

Bi-Annual Energy Report 2010: Wood/Metal Excess

As you likely know, every year I review the energy of the year based on Chinese medical astrology in order to help people adapt to the energetic tides that affect all of us for good and ill. Like last year (and next year), this is a year of extremes where two oppositional energies are active at various points during the year. Oppositional years such as these often spell challenging times (think 2009!). This year, I will divide the energy report into two parts for each major phase of the energy.

Wood Yang Excess Until August

From February 2010 to August 2010 we are in an energetic state of Wood Yang excess. Wood is the energy of growth, connection, and change. When it is Yang, such as with this year, it is the energy of transformation, strategy, and planning. The other side of the coin for Wood Yang is rising heat that can lead to anger, shout, and, in some instances, violence. The movement of Wood Qi is pinching and pulling. It tears apart Earth Qi which is a source of energy for us. If you have been feeling unusually tired for the last several weeks or months, this is the most likely reason.

The planet Jupiter is associated with Wood Qi. Until August, Jupiter is unopposed in its orbit with our planet and therefore increases Wood Qi here at home. On top of that, Spring is the Wood season. So, all Spring we are in a state of tremendous Wood Qi. Some days are energetically Wood days as well. On Wood days in a Wood season in a Wood half year, we are getting overloaded with Wood Qi far beyond the ability of most of our bodies to handle it. Inevitably, this will lead to symptoms associated with Wood Qi excess that I will describe below.

Geopolitically, this is a year focused on allies, strategies, and long term visioning. Allies have already come to the rescue of the Greeks from financial ruin. And the U.S. appears to be making friends again throughout the Middle East and Russia. There may be some amount of saber rattling and violence especially when the Metal period begins in Autumn. More on that in the next report.

Wood affects the earth by tearing it apart. As a result, we saw a major earthquake in China last year during the Wood term and this year earthquakes are striking frequently across the globe. Wood Qi is also associated with wind and thunder. We can expect turbulent weather as a result with some ferocious storms with high winds and tornadoes. We also may see strong hurricanes at unusual times of the year this year. Hurricane experts are already warning people of an explosive season this year.

Wind, interestingly enough, is also associated with illness. The flu season will likely be much longer than normal this year, lasting all summer. Stomach bugs with vomiting and diarrhea are highly likely. When summer hits, some high fever bugs will develop as well that will likely become extremely high fever bugs in Autumn.

Wood is also related to allergies. This year is purportedly the worst allergy season in at least ten years (it started unusually early and will end unusually late). On top of that, Wood Yang rising correlates with

headaches and migraines, dizziness, vertigo, and light headedness.

In my clinic, I am seeing a high volume of joint problems these days. Plenty of carpal tunnel cases popped up overnight. The mid-back is a nexus point for Wood Qi. I am seeing many cases where the nerve is being pinched in this location with referring discomforts below the breasts where the Liver channel ends and the Gallbladder channel passes (Wood meridians).

Wood relates to tendons, ligaments, eyes, eyelids, the liver organ, the gallbladder organ, collagen, the prefrontal cortex, the visual cortex, and the area of the brain that coordinates talking and breathing (where I associate conditions of asthma). All of these areas are due to overflow with energy and experience intense problems of excess especially for individuals with Wood Qi in their constitutions. Areas of the body likely to see problems of weakness and deficiency include the mouth, muscles, flesh, spleen organs, stomach organs, the pancreas, the motor cortex, and all of the digestive organs (other than the gallbladder).

As Wood controls Earth Qi, which is in charge of the digestive system, people are likely to experience a higher volume of digestive upset, including random bouts of nausea, alternating constipation and diarrhea, reflux, and pains in the abdomen. This is the year that many people are likely to suffer from gallbladder diseases of excess – such as gallstones and cholecystitis. Many people in this situation opt for surgery to remove the gallbladder not realizing that this energy will pass – or not able to wait out the storm given the intense symptoms (hint: try your local acupuncturist if you can, first).

Once summer officially begins, the energy is going to get hot. Very hot. Summer is Fire Qi. When Wood and Fire combine, they generate more Fire Qi. While this may temper the impact of Wood Qi excess, it is going to generate heat: hot temperatures and hot temperments. We are likely to shift out of feeling low energy overall to feeling manic, impulsive, and, for many, hypoglycemic (as the energy in our abdomens will heat up around the pancreas). So, if you have this tendency anyways, make sure you always have food around you this summer.

The areas of the body that are likely to develop problems during the Summer months includes the tongue, capillaries, the chest, the heart, the small intestine, the blood, and the limbic system of the brain that regulates emotions and many of our hormones. At this point, the biggest weak areas are going to be the skin, linings of the digestive tract/urinary tract/respiratory system, the sinuses, and the lungs. In September, Metal excess arises and Wood Qi recedes. So, all of these areas of weakness are going to lurch forward into areas of excess. The problems that are likely to arise at that time in those parts of the body are going to be intense and complicated.

Finally, one last annoying element of Wood Qi is that when it combines with Earth Qi in relatively equal amounts, it generates dampness. Dampness is associated with many things: bacterial infections, food stagnation (leading to feelings that food is stuck along the digestive tract), and very unhappy soft tissues.

Adapt To Stay Healthy And Balanced

There are ways you can adapt to this energy to stay healthy.

The best way you can adapt is to use this energy for its positive powers – direct it where it can be most helpful. This is an excellent time to be creating strategies, planning, connecting to people, talking on the phone, and learning.

That aside, the next best thing is to increase Yin. Wood Yang will cause Yin deficiency leading to light sleep with frequent wake ups, tantrums in kids and adults, and a tendency to burst out in anger. Yin helps to anchor these situations and bring them to balance. Yin time includes: cat naps (ie. siestas), quiet time, gentle massages/craniosacral, eating together with others, cuddling, family time, reading, and sleeping.

Don't spend endless amounts of time this Spring in lush, green environments. When (official) Summer hits, this shifts and you may feel extremely happy in these environments. Until then, they will exacerbate Wood excess issues. You also want to minimize time in water such as baths, lakes, and pools until Summer. The reason for this is Water Qi generates Wood Qi. So, exposure to water which enhances Water Qi, can exacerbate any Wood Qi excess you are experiencing.

Regarding water, something particularly strange is likely to happen when we hit Summer. Time in water may ultimately make us feel warmer and stagnant overall. This is because Water Qi makes Wood Qi (plus the Wood Qi planetary energy) which makes Fire Qi (plus the Summer Fire season). Fire at its peak makes Earth Qi. So, this is an extremely rare instance where Water may make us feel particularly nurtured and lazy this Summer, more than normal. While this may sound delightful, be extremely careful around Water this Summer. I am concerned that this combination makes Water less safe for everyone but especially kids, as the entire unique combination of energies makes Water feel thicker and heavier to swim through. I know this sounds strange in theory, but we will have to see if this is true in reality. In the meantime, I strongly, strongly recommend that you don't let your kids swim without a lifeguard and to keep one eye of your own on your kids as well.

Dietary shifts are a must. And, if you are a fruit lover like me, they are annoying shifts, unfortunately.

Most fruits should be avoided because they contain some amount of the Wood taste of sour. Here is a complete list of sour foods to avoid until August. Once the energy shifts, they will be healthy for us again. But until then, you take risks with your health by eating them: Pear, Orange, Kumquat, Tangerine, Grapefruit, Peach, Plum, Apricot, Apple, Pineapple, Pomegranate, Litchi, Grape, Cherry, Tomato, Tamarind, Lemon, Olive, Vinegar, Mango, Papaya, Raspberry, Strawberry, Chrysanthemum, Cow Pea, Quinoa, Blackberry, Blackcurrant, Cranberry, Lime, Trout, Aduki Bean, Pistachio, Pheasant, Cheese, Purslane, Raspberry, Leaf, and Rosehip.

On top of these foods, it is a good idea to avoid salty foods, as salt is Water Qi which will increase Wood Qi. These include: Wild Rice, Gourd, Seaweed Of Any Variety, Millet, Duck, Pork Products Of Any Variety, Oyster, Seafood (other than fish not mentioned here), Miso, Salt, Lettuce, Salmon, Shark, Sardine, Cheese, Nettle (as in tea), Dandelion Roots, Algae, and Chocolate (don't hate the messenger).

Increase in your diet nuts of all varieties, root vegetables of all varieties, beans of all varieties, spicy foods, and aromatic foods (ie. Indian food). Even a small amount of alcohol can be balancing. Fruits on the good list include: Bananas, Blueberries, Mellons Of All Varieties, Figs, and Dates. Not a huge list of fruits, but it is better than none at all. Even a small amount of excessively sugary sweets are unique

okay to eat this year to help combat the Wood Qi. So, if you have found yourself with a tremendous sweet tooth lately, this is why.

Fortunately, time passes quickly and soon Wood Yang Excess will be a thing of the past (until it resurfaces again in 2011 as Wood Yin excess). This Fall, Metal Yang excess is due. So, I will write more about how to change your lifestyle habits and diet to adapt to this change soon.

One more thing to add: become a Facebook Fan of my practice “Ethan Borg, Acupuncture” so that you don't miss any of my Energy Reports. And, if you are familiar with Spirit Branch Medicine (Google it and share it), you can use the Seasonal Treatment every day or weekly to help balance away the Wood energy.

Until then, stay healthy! And enjoy a very hot summer!

Best wishes,

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