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**5 Elements in Traditional Chinese Medicine: Fire (heart/small intestine, Summer), Earth (spleen/stomach, Harvest), Metal (lung/large intestine, Autumn), Water (kidney/bladder, Winter), Wood (liver/gallbladder, Spring)**

**Winter season** is the Water element. **Winter Qi** rules the Kidneys/Bladder organs and traverses deep to the bones. **Out of balance emotion** can be fear and insecurity based, **balanced energy** brings strong will power to Kidney Qi. The ears reflect Kidney qi health and the aging process, deep blue/purple/black is the Winter Kidney **color** (dark circles under eyes can indicate adrenal fatigue, eating dark colored vegetables/legume strengthen Kidneys), **Kidney Yin/Yang** represents our past (prenatal- yin) and our future (postnatal- yang) immunity/health. **Winter sound** is groaning! We know this one if we feel more stiff from the winter cold and damp. The Winter Water element is Yin time: rest, sleep, moving inward. The Kidney energy manages our water metabolism (all secretions), endocrine system (hormones), aging process, filters our blood volume hourly, controls the bladder and genitalia, supports all other internal organs, nourishes our bone marrow, stores our essence (prenatal jing), supports low back and knees, and strengthens libido and adrenals.

**Winter Season and Solstice:** More sunlight is coming!

Best time to conserve energy, boost nutrition and stay warm, meditate, and refine your listening skills in your spiritual depth.

- Go to bed earlier; rise later to boost energy for Spring (nature's rebirth)
- Stay active enough to preserve flexibility in the body/mind/heart
- Out of balance Water can be aggravated in Winter: depression, lack of motivation, arthritis, low energy, urinary dysfunction, feeling lackluster, "feeling cold to the bone"

**Kidney/Bladder meridian pathway of Qi in Acupuncture:**

**Kidney channel:** starts at bottom foot-inside ankle, lower leg, thigh, through genitalia/kidneys/bladder, up through abdomen, through chest, opens to ears  
**Bladder channel:** starts at inner eye, up over head, down back of spine, through kidneys/bladder, down backside of legs, terminates at pinky toe

By cultivating peace and inner/outer flexibility, your body/mind/heart will begin to familiarize itself to give a better quality of life each day. You will also develop greater resilience by being able to come back to these states of peace, by doing the practices (breathing exercise, meditation, acupressure, acupuncture, Qigong, Tai Qi, Yin Yoga) whenever you need them. These practices will eventually become second nature to you and will help you to create an inner framework of vitality and peace, opening doors to new ways of being in the world.

**Acupressure points: rub each point gently for 30 seconds**

Bottom of feet at ball of foot (grounding and calming and is Kidney 1)

Yin Tang between eyebrows  
Inner eyes (Bladder 1)  
Temples (Taiyang)  
Next to nostrils (Large Intestine 20)  
Use your fingers (peace sign) and rub your ears up/down and generate heat  
Then stop and feel  
Rub hands together, generate heat (Qi) and feel  
Scan above skin or touch outside ankles, up calf (outside shin bone), up thighs  
Hold hands on Kidneys (low back)  
Wash face, comb hair (usually not touching skin/head)  
Then feel body and take the time. When else would you? Be in the present moment...

### **Dietary/Lifestyle:**

In the Winter, eat fewer cold, raw, foods—such as salads, raw veggies: switch to warm hearty soups, whole grains, roasted nuts, dried foods, dark beans, seaweeds, wintergreens, and partake in warm, cooked, sautéed, steamed, roasted, baked whole foods. Salty and bitter flavors balance our Kidneys in the Winter cold season.

*Remember that moderation is important! Proper diagnosis can target imbalances and tailor your body to balancing food and herbs—energetic nutrition for body-mind.*

**Avoid:** cooling foods and raw fruits, raw foods, excessive salt  
Eat in season, organic!

### **Factors which Deplete Jing (Kidney Qi, Yin, Yang, Essence)**

1. Stress, fear, insecurity, overwork
2. Toxins: alcohol, drugs, coffee, tobacco, heavy metals
3. Excessive sweet-flavored foods
4. Too much dietary protein
5. Too many childbirths without rebuilding energy after each one

### **Herbs**

Since Winter is the time to replenish our energy, adrenals, Qi, I like to partake in kidney yang-qi tonics. These herbs have an adaptagenic effect, meaning that they strengthen our kidney immunity and boost adrenals. These herbs are the ginsengs, cordyceps, astragalus, rhodiola, ashwagandha, to name a few. Usually by blending a few of these herbs with herbs that are slightly warming (like cinnamon bark), plus a sprinkle of invigorating/strengthening blood herbs, a beautiful synergistic formula is created! Herbs are so wonderful; they are specific for you and what you need.

*Here are warm and nourishing foods and herbs to add to your Winter diet:*

Bitter goes to the Heart (The Fire Element to balance the Water element)

Lettuce, watercress, endive, turnip, alfalfa, carrot top, rye, oats, quinoa, amaranth, citrus peel, chicory root, burdock root, horsetail, chaparral

Salty goes to the Kidneys (in moderation)

Miso, seaweeds, sea salt, millet, barley, Braggs

Warming Yang-Qi

Cloves, fenugreek seeds, fennel seeds, anise seeds, black peppercorn, ginger, cinnamon bark, walnuts, black beans, onion family, quinoa, chicken, lamb, trout, salmon

*Jing Tonics*

Micro-Algae, wheat grass, almonds, milk, ghee, nettles, royal jelly, bee pollen, chicken, mussels, fish, liver, kidneys, marrow from bone (RNA/DNA, rich in B12, Vit.A) Omega-3s (good quality cold water fish oil)

Wheat, black sesame seeds, black soybeans, chestnuts, raspberries, strawberries, walnuts, black or dark colors in food go to kidneys, black beans, kidney beans, adzuki beans, winter squash, potato with skins, parsley, sweet rice, rose hips, schisandra fruit, goji berries

Thank you for nourishing yourself!  
HAPPY WINTER SOLSTICE!  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!  
I appreciate each one of you! Thank you!

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Branches of Wellness Acupuncture