

Chinese Herbs

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Many Chinese herbal formulas in use today have been used and refined since the earliest periods of Chinese history. For centuries, the Chinese have espoused a holistic approach to health. Chinese herbalists teach that lifestyle factors such as physical condition, stress levels, behavior patterns, environment and emotions can contribute to poor body balance and should be taken into consideration when choosing an herbal formula.

Understanding Chinese Constitutional Herbology

In Chinese herbology, the term “constitution” refers to a person’s basic nature. It takes into account lifelong tendencies, preferences and tastes. The Chinese utilize a system of five elements: **earth, metal, water, wood and fire**. They see similarities between these substances in nature and qualities in human beings. Hence, they might say that a person with fire-like behavior and fire-like health qualities has an excess of the fire element. This doesn’t really mean that the person has too much fire. It is simply a way of describing an observation. The statement “my love’s eyes are like the ocean, deep and clear,” doesn’t mean the lady has eyes made out of seawater. It, too, is simply a comparison. We must keep this point in mind when we study Chinese herbology or we will become terribly confused. We shouldn’t try to pin Chinese terms down to Western mechanical thinking.

We can’t pin down the observations of the Chinese herbalist to specific organs or behaviors. They are general patterns, which we gain a “feel” for with practice and experience. You will find Chinese herbology easier to understand if you approach it as a poet rather than as a scientist.

Also, keep in mind two terms: **Yang & Yin**

- **Yang** = Hot, Dry, Exterior, Acute, Excess - too much energy will fry your circuit, burn out your glands/body, seen often in U.S. because we tend to go overboard on everything-eat too much, work hard, excess stress. Therapy reduces excesses, often cleanses.
- **Yin** = Cold, Damp, Interior, Chronic, Deficient - too little energy and it does not function, lack of energy can be due to congestion or lack of nutrition. Cleansing may help, but often need to strengthen or build first.

There are **14 basic TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) therapies** which you can use to restore balance to the energies of the body. For each energy imbalance there is a formula that increases the energy and a formula that decreases or regulates that same energy. Two deal with **yin & yang**, two deal with **qi**, and ten involve the five elements— **fire, earth, metal, water, and wood**. In each of these areas you will be provided with a list of indications and the particular TCM therapy needed to balance.

YANG: Excess yang manifests an excess heat and dryness, often seen in acute illness as the body works to fight it. Symptoms involve fever, inflammation, earaches, sore throats, canker sores, rashes or bright red tongue. Note, this can be seen in some deep-seated chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and glaucoma.

Therapies: **IF-C** is the first choice, but one may also need **VS-C** or **Cordyceps**.

YIN: When young and have lots of energy we are prone to excess yang, but as we age, we become increasingly prone to deficient yin. Yin is the body’s reserve energy. Lack of yin is manifested by dryness (skin, eyes, mouth, etc.) and a kind of agitated fatigue. Since yin energy is cool, most energy, when deficient you get hot-like symptoms without actual excess heat in the body. This can show up as hot flashes, burning sensation in the soles of feet/hands, or as night sweats.

Primary therapy is to build yin with a formula such as **HY-C** or **Nervous Fatigue Formula**.

Important: This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended for diagnosing or treating diseases. If you have a serious illness, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before beginning a course of treatment.



Building Better Health Naturally

QI is the basic energy that gives your body life and health. Since qi is the basic energy of life, one doesn't really have an excess of this energy, but one can have **stuck, constricted or sagging qi** that needs to be regulated.

People will sense a heavy sensation in their head, center of chest or sometimes have thoughts of depression. Other characteristics: chest pain, anxiety, worry, restless sleep, frequent colds, bronchitis, backaches, PMS, constipation and allergies. Sagging energy causes internal organs to sag, too. This can cause prolapse of organs like the colon and uterus. In Chinese medicine, all pain is caused by obstruction of qi.

Therapy: **Mood Elevator, Tiao He, and Chinese Stress Relief**

Deficient Qi: when a person's health has been severely run-down and their energy reserves are exhausted. The person is low in energy, has chronic fatigue, gets cold or sick easily, has hair loss, asthma, general aches, is chronically ill and has pains due to lack of qi flowing.

Therapies: **Trigger Immune, Mineral Chi Tonic, VS-C (Anti-viral), Lung Support, & Korean &/or Amer. Ginseng**

EARTH

The earth is the grounding element. It holds things down and keeps them in place. Being stable, basic, deep-rooted, centered and fertile are all characteristics associated with the earth element within us. The emotions of sympathy and compassion are also associated with the earth. They are the "mothering" emotions. The stomach is the home of nourishment, and the spleen is said to regulate the center. The spleen is thought of, by the Chinese, as the organ that imparts life to other organs. We know from physiology that the spleen is involved in building the blood, which nourishes all tissues, and the immune response, which protects all tissues.

A person who is **too earthy** or motherly might have a tendency to worry a lot about others. In the West we are all aware of the effect of sympathy on the stomach. We commonly warn people not to worry too much or they'll get an ulcer. Symptoms are acute indigestion, foul breath, bloating, loose stools, and sugar cravings. Therapy to sedate earth energy is done by removing retained food and fluid and restoring digestive and metabolic function with the combination, **Chinese Anti-Gas**. You may also desire to add a gentle colon cleansing, probiotics, & enzymes.

A person with a **deficiency of earth** element would be nervous, flighty, unstable, and imbalanced in the emotion of compassion and have no feelings of nurturing others. Another sign of deficiency would be the inability to digest or process things, including information. Physiologically, they show inability to gain muscle mass, pale, sensation of lump in throat, overactive thyroid gland, and poor digestion.

Therapy: **Spleen Activator** is primary, but **Trigger Immune** also tones earth energy.

WOOD

Wood is flexible and bending. For example, a tree not only yields to the wind, but it is also strong and durable. It is not static, but changes with the seasons. Certain characteristics of a healthy human being can be compared with wood. For instance, as a healthy tree has a well-developed root system, so should a healthy person be well-grounded in his personality. A healthy person should be strong, but flexible. When faced with the need to compromise, a healthy person should be able to bend, but not break. The Chinese associate decision-making and the abilities of planning and judgment with the liver. The emotions of anger and resentment are said to affect the liver and gallbladder. Even in Western culture we associate anger with the liver and gallbladder when we say, "This really galls me."

For example, a person with **excessive wood** might feel continually irritable and always on edge. Issues: Liver, Menstrual irregularities, nighthawk, morning grogginess.

Reduce excess wood with **Tiao He** or **Mood Elevator**.

A person who is **deficient in wood**, on the other hand, might have the inability to express anger or feelings of frustration and inner conflict. The fight in them is gone, leaning toward despair, tiredness, or despondence; interrupted with sudden bouts of frustration. These people tend to get classified as hypochondriacs, for the doctor can't find anything wrong with them. Even in Western culture we associate anger with the liver and gallbladder when we say, "This really galls me." For example, a person with **excessive wood** might feel continually irritable and always on edge. Issues: Liver, Menstrual irregularities, nighthawk, morning grogginess.

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FIRE

We associate fire with warmth and light. Fire is very active, dynamic, colorful, lively, energetic and contains the spark of vitality. In the West, we speak of a person as being "all fired up" or "on fire." The circulatory system & the heating system of the body are associated with the fire element. The Chinese see the heart as the home of insight and understanding. Courage is also associated with the heart. Similarly, in the West we might describe someone as "faint-hearted" or "lion-hearted." The Chinese have the philosophy that the body heat (life energy) is created by three "burners" (centers) in the main trunk of the body. They call this the "triple warmer" and associate it with the fire element as well.

When fire is too abundant, there is dryness, heat and excessive energy in the top half of the body, since fire tends to rise. **Too much fire** could result in excessive imagination. The thirst for permanent joy is insatiable, and when one places too much emphasis upon the pursuit of joy and happiness, excessive stress is put on the body. Stress has an adverse effect on the heart as evidenced by the fact that stress is one of the risk factors in heart health. Excess fire will make one prone to a variety of problems— digestive, cardiovascular, nervous and glandular systems. Problems include dizziness, insomnia, heart palpitations, muscle tension, high blood pressure, and nervous disorders.

Therapy to reduce fire is **Chinese Stress Relief**.

Too little fire might result in not being able to finish what is started or to see things through, and can result from prolonged periods of stress. A key indication of deficient fire is that they feel tired all day, but have restless sleep at night, are forgetful, easily upset, have heart palpitations, sense of pressure in chest, frequent urination, excess perspiration, constipation, and adrenal exhaustion.

Therapy: **Nervous Fatigue Formula**, **Mineral Chi** tonic may also be helpful.

WATER

Water is fluid and changing and takes whatever shape given it. Its form is determined by its container. The nature of water is to be serene and submissive, but in excess it can be as violent and inundating as a flood. The energy of water is also expressed in the flow of blood and lymph, and their ability to be fluid and flexible. The emotion associated with water is fear, and excessive fear is thought to damage the kidneys. We have a similar idea of the relationship between the urinary organs and fear in the Western expression, "He was so scared that he wet his pants." The adrenals, situated on top of the kidneys, are the glands that respond most violently to fear. Fear can be seen as a holding in or an inability to "go with the flow."

A **lack of the water** element would lead to a lack of fluidity (brittleness) or the inability to change or compromise. Also, being timid (spineless). Water flows down, so water problems would show up in the lower half of the body— such as weakness in knees & ankles. Symptoms include pain, misalignment, impotence, diabetes, incontinence, gray hair, and arthritis.

Therapy: **KB-C** enhances moisture in tissues & supports basic life energy.

With **too much of the element of water**, one might become too fluid and unable to stand up for oneself and would become "weak-kneed." Symptoms include poor lymphatic drainage, fluid/mineral imbalances, puffiness, swollen abdomen, damp cough, PMS, uncertain, fearful, and timid.

Therapy: **Chinese Kidney Activator**, **Breathe EZ**, and **Chinese Anti Gas** all have water reducing properties.

A popular Chinese saying states: "**Different diseases, one treatment; one disease, different treatments.**" What this means is that a Chinese physician will treat all the diseases a person has as if they were one disease. He is treating the overall picture of how a person is out of balance. It also means that five patients complaining of the same disease may get five different treatments, because each person has a unique constitution and the overall energetic pattern in their body is different.

For more information:

Book: **Secrets of Chinese Herbs** by Steven Horne and K.P.Khalsa

