion. Its symptoms can include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache and nausea, or vomiting. Here are the best remedies for heat exhaustion:

1. Carry water with you and sip it throughout the day. Dehydration can set in and we don't even realize it until we begin to feel thirsty!
2. Pace yourself when working outdoors, exercising or just having fun. Those who participate in regular exercise over time, allowing their bodies to adjust to hot conditions, may better tolerate exercise on hot days.
3. Replace salts and minerals with electrolytes such as Gatorade or other power drinks that have potassium. Avoid drinks with large amounts of sugar. Dehydration can stress the heart and impair the kidneys' ability to maintain the correct level of fluids and balance of electrolytes. Electrolytes are charged elements—like potassium, sodium, phosphorous and chloride—essential for the normal function of every cell in the body.
4. Wear lightweight clothing. The lighter the colored clothing (white being ideal) the more sunlight is reflected away from you. Darker colors absorb the light and heat.
5. Seek air conditioning, cool breezes under the shade, and/or take cool showers in order to bring down your body temperature.
6. Sunburn can happen very easily if you are not careful. Dilute one part Tea Tree Oil with ten parts of olive oil or coconut oil and spread freely over the affected areas. This is soothing and pain-relieving and to reduce blistering and peeling. People have also applied tea tree oil full strength to sunburn.
7. Use common sense and schedule your outdoor activities at times to avoid the hottest parts of the day, and use a buddy system if necessary to keep watch on those at high risk.
8. If you feel dizzy and/or stop sweating, quit all activity and get out of the sun fast. Drink cool, not cold water with a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in it. The vinegar helps to replace electrolytes and minerals like sports drinks do.
9. In ancient Egypt, China and the Far East, watermelon juice and its seeds were traditionally offered to thirsty travelers, and they are still important today in times of drought or water pollution. This flavorful fruit is one of the best remedies for dehydration and summer heat symptoms, which include thirst without desire to drink, band-like headache, nausea, low appetite, heavy, weighted body sensation, low motivation, sluggish digestion, increased body temperature, sticky sweat, surging pulse, and red tongue with thick white or yellow coating. Watermelon cools and cleanses the system, clearing summer heat and acts as a natural diuretic.
10. Take a cool bath and relax in the water for 15-20 minutes. Try to submerge as much of your body as possible. -[Andrew Pacholyk, L.Ac.](#)