

## Fall 2009: Care and Cultivate for Optimal Health

The UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine offers a dynamic approach to health, healing, and prevention by integrating modern medicine with established practices from around the world.

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### Did you know...

Massage is beneficial for people of all ages, whether healthy or with a medical concern. Research shows benefits for both the body and mind.

These include positive mechanical, reflexive, physiological, and psychological effects. In particular, studies indicate that massage is effective for anxiety, chronic pain, musculoskeletal disorders, neonatal care, sleep disorders, and others.

# welcome



Dear Friend,

This quarter's newsletter-**Care and Cultivate for Optimal Health**-is dedicated to supporting individuals in making decisions about how to pursue healthy living. There are many ways in which we can become our own "prevention specialists" according to the life style choices we make each day. Some of the best practices for health, healing and prevention from around the world include: a healthy diet, daily exercise, a daily mindfulness practice (i.e., meditation, journaling, gratitude practice) and a sense of connection to community. Lifestyle choices are a key component of integrative medicine.

One goal of the Osher Center is to provide a space where ideas and information about lifestyle choices and integrative medicine can be made more available to those in the Bay Area and beyond. The idea is that through disciplines like TCM, yoga, Tai Chi, and meditation, individuals can gain more control over their health. According to research, this control is often particularly powerful for patients who, because of disease or illness, have lost control of some of their physical strength.

Our collaborative approach to patient care includes conventional and integrative practitioners working together and partnering with patients to continue to provide the best quality of care. We focus on prevention, patient empowerment, early intervention and patient-centered care through the integration of modern medicine with established practices from around the world. The integrative medicine view of health and healing supports greater health for all. It encompasses a broad range of view points, practices, and perceptions that can enrich our sense of self and our world, and by doing so, can open up new ways of thinking about life that can effect a positive change.

Sincerely,

Susan Folkman, PhD  
Director, UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine

## Health Tips: Turning Everyday Habits into Everyday Health



**By Marcia Degelman, CMT, Integrative Medicine Specialist**

We are creatures of habit. We can get stuck in a rut, or we can use our repetitive behaviors to do good things for our body and mind. Think about your daily rituals. What are the first things that you do when you wake up? Wash your face? Brush your teeth? Do you have to negotiate with yourself to do these things? Probably not; you just do them. You are in the habit of doing them. What if you added some stretching to that routine? You don't have to call it yoga. How about a few minutes of mindfulness? You don't have to call it meditation.

Re-frame the way you think about your habits and daily rituals. You can simply take a few minutes to check in on yourself and see what's on your mind; just let it go by for a few precious moments. Bring your attention to your breath. You can always worry about stuff later.

Could these few moments improve the quality of your day? Add to your peace of mind? If you did it every day, it would simply become a habit. And you could reward yourself with something good for you, like a chair massage instead of a chocolate chip cookie. And then take yourself out for a nice walk in the park. Good habits should be rewarded.

**Marcia specializes in Massage Therapy, with a focus on stress management. Find out more in *Explaining Health: What You Need to Know to Stay Healthy*, available at [www.explaininghealth.com](http://www.explaininghealth.com).**





"I've enjoyed taking the yoga classes with Kristie. Her approach is nurturing, encouraging and gentle. I feel more relaxed, flexible, peaceful, and yet energized afterwards.

My connection to my body and breath has improved, and I appreciate her spiritual influence."

-Yoga Student

**Yoga: The Art of Joyful Being**



By Kristie Dahlia Home, E-RYT 500, Yoga Instructor

**The Changing Face of American Yoga**

In the 1970s, yoga was popular as a form of stretching and relaxation. More recently, it has become popular as a fitness practice. Today, images of gorgeous people performing incredible feats of strength and flexibility have left some people feeling that yoga seems like a demanding, even intimidating, physical practice. It doesn't have to be that way. In fact there are numerous benefits from a wide range of practices, from gentle to vigorous.

**What is Yoga, Anyway?**

Yoga is an ancient art that aims for a more joyful existence on every level. There is a physical component because a more comfortable body makes for a more comfortable mind. The *asanas* (physical postures) involve both the stretching—popular in the past—and the strengthening many people enjoy today. The poses can indeed be extravagant if one chooses, but they can also be accessible, gentle and pleasurable.

**Start Where You Are, and Grow from There**

For some, physical postures call for focus and dedication. For others, meditation may pose a challenge. Neither aspect of practice is a race or competition. Rather, it is a progression that benefits both mind and body. Over time, most people experience increased strength and flexibility in the muscles and an increased range of motion and comfort in the joints. Many find a decrease in pain or new ways to

relate to pain that make it easier to bear. The body's natural healing abilities can become more active, increasing overall health.

Yoga also includes *pranayama* (breathing practices), which help to create healthful breathing habits, calm the nervous system and increase energy levels. *Yoga Nidra* (deep relaxation) soothes, calms and rejuvenates. Meditation—which might take forms like walking, sitting or laughing—offers a chance to create new ways of relating to our thoughts and emotions.

**The Health Benefits of a Gentle Practice**

At the Osher Center, our yoga program specializes in gentle, healing-oriented classes. For instance, our Gentle Chair Yoga class can be done seated the whole time, or you might choose to stand or get onto the floor. We create an environment that adapts to your needs and welcome anyone who wishes to experience more health and happiness in body, mind and spirit. The movements begin in an easeful place, with suggestions offered for how to add intensity or ease as your comfort and interest call for. The relationship of the mind to the body and manner in which choices are made, are every bit as healing as the movements of the body itself!

**Kristie specializes in individualizing practice to suit each person's unique needs, bringing the joy of deeper well-being to people in all physical circumstances.**

# Self-Care and Seasonal Wellness:

## Shopping for Supplements: What Do You Need to Know?



By Priscilla Abercrombie, RN, NP, PhD  
Women's Health Specialist

Shopping for supplements at a local store can be overwhelming. How do you read a supplement label? Are supplements tested for safety by the FDA? Can you be assured that you have purchased a quality product?

In this column we will address some common questions and hopefully help you feel more confident when you head down the supplement aisle.

**Read the supplement label carefully.** All vitamin formulations are not the same. Look at the table on the back that lists the percentage of daily value (DV) for each nutrient in the supplement. The recommended dietary allowances (RDA) are the daily dietary intake level considered to be sufficient for 97%-98% of all healthy individuals. This includes both genders across the lifespan. If you want more recent



information about your requirements based on age and gender see the Institute of Medicine's 2005 References for Dietary Intake on their website.

### Anatomy of the Supplement Label

**Serving size.** Some vitamin labels show a nutrient list for a "serving size" of anywhere from one to eight tablets. Do not mistakenly think that the ingredients listed are for one tablet.

**Directions for use.** Sometimes the directions are to take your supplement three times a day. Will you really take it three times a day every day? If not, you may want to look for one that you take once a day. Be sure you can take them as directed if you want to get the health benefits of the supplement.

**Ingredients.** Be aware of proprietary blends added to supplements. They may use words like "Women's Herbal Blend" on the label. Sometimes they only list the ingredients in their

proprietary blend, not the doses or other important details about the herbs. It is unlikely that these herbs are added in adequate doses to have any therapeutic value. If you would benefit from a specific herb, your practitioner should prescribe for you the appropriate dose and formulation.

**Expiration date.** Verify freshness and make sure you'll use the contents before you reach the expiration date.

### Other Issues to Consider

**Educate yourself.** Nutraceuticals are big business, and they are being marketed heavily. *Don't believe everything you read.* Read online about how dietary supplements are regulated. Consult evidence-based resources such as Natural Standard, The German E Commission Monographs or the American Botanical Council Web site.

**Store supplements in a cool, dry, safe place**--not on the bathroom counter. As with all medication, keep supplements away from children, in a locked or secure location.

**Be Cautious and Communicate with your practitioner.** Talk to your health care practitioner before taking medications or supplements when you are pregnant or breastfeeding, before surgery or when you have a chronic condition, such as heart disease. Check for interactions and contraindications (online or with your pharmacist) between any of the prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, herbs and supplements, and know the side effects of all the medications and supplements you are taking.

### Advice on Choosing a Quality Product:

- Choose companies that follow good manufacturing practices (GMP); this will be on the label.
- Look for the United States Pharmacopoeia Quality Verification Program seal (USP). Most Costco brand products have this.
- Look for National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certification; they certify water filtration systems around the world.
- Search [consumerlabs.com](http://consumerlabs.com). They test supplements (very similar to USP criteria) and can be found online for an annual fee of about \$25.

**Read more online to learn about the role of the FDA and Federal Trade Commission in regulating dietary supplements.** [www.osher.ucsf.edu/newsletter](http://www.osher.ucsf.edu/newsletter)

# Care and Cultivate for Optimal Health

## Promoting Health During the Fall: A Traditional Chinese Medicine Perspective



By Miria Toveg, MS, LAc,  
Acupuncturist and Traditional  
Chinese Medicine Practitioner

Autumn is dominated by yin energy and is associated with the organs of the lungs and large intestines.

### Lungs: Inward, Outward; Large Intestines: Release

From our first to last breath, our lungs connect us to life. Referred to as the delicate organs, the lungs are most susceptible to wind and cold. In autumn it is important to maintain a healthy balance between diet, exercise, rest and keeping warm, especially around our neck and chest. Qi (Chi)-produced and circulated by the lungs-nourishes and protects our internal organs. This Protective Qi defends us from external influences, both physical and emotional. When our defenses are down, we are more susceptible to pathogens such as colds and flus.

Equally important to our health is our large intestine, which also needs special attention during autumn. The main function is to gather our body's putrefied toxins and eliminate them. The connection between autumn and the larger intestine reinforces that we take this time to purge from our lives that which is harmful.

### Autumn Nourishment

In autumn add more cooked and warming food, including: acorn squash, burdock root, butternut squash, carrots, chestnuts, corn, green peas, lotus root, Jerusalem artichokes, okra, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, turnips and yams. Some favorite grains and beans are amaranth, barley, quinoa, spelt bread, kidney beans and white and navy beans. As for nuts, almonds, cashews, peanuts and sesame seeds are good. Pecans, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and hazelnuts are also beneficial.

Fenugreek tea is wonderful because it acts as a lubricant, softens and dissolves mucus in lungs, and moistens the intestines to prevent constipation. Herbs that help protect the lungs are Usnea, Osha, Mullein and Lobelia.

### Autumn Reflections

Autumn emphasizes the cycle of dormancy and preparing for rebirth. This allows us the opportunity to release old thoughts and negative patterns. Through the process of letting go, we grow and thrive anew. Let this autumn season be a time for us to nourish our selves, to renew and to promote true happiness and universal love to all beings!

## Sweet Potato and Peanut Stew (Serves 4)



A tasty vegetarian dish with tomatoes, warm spices, and a touch of peanut butter. Microwaving the sweet potatoes helps you finish in a flash.

### Ingredients

- 3 medium sweet potatoes (about 12 ounces each), well scrubbed and cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed with garlic press
- 1 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 2 cans (15 to 19 ounces each) garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 3/4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 1/4 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup loosely packed fresh cilantro leaves, chopped

### Preparation

1. Place potatoes in 2 1/2-quart microwave-safe dish. Cover dish and microwave on high about 8 minutes or until fork-tender.
2. Meanwhile, in 5-quart to 6-quart saucepot, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add garlic, cumin, salt, cinnamon, and crushed red pepper, and cook 30 seconds, stirring. Stir in beans, broth, tomatoes, and peanut butter until blended; heat to boiling and cook 1 minute, stirring occasionally.
3. Reduce heat to medium-low; add sweet potatoes to bean mixture and simmer 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in cilantro.

Per serving: Calories: 585 • Total Fat: 16 g • Cholesterol: 0 mg • Sodium: 1,725 mg • Carbohydrates: 92 g • Protein: 22 g.

Source: *Good Housekeeping*

## The Potential of Integrative Medicine and the Role of Research

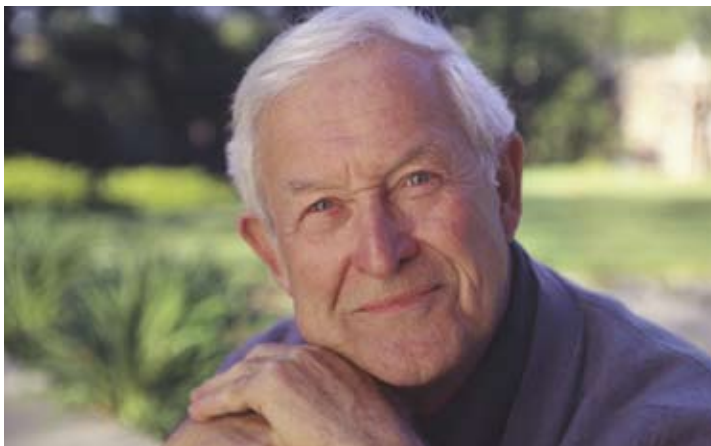


By Maria Chao, DrPH, MPA, Research Fellow

With healthcare reform on our national agenda during a time of economic challenge, many of us find ourselves trying to envision a system that offers high quality healthcare that is simultaneously cost-effective and accessible to all Americans. Not surprisingly, many of us at the Osher Center see integrative medicine as part of this vision.

### The Potential of Integrative Medicine in Healthcare

Integrative medicine has the potential to serve varied healthcare needs that span the spectrum of preventive, acute, chronic and palliative care across the lifespan and among diverse populations. From a public health and cost-containment perspective, preventive health strategies warrant the greatest investment. Integrative medicine offers nutritional guidance, lifestyle counseling and stress mitigation: all strategies that promote health and prevent illness. Furthermore, many integrative practices—such as the augmentation of mindfulness-based practices, behavioral interventions, acupuncture or massage—require minimal



technology and are thus relatively low cost. Many proponents also herald the light environmental “footprint” of integrative medicine, given its relatively low resource utilization.

Health improvements over the past century have resulted in longer life expectancy and a shift to chronic conditions. As such, our healthcare system needs to be responsive to chronic disease management and palliative care. Integrative approaches have been used with success for addressing fatigue, stress and pain—conditions that profoundly impact quality of life across much of the U.S. population.

### Challenges and Opportunities

Much of the scientific methodology and design of exemplary clinical research was created to test the efficacy of pharmaceuticals. These studies examine the biological mechanism of a single pharmaceutical agent under controlled clinical settings. In contrast, the heart of integrative medicine is an emphasis on the whole person, including biological, environmental, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions as integral dimensions of health and wellness. Furthermore, many integrative medicine treatments are individually tailored. How can whole systems of healing be evaluated for efficacy? What is the utility of standardizing an acupuncture treatment for low back pain, for instance, when in practice the treatment would be patient specific? What are relevant bio-psychosocial outcomes of integrative medicine and how can we measure them?

To address these and other challenges, our researchers are at the forefront of advancing scientific methodologies, creating multidisciplinary teams and developing innovative paradigms for research. Current studies at the Osher Center include:

- The effects of a meditation-based stress reduction intervention in HIV infection;
- A clinical trial investigating long-term weight loss and maintenance in obesity;
- Mind-body approaches to understanding and treating low back pain;
- Pranayama (yogic breathing exercises) for cancer treatment related fatigue;
- The effects of mindfulness-based childbirth and parenting interventions; and
- Quality of life at end of life for underserved women.

The breadth of research topics in integrative medicine coupled with limited resources underscores the need to prioritize which studies to conduct. Osher Center researchers focus on evaluating integrative approaches for public health priorities (such as obesity, HIV and cancer). Given the current state of our health care crisis, there is a clear need for health strategies that are low-cost, easy to implement and accessible to a wide range of the population. Integrative medicine could be a viable approach to population health improvements such as holistic preventive approaches, enhanced quality of life or effective chronic disease management. As research broadens the evidence base, integrative medicine may well be part of answering the conundrum of how to provide cost-effective, accessible, quality care for all.

Want to learn more about the history of Integrative Medicine? Visit <http://www.osher.ucsf.edu/about>

## Training the Mind



By Shelley Adler,  
PhD, Education  
Program Director

For medical students, the brain is an important topic of academic discourse.

They spend a significant amount of time learning about its structure, the many ways in which its function is affected by neurological and psychiatric disease, and the more subtle negative effects of stress, lack of sleep and exposure to medicinal or illicit drugs. The need for diagnosis and treatment of brain-related diseases provides a clear rationale for this emphasis on the brain's structure, function and dysfunction, but there are compelling reasons for also devoting time to learning ways that we can optimize the performance of the healthy human mind.

### Why Is a Healthy Mind Important in Healthcare?

First, many patients, whether healthy or ill, seek advice from their physicians on how to improve their cognitive and mental capacities, including thinking, focus and emotional well-being. Second, mind-body techniques can be particularly helpful during times of illness. For example, meditation and focusing have long been used by healthcare providers to help patients dealing with debilitating stress, chronic pain or other types of suffering.

Finally, physicians rely on the optimal function of their own brains and minds—the very nature of a physician's work stretches these capabilities to the maximum. Problem-solving, multi-tasking, encoding and retrieval of information, adaptive responses to stress, social cognition, compassion, compartmentalizing—all of these abilities are part of a physician's job requirements. Physicians

and patients alike benefit from developing and honing these abilities to the fullest extent possible.

### Experiencing the Mind-Body Connection in Medical School

We have developed an elective course called “Training the Mind” in collaboration with the Department of Neurology that integrates mind-body medicine content into a curriculum block on Brain, Mind and Behavior. In this course, first-year medical students attend lectures and participate in a group meditation three times per week throughout the quarter. Some of the objectives include:

1. Introduce and practice techniques for mind enhancement, such as meditation, art appreciation, memory games and stress management.
2. Understand how our perspective on mortality influences mind functions such as attention, focus and relationships with others.

The course's benefits are seen by both the students and instructors alike; not only are students learning “healthy mind exercises” that will help their future patients, they are experiencing the benefits themselves. A student shares their reflection on the course:

“These exercises accomplished something especially important to me. They coupled efforts to improve concentration with value. When we worked to develop our concentration, our focus centered on self-conception, the beauty of artwork and the expression of emotion. The class aligned our motivations to improve concentration with pre-existing incentives in order to make it easier for us.”



### Instructor Perspective:

“Given the focus we have in the medical school's formal neuroscience curriculum on “normal” function and disease, I am so pleased that we have created an opportunity for students to learn more about how to make their already well-tuned minds even more capable. As they understand more about the nature of the mind and techniques for improving focus, attention and attaining a state of inner peace, I am quite sure they will be better equipped to cope with the rigors of medical training and, as an extension of this, find more joy in their work and become even better physicians”.

- **Dan Lowenstein, MD**  
Professor and Vice Chair,  
UCSF Department of Neurology  
Lead faculty

Providing medical students with insights into, and first-hand experiences of, the mind-body connection is an important role for integrative medicine education. It provides students with tools for improving their abilities to navigate the challenges of medical school, makes them better physicians and equips them with tools to enhance the patient care experience.

UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine  
Visit our newsletter online: [www.osher.ucsf.edu/newsletter](http://www.osher.ucsf.edu/newsletter)

**UCSF Osher Center Events\***

October	
October 24 - Class	Nourishing Ourselves from Within
November	
November 2 - Class, every Monday	Gentle Chair Yoga
November 12 - Lunchtime Lecture	Tai Chi Presentation with Dr. Paul Lam
November 18 - Free Class, every other Wednesday	Laughter Yoga
December	
December 1 - Class Starts	Gentle Yoga for Every Body
December 6 - Workshop	Mind in Labor
December 7 - Pritzker Lecture	The Ecology of the Child
January 2010	
January 14 - Healthy Living Lecture	The Role of the Body's Natural Defenses in the Prevention and Treatment of Cancer

\*This is not a comprehensive list. For a full list of public programs go to [www.osher.ucsf.edu](http://www.osher.ucsf.edu).

**Give the gift of health!**

Massage gift certificates are now available through our clinic.

**Did you know...**

Our clinic services are eligible for use with Healthcare Savings Accounts and Healthcare Reimbursement Accounts.

**We'd love to hear from you.**

Send comments, feedback, and requests to receive our newsletter electronically to: [ocim@ocim.ucsf.edu](mailto:ocim@ocim.ucsf.edu).

**Special thanks to Betty and Jack Schafer for supporting this newsletter.**

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

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