



July/August 2013: Summer Shorts...Healing Reactions; Canola; Kuzu

"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.¹

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.

¹ For an excellent piece on sleep, see, well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/17/cheating-ourselves-of-sleep/?hpb

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).²

Types of Healing Reactions:³

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.

² Paul Pitchford, *Healing with Whole Foods*, 106-7.

³ 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.

Strikes against Canola Oil

“Bad fats and oils will destroy your health faster than sugar. They cause more problems than any other class of food.”...Paul Pitchford

I have a running debate with a very dear friend who is a professional whole foods chef and uses canola oil for cooking and baking. To my mind, canola has no place in the kitchen. Yet, it is touted both to be “healthy” by the food industry because it is rich in omega-3 fatty acids *and* to be a good option in the kitchen because it imparts no specific taste to foods. Canola’s parallels with soy are striking: both are derived from plants that were never part of traditional diets; both are genetically modified to endure pesticides and herbicides and either genetically manipulated or processed to eradicate toxic elements; and, both are marketed as “healthy” choices for good nutrition.

As a more encompassing comment, I believe *all* refined vegetable oils (corn, safflower, soy, canola, etc.) should be avoided. These are inflammatory oils that were adopted by the food industry in recent decades to displace traditional natural fats and oils because they are cheap and have a long shelf life:

To make “clear, sparkling” vegetable oils, seed oils are first degummed and stripped of vital nutrients, such as lecithin, chlorophyll, vitamin E, beta carotene, calcium, magnesium, iron, copper, and phosphorus. Then they are bleached with chemicals such as benzene and hexane and deodorized at high temperatures approaching 500 degrees. There is nothing left to taste or to go rancid, so you never know if the oil is bad. Attracted by their low cost and long shelf life, the processed food and restaurant industry liberally use these refined clear oils. But, because they are stripped of their natural antioxidant protections, they are vulnerable to free-radical damage. And, missing other nutrients, these inflammatory oils are linked to cancer because their denatured state makes it hard for the body to break them down.⁴ In addition to fueling inflammation, refined vegetable oils also upset metabolism and encourage weight gain.⁵

⁴ Paul Pitchford, p. 181.

⁵ The body readily burns short and medium-chain fatty acids like butter and unrefined coconut oil; long-chain omega-6 vegetable oils remain in the blood stream longer, often to be stored as fat. Farmers in the 1940s tried unsuccessfully to fatten cattle with coconut oil, finding success only when switching to vegetable oils.

Canola. Of all the refined vegetable oils, canola is a particularly poor choice because it is derived from genetically-engineered varieties of inedible, toxic rapeseed; it has no historic track record; it is particularly fragile, vulnerable to heat, and unsuitable for the kitchen due to its high omega-3 fatty acid content; and, it is linked to insulin resistance, high blood pressure and chronic disease.

Rapeseed, the parent of canola, may seem like an unlikely choice for making a vegetable oil due to both its high concentration of glucosinolates (bitter-tasting natural toxins that interfere with proper metabolism) *and* to its problematic levels of erucic acid (erucic acid is linked to heart problems and cardiac-related disease). So why use rapeseed? Scientists and the food industry were drawn to rapeseed by its ability to grow in colder climates and to easily bend to genetic engineering: Using selection mutation breeding and DNA technology, botanists in the early 1970s were able to reduce the glucosinolates in rapeseed and transform most of its erucic acid into oleic acid (omega-9 fatty acids). The result was a plant that rendered low-erucic acid oil (initially named LEAR oil) that could grow in colder climates. The first genetically modified varieties were quickly adopted by Canadian growers, who renamed the oil “canola,” short for “Canada low-acid oil.” Through the miracles of genetic engineering and the strong marketing muscle of Big Food, canola has come from nowhere in just 10 years to now account for eight percent of U.S. edible oil sales.

Because rapeseed is highly adaptable to genetic manipulation, more varieties are being developed each year. For example, transgenic genes have been inserted into rapeseed-derivatives to produce Roundup Ready, Liberty Link, and Clearfield varieties. For a sense of the manipulation and marketing of canola by the food industry, see for example <http://www.canolainfo.org/canola/index.php?page=7>

Advantages of canola? The food industry likes to market canola as a particularly healthy choice for cooking because of all the vegetable oils it is the lowest in saturated fat (7%) and richest in omega-3s (9%). But, to my mind, these are good reasons to *avoid* canola—canola is highly unsaturated, but cooking oil needs to be saturated to stand up to heat; *and*, canola’s high omega-3s profile means it has multiple double-bond “hot spots” along its long carbon chain, so it is very fragile.⁶ Canola oil is similar to flax oil, which is also rich in omegs-3 fatty acids. No one recommends cooking with flax oil; why should it be any different for canola?

Also, despite its fragile status, canola, like other vegetable oils, is mechanically extracted using toxic chemicals like hexane and then bleached, deodorized and heated to high temperatures. So processing alone can damage its omega-3s fatty acids to create trans fats—even *before* it is used in the kitchen for cooking or baking, or by the processed food industry, or by restaurants and fast food establishments.

⁶ Omega-3 fatty acids have double bonds beginning very early in the carbon chain, at the 3rd position from the omega end, continuing to the 6th and 9th position, etc.; in contrast, olive oil, an omega-9 oil, is saturated with hydrogen atoms up to its 9th carbon link, and therefore more stable.

Finally, there is no point in consuming canola for its beneficial alpha-linolenic acid⁷ because once heated, its alpha-linolenic acid and its original omega-3 value are lost.⁸

Conclusion. Canola, like flax oil, is delicate, a highly fragile oil that is rich in omega-3s, so it should not be used in cooking or baking. Olive oil is more stable than canola oil, yet it too should be used with caution, preferably not in cooking. Since canola is used widely by the processed food and fast food industries, it is best to read labels, ask questions in restaurants, and cook at home whenever possible.

What oils should we rely on? The traditional fats and oils that have supported good health through the generations:

- Butter from grass-fed cows and ghee. Butter from pastured animals has an ideal 1:1 ratio of omega-3s to omega-6 fatty acids. And, both butter and ghee are short-chain (4 carbon) fatty acids that are highly saturated and therefore stable for cooking;
- Unrefined coconut oil, which is: high in anti-bacterial/microbial lauric acid; 92% saturated for stability in cooking and baking; and contains no cholesterol (since coconut trees have no liver);
- Extra virgin olive oil, the first cold pressing, to be used at the table;
- For baking, sourdough can be used to replace vegetable oil because it provides texture and a moist crumb.

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

Kuzu is known as kudzu in the United States, where as a strong, tenacious root, it is regarded as a pesky, invasive, destructive menace. Yet, for centuries kuzu has been treasured in the Far East for its medicinal and healing properties. 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

⁷ Alpha-linolenic acid is normally converted to EPA and DHA, omega-3 fatty acids that are vital to good health.

⁸ G.S. Patten and M.Y. Abeywardena, "Fish oil feeding increases gut contractility in spontaneous hypertensive rat (SHR) model." *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2003; 12: S64.

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 Recipes⁹

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.

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.

⁹ From *Japanese Foods that Heal*.

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.

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*