



Vol. 9 No. 2

Below is a full copy of the text of my letter to the Editor of the New York Times submitted March 20, 2009. My letter is in response to the front page article entitled "Studies Show Prostate Test Saves Few Lives" of March 19, 2009 as well as to the editorial entitled "The Prostate Cancer Muddle" of March 20, 2009. If you have been diagnosed with a prostate problem or know someone who has, we at WholeLife HealthCare can help.

Your editorial of March 20, 2008 does not completely address the real issue raised with the two studies regarding PSA tests. The PSA test is indeed a very worthy screening tool. Anyone with a will to live a full and healthful life wants to know the facts of his or health. For the ostriches of us out there preferring to keep our heads in the sand, don't take the test, or any other test that could give you insight into how you might increase your good health. The PSA test is an initial screening tool intended to tell those men interested in taking responsibility for their health the status of their prostate gland. Unfortunately most any health screening tool is not perfect and it follows that any unexpected results should be verified with a repeat test. If a test definitively reveals one's prostate health to be less than ideal, then prudent and effective, safe and life-giving steps can be taken to support that as well as the health of the whole patient. Let's face what specialists can't: unhealthy prostates do not live in healthy men. Specialists in prostate health often look at the prostate, missing any and all co-factors which contribute to its health or lack thereof. Any physician educated and experienced in functional health care understands this. Woe the loss of the primary care physician who understands her or his role in helping the whole patient achieve the health level he or she desires. It's the conventional medical approach to prostate health that's not offering real healthcare needed by our men with prostate health issues. This screening test is not only worthy, it's crucial. The treatment is what's at fault.

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Vol. 9 No. 1

IS IT *STRESS* OR *EUSTRESS*?

As a holistic primary care physician serving patients from the Manhattan metro area for thirteen years, my patients have forced me to become an expert on stress and its effects on our health. We all know what stress means, but do you know what eustress is?

First of all, let's make sure you can say eustress: it's pronounced it "yu stress," with the emphasis on the first syllable.

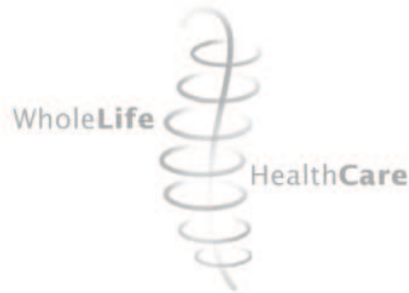
Stress is divided into two types: distress and eustress. I don't have to tell you what distress is, but I can tell you that eustress is stress without distress; eustress is the stress we experience when good things happen, when we are successful, when our business is thriving, when our boss is happy, when our presidential candidate wins, when we land a new client, when we get exciting news, when someone takes the time to tell us how important we are to them.

My patients come to realize that as we work together the balance between distress and eustress in their lives shifts as their health shifts toward optimal. Not under stress? Let me tell you here and now: if you're using over the counter drugs for acid reflux or headaches or back pain, or using prescription drugs for cholesterol, diabetes, sleep aid or blood pressure, or using coffee to get you started and keep you going, you are way high on the distress and way low on the eustress.

Take a few minutes and make a list of the stress in your life, dividing the page into two columns, one each for eustress and distress. Then take a few more minutes and make a plan to talk about this list with a loved one, a business partner or a person who supports you in your life. The time to change is now.

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Vol. 7 No. 1

Did you know that the body has a clock? In fact, the body has many clocks. Normal sleep and wakefulness are closely regulated by diurnal rhythms. Some hormone production waxes and wanes with the time of day, not to mention the time of month. Blood cells are produced every certain number of days; other cells have a pre-defined life cycle. Time is not just an important function of society; it is an important factor for the body.

Traditional Chinese medicine teaches that the body as a whole has a “time” that is divided into five seasons, and each of these seasons is a time when the body focuses on a certain system. All of the components associated with each system are reviewed, rebalanced and rejuvenated as best the body can. These seasons closely relate to our earth’s seasons and, just as the earth may experience extremes of weather at seasons’ changes, so can the body experience extremes while transitioning from one system’s focus to another. This is one explanation as to why many of us consistently may not feel so well at a certain season’s change year after year, why some of us feel exuberant at another season’s change from year to year, why some of us actually “get sick” with yet another season’s change from year to year. These times of not feeling well or feeling very well or actually becoming ill are a result of either increased stress or the relieving of stress.

Any change, be it wanted or unwanted, is associated with stress of some kind. We are all too well aware of the stressors in our lives that produce unwanted feelings, thoughts and symptoms. For some of us, merely reading the front page of a newspaper qualifies in this category. But we also have stress associated with changes we want. Would anyone be quick to categorize someone packing for a wonderful two week trip to an exotic location as stress-free? Have you ever seen a bride-to-be in a state of relaxation? So, there is stress and eustress, the latter defined as “stress without distress.” But change is stress and stress, no matter its source, is still stress.

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Think of the body's transitions from one season to the next, from one system to the next, as a potential stress. How easily you change from season to season can be directly related to your body's health in that season's system, not to mention your overall health.

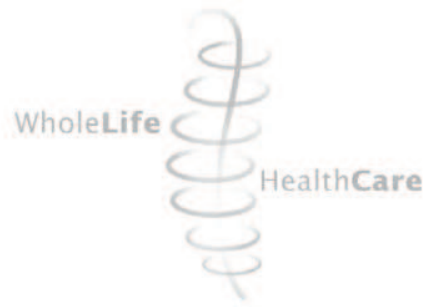
Winter is the season when the body transitions from Autumn's focus on Lung/Large Intestine health to Kidney/Urinary Bladder health. If your body is making a difficult transition, or these systems are significantly imbalanced, the most common physical symptoms we see during this time of year are urinary tract inflammations and infections. And hospital statistics show more emergency room admissions due to kidney stones during Winter than any other time of the year. Remember, the kidneys are crucial for cleansing the system of wastes and the bladder merely holds these wastes until you urinate. Caring for the Kidney/Urinary Bladder system is simple, but not always easy for most of us. "Never ignore the urge to eliminate" is the first rule of thumb. Bulky layers of winter clothes can often seem in the way of bathroom visits, especially when enjoying outdoor sports, but timely elimination of body wastes is as important now as at any time of the year. Water, pure healthful water, is the second key to keeping symptoms at bay. So, the second rule of thumb is to drink one-half your body weight in ounces a day of pure non-carbonated water. If you are an athlete or have a physically demanding job or do regular work-outs of moderate to high intensity, you need to increase that amount of water to accommodate the amount you lose through perspiration. And whatever amount of pure water drinking you need to have daily, make sure the bulk of it is done by dinner time. There's no need to interrupt your Winter's rest unnecessarily with nighttime bathroom runs. A mild imbalance symptom in the Kidney/Urinary Bladder system would be fatigue not associated with loss of sleep.

At WholeLife HealthCare we very much appreciate the Traditional Chinese Medicine's holistic approach to health which includes emotional and mental health traveling arm-in-arm with our physical health. And we know that when the Kidney/Urinary Bladder system is unbalanced, that can manifest as fear. I believe one of the reasons we can become unbalanced during this time of year is that we don't honor the age-old tradition of using Winter as the time to go inward, the time to "hibernate," the time called "dreamtime" by many indigenous traditions. This is a time when we can each take stock of our previous year and current life, see what works and what doesn't, learn what we'd like to change and what new goals would be, then contemplate on how that might look. Those of us who merely look ahead, pushing toward this goal and that goal without taking stock of where we are can get into a state of fear. Looking ahead is important for many of us; but planning without the foundation of knowing where we are would put most anyone into a state of fear. How can we easily proceed into the future of our lives without knowing where we are now? So, take the time the short days of Winter offer to sleep and slow down, to catch up with yourself, and Winter will be a most welcome season.

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If any of these symptoms discussed above, be they in the “physical” body or the “emotional” body, become more than a whisper, you probably need some help with the transition. Season’s change is a terrific time to check in with us and see how you’re doing. In fact, we urge you to make an appointment just before each seasonal change. This way, we can strive to avoid any symptoms or illnesses you may experience with season’s change, improving your overall good health at the same time.

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Vol 6 No 1

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Autumn is the season when the body transitions from the late summer's focus on Stomach/Spleen health to Lung/Large Intestine health. It is certainly common for us to experience symptoms related to respiratory systems such as sinus congestion, coughs, itchy or weepy eyes and sore throats with the cooler weather coming in. Often we blame pollen, mold, and viruses for these symptoms but they may not be the culprits at all. We may merely be focusing on the cleansing and rebalancing of the respiratory system and having difficulty; hence, we "get sick." Often less noticed but nonetheless present are bowel changes such as sluggishness, change in frequency, constipation, loose stool, and general change in stool. Some other symptoms indicating a difficulty in transitioning to the Autumn can be symptoms associated with thyroid imbalances, dry hair or eyes or skin, a tendency to crave or avoid spicy and hot foods, and sadness.

Sadness? Yes, we share philosophies with Chinese Traditional Medicine that the best health care is holistic in that it also includes the emotional health with the physical. It is not uncommon for us to experience sadness, or a sense of loss, or even a sweet sense of melancholy moving into Autumn which may go so far as randomly remembering past instances of loss and grief as this season progresses.

And if any of these symptoms, be they in the "physical" body or the "emotional" body, become more than a whisper, you probably need some help with the transition.

Season's change is a terrific time to check in with us and see how you're doing. In fact, we urge you to make an appointment just before each seasonal change. This way, we can strive to avoid any symptoms or illnesses you may experience with season's change, improving your overall good health at the same time.

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