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WINTER KIDNEY AND BLADDER

When following nature the winter officially starts on December 21st this is known as the Winter Solstice.

This is the time of the year when the days are the shortest. We have the least daylight. This is also when nature is silent and still so we should be following this and bringing our energies inward. This is the time of year that we should be rejuvenating the body and the mind and to do this we need rest and warmth.

The kidney region should be kept warm, a kidney warmer is a great idea. The body naturally likes to put on weight around the kidneys at this time of year, a kidney warmer will keep them warm without the weight gain. The adrenal glands sit on top of the kidneys, so relaxation and lying in will help the overworked and stressed adrenal glands.

The bladder is also at its height at this time of the year, so you may find you are more prone to infection or that you run to the toilet more regularly. Drinking plenty of filtered water at room temperature or above will keep the bladder flushed. Avoid fizzy and caffeinated drinks. Also avoiding decaffeinated drinks unless they have been water based decaffeinated.

This is the time of year for warming foods, lots of soups and stews made with lots of vegetables in season and vegetable protein like beans and pulses. These are gentler on the system and much more easily digested and therefore more restful for the body. Keeping animal protein of any kind to a minimum at this time of year will really help in the support of the kidneys.

The cooking and food choices of the winter are all about warming the body and strengthening the water element. If you live on a diet all year round that is better suited to warmer climates, you could suffer damage to the kidneys, adrenal glands and the sexual organs. Low libido is a major factor in western countries that eat foods out of season.

We should look at exercise that helps to generate heat and energy in the kidneys such as certain pilates and yoga postures, these can be extremely

beneficial. Exercising excessively can deplete kidney energy as can working long hours so this should be avoided if possible.

Nurturing the water element is the best way to ensure a long life.

A great drink for strengthening the kidneys, bladder or adrenals is Adzuki Bean Tea.

1 cup of dried Adzuki beans
5cm strip of Kombu seaweed
4 cups of water

Place adzuki beans in a pot with the kombu and soak for 4 hours or overnight.

Once soaked chop the kombu into small pieces and add 4 cups of fresh water and bring to the boil. Lower the flame and then cover and simmer for 20-30 minutes.

Strain the beans and drink the liquid while hot. You may continue to cook the beans for a couple of hours with additional water until soft and edible. Use them to make chilli or as a substitute for meat in a casserole.