



Elson M. Haas, MD

# 10 Tips on Staying Healthy with Autumn

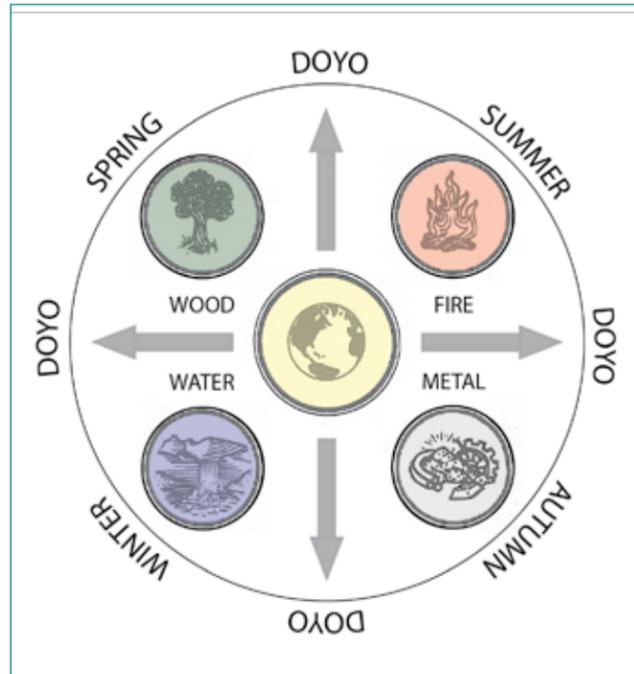
WRITING ABOUT THE SEASONS AND THEIR AFFECTS ON OUR personal health has been part of my medical message for most all of my 40 years of practice. Connecting to Nature and our own true nature is a key to good health, learning and evolving as we become more self aware and also sensitive to all life on this planet, and our future. Eating from the Earth's bounty with simple foods from our gardens, farms and farmer's markets, and our local stores is principle number one of nutrition. A quote from my book suggests, "Every step away from the garden and orchards is a loss of vitality and nutrition."

I am so happy to see that my first book, *Staying Healthy with the Seasons*, initially published in 1981, has been influencing the public's health education with this simplest of natural messages. Hippocrates purported to "*Pay attention to the seasons of the year and what affects they have on our health.*" Ideally, we pay attention to the times of seasonal change and look ahead to adapt to this ongoing cycle that has been around since the beginnings of life as we know it.

We have been enjoying the most playful of Seasons this Summer, except for these huge damaging hurricanes and rains in the south. The waters and the fires of this season are clearly out of balance. Is this a unique and isolated problem or one of the many signs of a changing planet in a bit of trouble? Please give it some thought and see if your behaviors can shift to support your best health and then extend that to your family and friends and the entire planet.

My *Seasons* book and writings involve multiple aspects of our health—as with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual—along with many disciplines of health, such as Natural and Eastern medicines, foods, herbs, and lifestyle care combined into a Western medicine framework and mindset. I call this NEW Medicine. My 10 tips for Autumn follow and include ideas in many of these areas. →

**1. As with the gardens, open up to the harvest of your year from the seeds you have planted for your life, and be willing to work hard and discipline yourself as you head into a new season.** If you are a student (we are all students of life), get back to your studies. Yes, it is time to shift from the fun and laziness of summer. Nature is so giving, and it helps to be receptive to her and what the Earth has to offer. What do we have to give to life for all the energy, love, and beauty I hope we all receive?



**Attuning To Each Part Of The Year And Making appropriate lifestyle changes is key, but the ancient Chinese system also focuses on the time between the seasons—known as the Doyo.** This is the period 10 days before and 10 days after each solstice and equinox, when we begin to adapt and make the appropriate changes to step forward into the new season, often with subtle shifts in our diet, exercise program, sleep, and work. Do-Yo literally means “All Have” and these 20-day periods contain a little of each element.

**2. Relationships are important to all of us. This is a good time to deepen and clarify our love and family connections.** This helps us discover more about our own needs and those close to us, as well as learn to listen to them (both the needs and the people). Also, learn to be alone and listen to your inner guidance and truth. Some folks focus relationships on their computers and TV, car or other electronic devices. Can you still your mind chatter, and let your body breathe deeply to your soul? Give it a try and your spirit will be calmed and can also fly free of the burdens of time.

**3. Open to the creative Spirit. We can receive new ideas and actions necessary to fulfill our purpose and move us forward in our life.** This can help to improve motivation with new energy and excitement for life. This could be writing about past experiences or our future goals, working on a book or personal story, reading a self-help book and applying it to improve our life, or taking up a new exercise. In other words, start a program now that you can develop and work on into the colder, darker months.

**4. The foundation and fortification with our Foods and Diet is an important focus now.** Again, this is Harvest time and there are a great many foods—apples and walnuts, sunflower seeds, zucchini and other squash, cabbages, peppers and tomatoes, plus many grains and beans. Learn some new recipes and enjoy good foods. Most of us need more protein and heat generating foods in the colder months, even the energizing spicy peppers such as cayenne and chilies. This will keep our blood and energy moving.

**5. Exercise activity is crucial now as in any season. As the weather cools, stretching is even more important, as is having indoor exercises we can do.** Yoga and other flexibility-enhancing movements are helpful at keeping us youthful. Remember, we feel as young as our spine is flexible. Our weight work and aerobic activities are vital to staying fit and toned, and strong to support our immune function and circulation. A vital body rarely gets sick.

**6. Nutritional supplements are often useful this time of year.** Many of my patients add some nutrients that support immune function so as not to pick up whatever is going around. Taking some Echinacea now is helpful as is the Chinese herb, astragalus. Some people prefer the use of mushrooms for immune support, as with maitake and reshitake. Maintaining daily vitamins C and E along with selenium and zinc is also

immune protective and helps clear our body of certain toxins. Roots are helpful at tonifying our body at this time. Ginseng is quite good for building strength and endurance. Burdock root is good for the skin and lungs, an area of focus for this season. See the Autumn section of *Staying Healthy with the Seasons* book for further information.

**7. Detoxification is a good idea for early autumn. I am doing a whole month myself and creating a 3-week program in September can provide a great benefit.** Can you take a break from some of your routine habits, like caffeine, alcohol, sugar, or cannabis? Doing an effective Detox Diet or avoiding sugar, wheat and dairy for a couple weeks (as I write about in *The False Fat Diet* book) is often quite revealing and helps us to feel better, lighter and more youthful with greater energy. Since it is getting cooler this season, we will need to exercise and sauna or steam as a means to sweat to clear toxins. Regular sweating is important to health and longevity.

**8. Prepare for the cold season. Gather your fuel and food, breathe, and exercise, as you should.** In Chinese medicine, the fall season focuses on the lungs and large intestine. Overdoing it can lead to congestion and toxicity, as well as constipation and the clogging of the nose and sinuses. This leads then to upper respiratory infections as the germs grow in the mucus and then inflame the membranes. Staying clean and clear this season along with a healthy immune system will help keep you well. Try a facial steam and breathe in the herbal mist (you can use mints, rosemary, chamomile, lemon verbena, and other herbs) to help clear the sinuses.

**9. Should you get any colds or flus, it is best to jump on those immediately.** I start with hourly vitamin C of 500–1,000 mg, increased doses of vitamin A (not beta-carotene) 25,000–30,000 IUs three times daily for just 3–4 days and then lower that dosage to 10–20,000 IUs twice daily for about a week (then take a break since excess vitamin A can be toxic if taken too long). I also use fresh garlic as several cloves at a time dipped in honey and chew them; I may repeat this several times the first day. That is a spicy and aromatic natural antibiotic and immune defender; you can alternately use the odorless garlic caps, several three times daily if you do not want to smell, but they are not quite as effective. You can alternatively press several cloves of garlic into your bowl of soup before you eat, instead of eating the garlic straight. Echinacea and goldenseal alcohol extract can also be used to support immunity and cleanse and disinfect the membranes. Some help may be achieved with olive leaf extract as a mild anti-viral herb. Of course, drink lots of water, herbal teas, and hot soup.

**10. Take a rest now because the demanding holiday season is just around the corner.** Do not burn your batteries out before November. Kindle your inner flame and firepower, which is protective from the invasion of harsh climates and germs. The winter blues comes partly from a loss of this fire energy. Shifting and balancing with the Seasons is vital to Staying Healthy. ■



**Elson Haas, MD** is a practicing integrative family physician since 1973 and is founder/director of the Preventive Medical Center of Marin ([pmcmarin.com](http://pmcmarin.com)) in San Rafael, CA. Dr. Haas is the author of 11 books on health, nutrition, and detoxification, including *Staying Healthy with Nutrition*, *The Detox Diet*, *The False Fat Diet*, and the classic, *Staying Healthy with the Seasons*. His most recent books are *Ultimate Immunity* (Rodale 2015) and the just self published *Staying Healthy with NEW Medicine: Integrating Natural, Eastern, and Western Approaches for Optimal Health*. Learn more at [ElsonHaasMD.com](http://ElsonHaasMD.com). Dr. Haas, as Dr. Sun, creates entertaining educational products for children and families, including The Anatomix Comix™ with CD of songs and also available as Apps at [www.seasonsstudios.com](http://www.seasonsstudios.com).