

# Seasons & Wellbeing

by Indira Mariappan



## Greetings!

The autumnal equinox is where day and night are almost equal. Temperatures are dropping, evenings are cooler and the breezes have changed. The gradually increasing wind and cold begin to create dryness in the air. At this time of year, everything in nature contracts and moves its essence inward and downward. Likewise, we are influenced by climatic changes and it is through practices that bring our awareness closer to the cycles of Nature that we restore ourselves.

## AUTUMN

According to traditional medicine, this season strongly affects the health of the lungs, skin and colon which in turn influences immune function. Hence, this is the time to support the overall health of these organs and therefore strengthen our **immune system** in preparation for winter..

**Abundant lung energy** manifests as strong physical vitality. Immunity is strong and so recovery from illness is quick and effective. Gestures are clear and expansive. The body's posture expresses a definite sense of self worth, presenting the chest openly to the world with an attitude of open-heartedness.

### The Lung's Physical Realm

The lung has to do with boundary, breath and renewal: a boundary across which oxygen is taken in and carbon dioxide is excreted, a boundary between the inner and outer environment, a boundary which defends and defines the person.

The **breath** gives us our physical vitality and is said to govern the life-force (qi or prana) in our bodies. It **renews** us.

The **skin** is considered an outer lung as it also breathes and exchanges substances with the outer environment. Therefore its healthy functioning is viewed as an aspect of lung function.

The **colon** is considered the lung's paired organ in traditional Chinese medicine and its obvious function is releasing what is no longer needed. This release is on the physical and non-physical realm.

### The Lung's non-Physical Realm

The personality of those with vital lungs is characterised by their feelings of self-esteem and respect for themselves and others. Such people seem unified, hold onto their direction and are effective and comfortable to take their place in the world.

In my previous newsletter I described the Spleen as the internal mother and home; the Lung is archetypally related to the father. Traditionally it is the father who teaches a sense of self-value, teaches us about boundary and helps with individuation and separation from the mother.

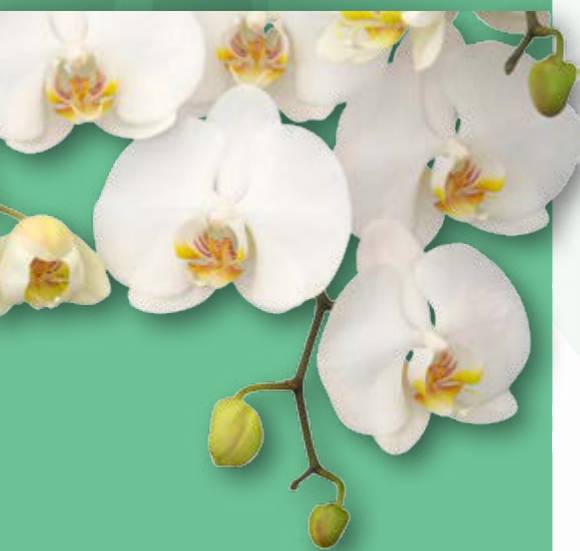
Those with healthy lungs tend to hold onto their principles and keep their commitments, but when it is time to let go of an object or a relationship, they sense this and do it. They feel the associated grief and sadness but soon resolve it.

**Grief** is the emotion associated with the lungs and colon. When grief is expressed and resolved, it strengthens our internal basis of health. Repressed grief however, interferes with our life-force and contributes to lung and colon dis-ease.

### Nourishing Tips for Autumn

**Breathing nourishes the lung.** Take frequent walks by the ocean or in the bush. Enjoy being in nature and breathe in nature!

The physical capacity of the lungs can be developed by swimming and through breathing practices.



“A harvest of peace is produced  
from a seed of contentment  
American Proverb

Spend a few minutes through the day learning to breathe deeply with the diaphragm and relaxing the muscles of the chest and shoulders. This can effectively build up the power of the lungs.

Voice work such as singing, reading poetry aloud and learning to project the voice can also develop the lungs. This is a wonderful avenue of self-expression .....just give it a try!

Expansive movements that physically open the chest are invaluable. Yoga postures such as bow, camel and hanuman pose are wonderful to open our chests and hearts. They bring tone and release contraction of muscles that surround the rib cage and encourage an open-hearted way of being!

An experienced yoga teacher is essential in learning these postures safely. The vital breathing practices taught alongside these physical aspects are truly restorative.

**Ayurveda** (science of life) teaches that the energy of the heart chakra governs the heart and lungs in our physical body. The simple breathing exercise and the yoga postures mentioned help to free up this area.

In the non-physical realm, the heart chakra fosters compassion, clarity and ability to love.

“By steady focus on the heart chakra, a full understanding of the nature of the mind is gained”

Patanjali, Yoga Sutras, 3.34

**Massage** 150 to 200ml of gently warmed cold-pressed sesame oil from head to toe! This is especially helpful for those who suffer with cold hands and feet, muscle stiffness and cracking joints aggravated during cold weather. Allow the oil to stay on the skin for 15-20 minutes before taking a nice warm shower, leaving a little oil on the skin.

**Dry skin brushing** or rubbing with a good cotton towel will maintain the skin's health and support the immune system. Wearing natural fibres allows the skin to breathe freely.

**Be aware of Dryness.** The gradually increasing wind and cold and the use of heaters begin to create dryness in the air, which in turn affects the integrity of the skin and mucous membranes of our

respiratory tract. This can make us more susceptible to invading pathogens.

### **Protect yourself in this environment!**

Keep your neck, wrist and ankles from being exposed to wind and drafts. Use a scarf and cover your head and ears on windy days. Minimise your exposure to cold dry winds and drafts.

**To counter this dryness of the body** (symptoms include thirst, dry skin, nose, lips, throat and itchiness), emphasise moistening foods: soybean products, spinach, barley, millet, pear, apple, persimmon, loquat, seaweeds, black and white fungus, almond, pinenut, sesame seed, eggs, clam, crab, oyster, herring and mussels. Using a little celtic sea salt in cooking also moistens dryness.

Hot and spicy foods in excess can contribute to this dryness and therefore need to be used in moderation by those sensitive to the cold dry weather.

**Autumn** signals the need for heartier flavours and food.

**Food preparation** needs to be more warming for the cooler season. In general, cook with less water and a lower heat for a longer period of time as this concentrates the food. The warm fragrance of baked and sautéed food stimulates the appetite - remembering that **the essence of food** is received through the sense of smell.

**Introduce some sour flavoured food.** This flavour signals to the body to begin the process of contraction and adjust in accordance with the season.

Include small regular portions of sourdough bread, sauerkraut, olives, pickles, leeks, aduki beans, cheese, yoghurt, vinegar, lemons, limes, grapefruit. Do be cautious with extremely sour foods, as small amounts have a strong effect.

**Mucilaginous foods** are important for mucous membrane renewal of the lungs and colon. Seaweed, kombu, marshmallow root, flaxseed and fenugreek are examples.

**Dark green and golden-orange vegetables** offer a protective effect on the the surface and mucous membranes of the body due to their rich beta carotene content. In particular include carrots, winter squash, kale, parsley,

wheat or barley grass and the herbs yerba santa leaf, mullein leaf and nettles.

**Foods considered harmonising** during autumn include:

- ✦ grains: white, brown and sweet rice, sprouted seeds and grains
- ✦ beans: white beans egg cannelloni beans
- ✦ vegetables: watercress, mustard greens, radish, garlic, chinese cabbage, white mushrooms, turnip, celery, daikon radish, cabbage, cauliflower
- ✦ fruit: apple, pear, banana
- ✦ fish: cod, herring flounder, sole, snapper
- ✦ herbal tea: rose hip, fresh ginger root

**Do attend to the aesthetics of food and delight in the simple rituals of eating! This quality of respect for the importance of food sets the tone for supporting our health and celebrating life during this autumn harvest.**

**Natural medicines** are invaluable in supporting our health through the autumn months. I frequently prescribe homeopathic remedies such as ferrum phosphoricum, pulsatilla and silica amongst many others on an individual basis to effectively curtail the progression of a cold.

Supplements such as vitamin C with bioflavonoids, zinc and cod-liver oil are most helpful for immune system support along with many herbs.

Bach flowers and other remedies do assist in addressing the emotional aspects intertwined in our physical health.

This time I have also included some books that may be of interest. So Happy Reading, Eating and Living!

In good health and happiness,



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Consultations:  
[SeasonsHealth.com.au](http://SeasonsHealth.com.au)



### **Interesting reading:**

Care of the Soul by Thomas Moore; Wholefood by Jude Blereau  
Wild Geese & Selected Poems by Mary Oliver