



# SUMMER

Summer begins this year on June 20, 2021, the Summer Solstice and the longest day of the year. Summer is the season of activity, growth and creativity. It is the season filled with abundant energy, long days and lots of sunshine. Corresponding to the Fire element, we see development in the natural world all around us during this time.

The Fire element is associated with the heart. The heart is not only responsible for pumping blood throughout the body but also houses our “shen” or spirit. Because the heart is connected with our spirit, summer is the ideal time to mend the heart and release emotional wounds. Doing so frees up space that we can fill with joy and contentment and ensures that we do not continue to carry the burden of old hurts into the future.

Fire has the power to illuminate our inner being and also our outer world. When the Fire element is balanced and in harmony, the heart is strong and healthy, the spirit is calm and sleep is sound. When the Fire element is out of balance, depression or insomnia may occur. It is especially important to get enough sleep during the summer. Keeping a regular sleep schedule helps keep the heart in balance.

The following are some simple suggestions to help you enjoy a healthy and happy summer.

## **Start the Day Early**

Get up early so that you can benefit from the sun’s nourishing rays and energy. Go about your daily activities with joy and laughter – this is how you know the Fire energy is balanced. Use the early morning hours to begin a meditation practice or start a gratitude journal.

## **Stay Active**

Physical activity keeps blood and oxygen circulating so that nutrients are more able to nourish your body, so stay active. Go for a walk, work in your garden or practice Qigong. Standing or seated Qigong meditation postures are very beneficial at this time of year. Take advantage of the warmer weather and practice Qigong outside in your garden, patio, the beach or a nearby park. This will also allow you to absorb some nature Qi.

## Eat Cooling Foods

Food is medicine and the ancients used food and its healing properties to strengthen the body. In summer, a light and less-greasy diet is a good idea. This is the perfect time of year to try some new recipes and introduce some cool, Yin foods into your diet. Nutrition based on the Five Elements Theory classifies food according to its energetic qualities of temperature, taste, and ability to moisten and strengthen the body. Food with cool and cold properties can clear heat, reduce toxins, and generate body fluids.

In general, cooling foods tend towards the green end of the spectrum – lettuce, cucumbers, and watercress are some of the coolest. Fish and seafood are also cooling. Here are some food choices to keep you cool and balanced all summer long. These fruits, vegetables and herbs will help your body adjust its temperature and protect you during the long, hot summer days:

- Watermelon, Apricot, Cantaloupe, Lemon, Peach, Orange
- Asparagus, Sprouts, Bamboo, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Chinese Cabbage, Corn, Cucumber, White Mushroom, Snow Peas, Spinach, Summer Squash, Watercress, Seaweed, Mung Beans
- Cilantro, Mint, Dill

## Stay Hydrated

Keep a bottle of water with you and sip it throughout the day. Add some slices of lemon or cucumber or a sprig of mint for a refreshing change.

## Summer Correspondences

<b>Element</b>	Fire
<b>Yin Organ</b>	Heart
<b>Yang Organ</b>	Small Intestine
<b>Sense Organ</b>	Tongue
<b>Taste</b>	Bitter
<b>Color</b>	Red
<b>Sound</b>	Laughing
<b>Emotion</b>	Joy
<b>Direction</b>	South