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Weight Management for the New Year

The new year is upon us, and people are making (and trying to keep!) their resolutions. In December, many of my clients pledged to lose some weight, and get back on track with their health - but not until after the gluttony of the holidays!

Well, the time is now! How to keep those resolutions to eat better (and less!), exercise more and get back to an optimal weight? Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can help! While I don't have a special acupuncture point to make you skinny, as some of my clients have requested (!), I have found TCM extremely effective not only for weight management, but for overall health and well-being. Through a series of questions, and a pulse and tongue diagnosis, I will assess which body systems are out of balance or weak. Acupuncture, which involves placing extremely fine, sterile needles in specific acu-points, helps to move the body's *Qi* (bioenergy), and address any imbalances. Often in combination with Chinese herbs, acupuncture helps with weight management on many levels:

TCM helps to strengthen and balance the digestive system:

In TCM, the Spleen/Pancreas and Stomach are the organs responsible for digestion. When these energetic systems are weak or imbalanced, our digestion will be compromised, and there may be bloating, gas, reflux, heartburn, loose stools, or constipation. Acupuncture and herbs help to balance the digestion and metabolism, so we can extract the maximum nutrition from our food. As well, stronger digestion minimizes by-products of incomplete digestion that clog up the system. This leaves the body and mind feeling lighter and more energetic, which tends to spin off into wanting to exercise more, and to make healthier food and lifestyle choices.

Acupuncture excels at treating addictions:

If there is an addictive quality to a client's relationship with food, (ie emotional eating or binging) I will often add ear acupuncture to the treatment. Ear acupuncture is very effective in treating any addiction, be it to cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, or food. It consists of placing five small needles in each ear. This combination is very calming, and brings us back to centre. As well, it increases will-power, decreases cravings and withdrawal symptoms, and balances the emotions.

TCM helps to balance the emotions:

In TCM, each organ system has specific emotional correspondences. For example, the Spleen/Stomach is not only responsible for digestion, but is also associated with a feeling of groundedness and safety, and nurturing of ourselves and others. When these systems are out of balance, we often see anxiety, worry, and obsessive thinking. This is often a root cause of overeating. Food (and especially the sweet taste, which is associated with the Spleen/Stomach) has a temporary soothing effect, stuffing down anxiety and making us feel nurtured. Of course, the longer-term effects are often weight gain, brain fog, and fatigue.

When we rebalance the system through acupuncture and herbs, we feel better overall, anxiety tends to decrease, and overeating often falls away on its own. As one delighted client reported, "My anxiety has decreased so much since doing acupuncture treatments. The other day, I was looking at my customary chocolate bar, and I just didn't want it! I went for a walk instead!"

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