



## July/August 2013: Summer Shorts...Healing Reactions; Kuzu is a Medicinal Food

*"If the patient has been to more than four physicians, nutrition is probably the medical answer."*  
...Abraham Hoffer, MD, PhD

### Healing Reactions, On the Road to Better Health

Summer's rich bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables together with its heat, humidity and more leisurely pace invite us each year to lighten up and adopt healthier habits. In summer, we naturally rotate away from heavy anabolic "build-up" foods such as animal proteins and fats to more catabolic, cleansing fruits and vegetables. We may also try giving up sugar or caffeine/coffee, replacing these with more sleep.<sup>1</sup>

Dietary changes give the body a chance for "housekeeping." Cleansing foods allow the system to expel toxins and set healing in motion. But, healing often brings reactions, so when we launch into a healthier dietary or lifestyle program, we need to expect reactions and read them as *positive* signs of healing.

Far Eastern philosophy suggests that true healing requires reaction: Reactions signal the body's attempts to discharge toxins, both physical and emotional, that stand in the way of healing. Giving up sugar, coffee, alcohol, dairy, meats or fats each has a set of associated reactions, outlined below.

<u>Substance</u>	<u>Possible Symptoms</u>	<u>Duration</u>
Sugar	Fatigue, sleepiness, depression Lack of coordination, alienation	1 to 5 days
Coffee	Headaches, shakiness, nervousness	1 to 10 days
Alcohol	Tension, inability to relax	2 to 5 days or more, depending on consumption.
Dairy	Mucus discharge through the skin, sinuses, mucous membranes, lungs, sex organs	Starts up to 3 months after the food is stopped, for a year or two.
Meats, Fats, Proteins	Foul body odor, coated tongue, feelings of being toxic, skin eruptions	Varies: 1 to 4 weeks with fats, 6 to 10 months for deeper accumulations.

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent piece on sleep, see, [well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/17/cheating-ourselves-of-sleep/?hpbw](http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/17/cheating-ourselves-of-sleep/?hpbw)

*Emotional and physical healing.* Toxic experiences and traumas, perhaps dating to early childhood, also come with their own unique set of physical and emotional reactions; these are signs of a more prolonged and complex healing process. Healing reactions present an opportunity to go back through everything not previously resolved in life. Our body carries our personal history.

The nature of a reaction indicates what phase of life is being healed. Reactions feel similar to the original disease or emotional trauma but usually appear in a diminished form. If the reaction is an emotional discharge of anger, the feeling may remind a person of anger earlier in life, even though the present anger may be “caused” by different circumstances. Physical reactions are also reminders of former conditions: If chronic sore throats occurred during childhood, a healing reaction could involve one or two sore throats that eliminate any residues accumulated from the original infection(s).<sup>2</sup>

#### Types of Healing Reactions:<sup>3</sup>

1. Tension or pain in the upper back and neck, which may move upwards to the head, downward across the abdomen, arms, and legs, and eventually to the top of the head and to the toes and fingers. Pain may occur in the internal organs, particularly the liver, under the right side of the rib cage. Headache is also common.
2. Vomiting, particularly bile or various types of mucus.
3. Digestive imbalances: gas, cramps, diarrhea, constipation.
4. General fatigue. Weakness, weight loss, sensations of cold and/or heat. Fever, chills, cough, minor hair loss.
5. Heavy and prolonged sleep; occasional wild dreams.
6. Possible discharges include boils, pimples, rashes, body odors, nasal and vaginal discharges, coating on the tongue. Mercury fillings may loosen and fall out.

#### Progressive Order of Healing

In true healing, symptoms of discharge follow a set progression. First outlined by Constantine Hering (1800-1880) and known as *Hering's Law of Cure*, such symptoms are used to this day in the field of homeopathy. In a true case of healing, symptoms unfold in the following patterns:

1. From the inside to the outside; internal heat or toxins can appear as rashes on the skin.
2. From the upper part of the body to the lower extremities. Medications that affect the liver or kidneys can appear as redness or rashes on the legs or ankles.

---

<sup>2</sup> Paul Pitchford, *Healing with Whole Foods*, 106-7.

<sup>3</sup> Pitchford, Annemarie Colbin, PhD, *Food and Healing*, 216-19.

3. For chronic conditions, symptoms may appear in reverse order: Known as “retracing,” someone who in early childhood contracted chicken pox and later bronchitis may experience a period of coughing associated with bronchitis, and later a skin rash resembling chicken pox.
4. Prior to a healing crisis, a person feels a sense of calm and centeredness.
5. At a deep level, a person in a healing mode, despite symptoms, feels good.

*If the summer season inspires you to make positive changes in your life, have patience, knowing that healing may bring a few ups and downs on the way to establishing a firmer foundation for better health.*

### **Kuzu, for the Kitchen, the Medicine Chest, and the Suitcase**

Kuzu, a strong and tenacious root, is highly-valued in Japan, where the powder from its root is used medicinally and in cooking to thicken soups, sauces, and desserts, much like corn starch or arrowroot. Kuzu is known as kudzu in the United States, where we view it with mixed sentiments: It thrives in the Southern States, where it is often viewed as a pesky, invasive, destructive menace, capable even of felling telephone poles! At the same time, kudzu helps fix the soil to prevent erosion, while it also works as a natural fertilizer. Wild kudzu requires no irrigation, fertilizers, herbicides, or care. Kudzu is one of the hardiest plants one could imagine. Cooking with kuzu powder allows us to capture some of the essence and strengthening powers of the kudzu root. Kuzu, similar to most roots generally, has a downward/inward energy and nourishes and strengthens the digestive system.

Kuzu powder (the form used in the recipes that follow) is processed from the root and available in most health food stores. It is used in cooking and beverages. While not widely available in the United States, kuzu in its natural root form is also used in the Far East to make healing teas.

Kuzu powder is highly alkalizing and is a wonderful antidote to overeating heavy, acid-forming foods. It is also a great digestive aid. Because the powder is derived from the tough kuzu root, it is strengthening, with a strong downward, inward energy, well-suited for the lower intestinal tract. Kuzu is used to treat colds, flu, fevers, diarrhea, stomach upset, and hangovers. By alkalizing the blood, kuzu is also used to clear the skin of rashes and minor acne. And, rich in flavonoids, kuzu can be effective in lowering blood pressure and blood sugar, treating chronic migraine headaches, and relieving acute pain and stiffness in the neck and shoulders. Kuzu’s ability to curb cravings for alcohol is validated by modern science, something that was known and used in Chinese medicine more than two thousand years ago.

Kuzu’s ability to relieve overeating, stomach upset, diarrhea, headache, and hangovers make it a perfect remedy to pack this summer if you have travel plans, or anytime in the future when you venture to foreign shores. It is also a handy mainstay in the kitchen, where it can be used in place of cornstarch as a thickening agent and to enhance the flavor of soups, sauces, and desserts. And, unlike cornstarch which thins as it cools, a sauce or dessert with kuzu will continue to thicken when taken from the stove.

## **Kuzu Recipes<sup>4</sup>**

### **Kuzu Cream**

*This restorative tonic is most effective when taken about 1 hour before meals, preferably in the morning on an empty stomach.*

1 ½ tablespoons crushed kuzu thoroughly dissolved in 1 cup cold water  
1 umeboshi plum, pitted and minced, or 1 teaspoon umeboshi paste  
½ teaspoon fresh ginger juice (grate ginger and squeeze to extract juice)  
1 teaspoon shoyu (optional)

1. In a small enamel pan, place dissolved kuzu mixture. Add the umeboshi and bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring frequently. As soon as the mixture begins to bubble around the edges, stir constantly until kuzu thickens and becomes translucent.
2. Gently simmer for 1 to 2 minutes longer and remove from the heat. Add the ginger juice and, if desired, shoyu to taste.

### **Fruit Sauce**

*This is a light fruit dessert that can be eaten as is or used as a topping for puddings, cakes, pies, tarts, waffles, or pancakes. It will keep in the refrigerator for several days.*

2 ½ cups sliced or whole fresh fruit (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, nectarines, pitted cherries)  
1 cup organic apple juice  
1/3-1/2 cup brown rice malt syrup (less for sweet fruits; more for tart ones)  
Pinch of sea salt  
2 tablespoons crushed kuzu starch

1. Cut larger fruits into bite-size pieces. Small berries can be left whole.
2. Combine the juice, rice syrup and salt in a saucepan. If cooking the fruit is recommended (see below), add it to the saucepan and bring to a simmer, uncovered, over medium heat. Remove from the heat.
3. Thoroughly dissolve the kuzu in 2 tablespoons of cool water and add to fruit mixture while stirring briskly. Place over medium-low heat and stir constantly until mixture returns to a simmer and thickens.
4. If using fruit that does not require cooking, place fruit in a ceramic or glass bowl and pour the hot liquid over it. Mix gently and cool in the refrigerator. If fruit is already mixed in, transfer contents of the pot to a bowl and cool. The sauce will thicken as it cools.

Note: Delicate fruits like strawberries and raspberries should not be cooked. Ripe nectarines do not need cooking, but firmer fruits like blueberries, cherries and apples should be simmered with the juice.

---

<sup>4</sup> From *Japanese Foods that Heal*.

### **Apple Kuzu Drink**

*A good tonic for constipation and fevers and can be used to help calm hyperactive children. [Try making this by the quart, multiplying quantities by 4. It keeps well.]*

1 cup organic apple juice  
Pinch of salt (optional)  
1 generous teaspoon crushed kuzu starch  
1 to 2 tablespoons of water for dissolving kuzu

1. Heat the apple juice and salt in a small saucepan over medium heat just until bubbles begin to appear around the edges. Remove from the heat.
2. Thoroughly dissolve the kuzu in water, add it to the juice while stirring, then return the saucepan to the burner. Stir constantly until kuzu thickens and becomes translucent. Simmer 1 minute more, then remove from the heat.
3. Let cool before serving.

### **Reading Resources:**

John and Jan Belleme, *Japanese Foods that Heal*

Annemarie Colbin, PhD, *Food and Healing*

Mary Enig, *Know Your Fats*

Udo Erasmus, *Fats that Heal, Fats that Kill*

Paul Pitchford, *Healing with Whole Foods*

William Shurtleff & Akiko Aoyagi, *The Book of Kudzu*

Rebecca Wood, *The New Whole Foods Encyclopedia*