



ACADEMY OF  
DHARMA  
WELLNESS  
ARTS

# Foundations of Chinese Medicine

mini-coaching program





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## *Welcome*

Dear reader,

Thank you for choosing this guide. For our team, this is a special project. We sincerely aim to help you gain a deeper understanding of your health, learn to manage it in everyday life, and find a sustainable path toward balance and well-being.

This material is dedicated to the foundations of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM): its core principles, its perspective on health, and the roles of nutrition, daily rhythm, emotional balance, and internal energy. Here you will find not only theory but also practical tools to help you observe yourself, analyze your body's responses, adjust habits, and notice real changes.

We understand that many people today face overload, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and emotional fluctuations. There is too much information—and often contradictory—while universal advice rarely suits everyone. That is why our goal is not to offer ready-made solutions, but to create space for conscious self-understanding, support in setting priorities, and building a personalized health strategy.

In this guide, you'll find:

- explanations of how the body functions and how its systems are interconnected;
- descriptions of key TCM principles—Yin–Yang balance, Qi circulation, and the role of the organs;
- practical recommendations that can be implemented without special training.

We created this product so you can gradually and without pressure integrate beneficial changes and observe the results. There is no single template here—only an approach that allows you to consider your own individuality and feel supported throughout your journey.

If you ever need help or guidance, feel free to reach out. We are here to support you on the path toward a healthier, more balanced life.

**With warmest wishes,  
Alexander Dvoryanchikov and the  
Dharma Wellness Arts team**





掌握

# About the Author

## *Master*

Welcome!

My name is Aleksandr Dvoryanchikov. I am a physician specializing in reflexotherapy, a certified Western-medicine practitioner, and a master of Traditional Chinese Medicine. I am a co-author of an interactive coaching program and a project dedicated to health and Eastern practices.

### **My Beginnings and Path to Coaching**

My foundational medical education in the early 1990s gave me a deep understanding of the human body. Over the years, I have conducted more than 10,000 sessions, which allowed me to identify consistent patterns and develop effective strategies for coaching and personal development.

In my work, I rely on the knowledge gained through my master's studies in Chinese medicine as well as on the analysis of extensive clinical experience. This combination helps me create methods that integrate physical, emotional, and energetic aspects of health.

### **Yoga and Educational Work**

For more than 22 years, I have practiced Hatha Yoga and yoga therapy, receiving guidance from a teacher based in India. For 17 years, I have led individual and group sessions in yoga, meditation, and Eastern health methods. For two decades, I have been engaged in educational work—organizing lectures, seminars, and webinars for physicians and patients on integrating Eastern and Western approaches.

My primary mission is to unite tradition and modernity, creating harmonious and effective methods for restoring health.

### **Professional Qualifications**

I graduated from the I. M. Sechenov Moscow Medical Academy with a degree in General Medicine in 1992, then completed an internship and residency in reflexotherapy, Eastern medicine, addiction medicine, and dermatovenereology. I continued advanced training in herbal medicine, homeopathy, dietetics, nutrition science, and psychology.

### **My Journey in Eastern Medicine**

I have always been inspired by the depth of Traditional Chinese Medicine and its teaching traditions. I studied under renowned masters such as Professor Ji Guangcheng (Beijing), Dr. Mu Ou (Harbin), as well as monastic teachers from traditional schools. I am a hereditary bearer of Daoist and Buddhist traditions and the fundamentals of acro-balance.

I actively participate in seminars and workshops on Eastern reflexotherapy and Tibetan medicine, continually expanding my practical skills and deepening my knowledge.





## *About the Dharma Wellness Arts Project*

The Dharma Healing Arts project was born from a desire to unite experience, knowledge, and practices that help people strengthen their health, restore their energy, and cultivate inner balance. We believe that every person needs an individual approach—not universal prescriptions.

The uniqueness of the project lies in its synthesis of ancient Eastern traditions (TCM, Ayurveda, herbal medicine), modern scientific research, and the many years of experience shared by our team. We develop personalized plans that consider nutrition, daily rhythm, emotional state, sleep quality, physical activity, breathing practices, and mindful awareness.

### **What we do:**

We help people understand their true needs, identify key factors affecting their health, and build sustainable, balanced lifestyle strategies.

Our team consists of certified specialists in health, coaching, and Eastern medicine who support participants at every step of their journey. We do not offer one-size-fits-all solutions—we help you create a system that fits you.

Dharma Wellness Arts is not just an informational resource—it is a space where knowledge becomes practice, and practice becomes progress toward improved well-being, restored vitality, and a stronger, healthier life. We are here to support you at every stage of this journey.



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# *“How Western and Eastern Perspectives on Health Differ”*

For many years, I have observed how people relate to nutrition—how they search for answers in trendy diets, hoping to quickly change their state, yet often find themselves trapped in a cycle of restrictions, stress, and dissatisfaction. Eastern dietetics offers a different perspective. It teaches us not to fear this topic, but to listen to the body, to see it as an ally rather than an enemy. It is a path not of abrupt decisions, but of gentle steps that, day by day, restore balance and strength.

Eastern dietetics is the art of living in harmony with nature. It helps us understand that there is no universal formula that works for everyone. Every person has a unique constitution, unique reactions, and their own rhythm. Some need warming foods, others cooling ones; some need more movement, others require its softening. Here, the goal is not to follow rigid rules but to develop awareness—learning to notice what supports you and what drains your energy.

Within this approach, nutrition is not a test or a strict regimen. It grows from care, respect for the body, and an understanding of seasonal cycles, climate, age, and lifestyle. It is a living system that evolves with the person, adapts to their needs, and helps maintain harmony.

It is important to me that everyone using this material feels: the goal is not to force you into rigid frameworks. Instead, this is a space where you can, calmly and without rushing, discover what truly suits you. Let each step be steady; let every change bring not tension, but joy, softness, and improvement. You move forward at your own pace. This path requires no haste. It is open to anyone willing to listen to themselves and live without violence toward the body, building health that strengthens year after year.

To better understand the work ahead, let us look at how health is viewed from different angles. Often, the same issues are interpreted differently—Western and Eastern approaches offer their own explanations. It is important to see how they differ and what opportunities Eastern medicine offers—opportunities that may remain unnoticed in other systems.

In addressing chronic conditions, Western medicine generally aims to identify a precise physiological cause.



Physicians prescribe medications targeting specific bodily systems, use medical equipment and procedures, and apply therapeutic techniques designed to eliminate symptoms or correct localized dysfunctions in organs and tissues. One of the most frequently highlighted causes in Western practice is structural change: issues in the spine, joints, muscles, or vascular system. Such changes can lead to pain, tension, reduced mobility, or other functional disturbances.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), however, views the problem more broadly. It sees health as the result of overall balance within the body. Attention is given to the circulation of energy, the condition of the blood, the balance of Yin and Yang, and the functional harmony of internal organs. Even if structural changes in the spine or joints play a role, the Eastern perspective considers them not the root cause but one of the manifestations of a deeper imbalance affecting the entire system.

Thus, Western medicine primarily focuses on correcting physiological defects through medication, physiotherapy, or surgical intervention. The Eastern approach, by contrast, focuses on restoring proper energy circulation and systemic balance—allowing gentle influence on the entire organism, including muscles and bone structures.

Eastern medicine views health as a complex system where physical, emotional, and energetic processes are deeply interlinked. Understanding not only the general differences between Western and Eastern approaches, but also the specific concepts underlying the Eastern view is crucial. This allows us to see how Eastern medicine explains the mechanisms of health disruptions and what paths of recovery it offers.

The concept of “Liver Wind” in TCM describes a state of internal tension, excessive activity, and surplus energy that can negatively affect the body's flexibility and coordinated function. “Liver Fire” symbolizes irritative processes, inflammatory tendencies, and heightened tissue sensitivity.

Together, these imbalances create conditions in which the body is constantly under tension, which can manifest in various areas—muscles, ligaments, organs, and the circulatory system.

One of the key principles of Eastern medicine is attention to nutrition—aligning it with the body's internal rhythms and supporting organ functions essential for overall health.



Strengthening the Liver and Kidneys, optimizing metabolic processes, resolving stagnation, and reducing internal “fire” and “wind” help improve energy circulation and reduce reactivity. This is not an instant process, but as changes accumulate, the body gains the resources needed to restore itself: tension gradually decreases, overload reduces, general well-being improves, and sustainable results appear.

Eastern medicine, especially TCM, views health as the reflection of overall energetic balance. Balance is not measured only by symptoms, but by the entire system of Qi circulation, the harmony of Yin and Yang, and the dynamic interaction between organs and the external environment. Practice includes breathwork, herbal medicine, nutrition, daily rhythms, and energy restoration. The aim is not merely to eliminate symptoms but to understand their origins, clear excess fire, calm internal wind, and improve the overall quality of life. The Eastern approach focuses on resolving causes rather than masking manifestations. While stable results take time, many people notice improvements within 3–4 weeks.

In most cases, even persistent symptoms begin to shift within 1–2 months. Eastern medicine does not promise instant results, but with consistent practice, it delivers stable improvements—not only in specific areas but also in overall vitality and bodily resilience.

Common symptoms such as fatigue, insomnia, tinnitus, and weakness are widespread and significantly reduce quality of life. Western methods often provide temporary relief, while Eastern medicine works not only with the symptom but also with its internal root. And this does not require strict restrictions—only gentle adjustments that replenish resources and restore balance.

According to TCM, most chronic symptoms arise from impaired energy circulation, imbalances of Yin or Yang, and tension in the Liver and Kidneys. These conditions accumulate gradually and require attention not only to nutrition but also to lifestyle. This is not a quick strategy but a deep recalibration of the body—strengthening sleep, energy, and overall health over time.



# *Purpose of the Guide: Introducing Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Its Methods for Improving Health*

This interactive guide is the result of my many years of experience and accumulated knowledge. Here, I will share how to preserve and replenish vital energy by applying the wisdom of ancient traditions in the modern world. I sincerely hope it will help you find your own path to harmony and improved quality of life.

It is hard to believe, but most doctors and masters simply do not have the time to systematize all the knowledge they possess. Most of them are constantly helping their patients while continuously learning from their teachers and teaching others. The purpose of this project is not only to address symptoms but to work with the fundamental causes of illness, taking into account the influence of sleep, nutrition, herbal medicine, climate conditions, and natural rhythms.



Together with a team of masters, we have created a new platform aimed at helping people solve various health-related issues. We are confident that combining practical knowledge with modern approaches will open new possibilities for everyone striving for well-being and restoration.

**I invite you to explore a world where ancient practices become the key to modern health and balance.**

I can confidently say that the knowledge presented here has helped many people better understand themselves, make conscious decisions, and achieve lasting results.

Now that we have explored the foundations of the Eastern view of health and the unique features of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), we can move toward a deeper understanding of how these ideas come together into a complete system. We will examine how its core principles were formed, what ideas lie at the heart of this approach, and why they remain relevant and in demand today.

We will discuss what Qi is and how Yin–Yang balance works, how the meridian system is structured, and what role the internal organs play in maintaining overall health. It will be important to understand how this tradition considers a person’s connection with the surrounding environment—seasonal cycles, climate, natural rhythms, and emotional states. The Eastern approach teaches us to see the body not as a set of separate systems but as an interconnected whole, where any imbalance affects everything. This understanding will help create a strong foundation for further work with the material.

We will explore why it is essential not simply to follow advice but to learn to understand yourself, pay attention to changes in the body, and be mindful of how nutrition, rest, movement, and even emotions influence your well-being. This perspective makes it possible to build not temporary fixes but a sustainable self-care strategy that works in the long term.

Moving step by step, we will gradually transition to practical recommendations. But before we get to specifics, it is important to establish the theoretical foundation that will help you understand why certain steps work for you and why others may not. All of this will make the journey ahead more conscious, gentle, and effective.

# *A Brief History of the Origins and Development of Chinese Medicine*

Chinese medicine has a centuries-long history that reaches deep into antiquity. Its origins can be traced back to legendary rulers and cultural heroes—Fu Xi, Shen Nong, and Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor), to whom tradition attributes the foundations of medical thought. The earliest forms of Chinese medicine developed through observations of nature, seasonal cycles, the lives of plants and animals, and an effort to understand the human body as an inseparable part of the cosmos.

Daoist and Confucian philosophies, along with the concepts of Yin and Yang, Wu Xing (the Five Phases), and Qi (vital energy), became the cornerstone of Chinese medicine. These ideas were reflected in early medical texts. One of the most influential sources is the Huangdi Neijing (The Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon), dating back to approximately the 3rd–2nd centuries BCE. This work systematized knowledge on diagnosing, preventing, and treating illness and defined key principles of meridians, Qi circulation, acupuncture, and moxibustion.

In the centuries that followed, Chinese medicine continued to evolve and take on new forms. During the Han and Tang dynasties, new treatises were written, medical schools emerged, diagnostic methods improved, and pharmacopoeias and principles of herbal medicine were refined.

During the Song dynasty, the exchange of medical knowledge with other cultures intensified, printed medical texts began to spread widely, and a comprehensive range of methods appeared, including massage, therapeutic exercises (qigong), dietetics, and health-preserving practices.

By the 19th–20th centuries, Chinese medicine underwent challenging periods as it encountered Western medicine, yet it managed to preserve its unique identity. In the mid-20th century, traditional medicine received official recognition in China alongside biomedicine, leading to its revival, reinterpretation, and integration into modern healthcare systems.



# *Historical Dietary Traditions: Daoists, Buddhists, Monastic Practices, and Fasting*

In China, nutrition has long been regarded not merely as a means of satisfying hunger but as a crucial element of maintaining health and prolonging life. As early as the earliest philosophical and spiritual traditions, approaches emerged in which food was directly connected to lifestyle and spiritual practice.

Daoist practices placed great importance on purity of food. They developed the bigu system—a practice of avoiding grains and replacing them with herbs, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. It was believed that such a regimen helped the body release excesses, slow aging, and enhance internal Qi.

Buddhist traditions introduced vegetarianism into Chinese culture. The diet included vegetables, legumes, rice, grains, and fruits. Meat was completely excluded, and emphasis was placed on harmony of flavors and moderation.

Monastic rules regulated food intake. Eating was expected to be modest, light, and supportive of spiritual practices—meditation, scripture recitation, and physical discipline.

Fasting was used as a method of cleansing both body and mind. Short fasts (1–3 days), seasonal fasts (especially in spring), and long-term fasts among Daoists were common. Water with honey or light herbal decoctions helped ease these periods. Thus, even in ancient times, nutrition was viewed not only as a matter of physical health but also as a path to spiritual development. These traditions laid the foundation for Chinese dietetics, which remains preserved to this day.



## *Prevention Is Far More Effective Than Treatment*

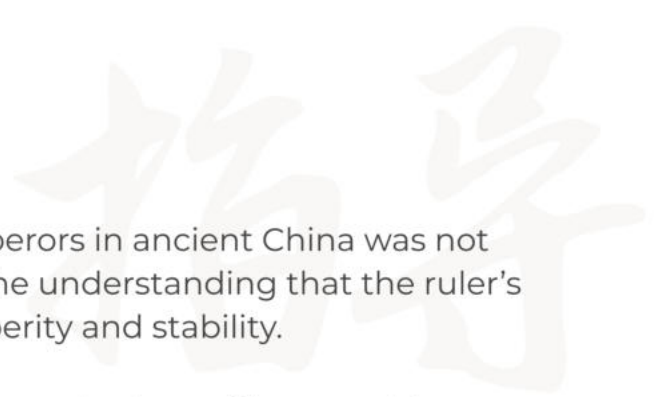
The core idea behind disease prevention for emperors in ancient China was not merely the physicians' fear of punishment, but the understanding that the ruler's health was the foundation of the country's prosperity and stability.

Chinese culture traditionally viewed the world through a lens of inseparable connections between humans, nature, and the cosmos. The emperor was seen as a mediator between Heaven and Earth; thus, his health symbolized national stability, prosperity, moral order, and the support of higher forces.

A physician responsible for the emperor's well-being was not a passive practitioner waiting for complaints and symptoms. He served as the guardian of balance within the ruler's body, a master capable of detecting the subtlest changes in the flow of Qi (vital energy), emotional state, pulse, diet, and lifestyle. This approach was proactive, not reactive: it was believed that illness begins quietly, arising from subtle imbalance long before obvious symptoms appear.

The philosophical roots of this approach lie in the principles of Yin–Yang and Wu Xing (the Five Phases), where any disturbance of homeostasis can be detected early if one knows how to read the body's subtle signals. The imperial physician was expected to regularly “scan” the emperor's condition, capturing even the slightest signs of tension or disharmony. Through pulse reading, assessment of complexion, skin condition, the tongue, sleep patterns, mood, and digestion, the physician could predict future issues and take corrective measures—adjusting the diet, prescribing strengthening herbs, applying gentle acupuncture or massage, recommending breathing exercises, and regulating physical and mental workload.

This is why, if the emperor fell ill, it was seen not simply as professional failure but as a breakdown of the holistic approach to maintaining his Qi balance. A physician was considered “incompetent” not because he could not cure the disease, but because he allowed it to arise in the first place—failing to detect early signs of imbalance. Thus, the deeper essence of prevention was systemic responsibility: the physician was the keeper not only of the emperor's body but of order in the entire realm. Prevention—foreseeing illness before it emerges—became the highest medical art, a crucial skill on which both the ruler's well-being and the stability of the state depended.



Going further into this subject, it is important to note that imperial disease prevention was not merely a matter of personal responsibility. It was embedded in the very structure of the imperial medical institution. The court maintained a thoroughly organized system of medical offices, including the Imperial Medical Bureau, the Academy of Medicine (Taiyi Yuan), and specialized schools that trained physicians of the highest caliber. These institutions not only educated future palace doctors but also developed diagnostic standards, preventive protocols, pharmacological systems, and treatment methods.

Court physicians were often exceptional masters of their craft, possessing multidisciplinary expertise. Their knowledge extended far beyond herbs and acupuncture—they were trained in philosophy, cosmology, astrology, ethics, ritual culture, and psychology. They studied Confucian and Daoist classics, mastered comprehensive diagnostic techniques, and learned to “read” the patient's state by refining the art of pulse differentiation, observing the tongue, assessing complexion, eyes, hair, and nails, as well as analyzing the emperor's speech patterns, emotions, and even modes of thinking.

Seasonal, climatic, and cosmic factors played a major role. Chinese medicine never viewed health apart from nature's rhythms; therefore, physicians had to consider the time of year, weather conditions, auspicious days for certain procedures, and the alignment of the emperor's internal state with the Five Phases (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water). Adjustments to diet, sleep, physical activity, and intellectual demands were made in accordance with these natural cycles.

For example, certain seasons encouraged more physical movement, massage, or breathing practices (Daoist or Buddhist), while others emphasized dietary adjustments based on seasonal foods that supported Yin–Yang harmony. Preventive care often included subtle psycho-emotional harmonization.

The emperor, as a living reflection of cosmic order, was expected to maintain a stable and balanced mind. Excessive emotional fluctuations were considered early signs of physical illness.

Physicians could recommend meditation, ritual practices, or spiritual exercises to maintain emotional steadiness and mental clarity.



There was also a system of reporting and continuous monitoring. Imperial physicians gathered regularly to discuss the emperor's condition, compare pulse readings and diagnostic results, revise preventive measures, and adjust herbal or therapeutic strategies. If any indication of imbalance appeared, they acted to eliminate the cause before it manifested as illness.

This approach considered not only physiological factors but also the socio-political reality: a healthy emperor symbolized reassurance and stability for the entire population.

Thus, the imperial prevention system was not a rigid requirement but a logical extension of the cosmological, philosophical, and moral principles of imperial ideology—an instrument for maintaining universal order.

The physician, remaining the invisible guardian of the emperor's health, was in fact one of the pillars of imperial stability, ensuring continuous alignment between Heaven, Earth, and Humanity embodied in the person of the emperor.

## ***Daily Rhythm (Morning, Day, Evening, Night)***

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the daily regimen is viewed as the foundation of disease prevention. Each time of day corresponds to the activity of specific organs and requires its own approach to diet and lifestyle.

**Morning — the time when Qi awakens.** A gentle rise, breathing practices, morning exercises, and a light breakfast that supports the spleen and stomach are recommended.

**Day — the active phase.** The body directs its primary efforts toward work and digestion. Lunch should be the most substantial meal, including grains, vegetables, and proteins.

**Evening — the gradual decline of activity.** Evening meals should be light and warm, so as not to burden the stomach and to support Yin.

**Night — the period of restoring Yin and Shen.** Nighttime sleep is considered the foremost medicine. It is recommended to go to bed before midnight to ensure complete restoration of the body.



## *Seasonal Recommendations (Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn)*

TCM places great emphasis on the connection between the body and natural cycles. Nutrition and lifestyle should align with seasonal changes to maintain harmony between Yin and Yang.

**Spring** — the time of awakening. The body needs light, warm food and outdoor activity. Avoid cold exposure and heavy, fatty meals.

**Summer** — the peak of Yang energy. It is important to avoid overheating and consume foods that hydrate and cool the body: watermelon, cucumbers, green tea. Fatty and fried foods should be limited.

**Autumn** — the season of moistening and strengthening the lungs. The diet should include pears, nuts, honey, seeds. An earlier, warm dinner helps maintain energetic balance.

**Winter** — the time of conservation and accumulation. Warming dishes are ideal: meat, legumes, hot soups, ginger, garlic. Cold and raw foods show depletion of the kidneys.

## *Targeted Nutrition*

Targeted nutrition is an approach directed at replenishing the specific types of energy the body needs—especially during times of pronounced deficiency.

For example, when a large amount of Yin energy is depleted, Yang-type energies start to dominate. Tinnitus, a sensation of heat, osteochondrosis, insomnia, tension in the lower back and knees, headaches, impaired vision, hair loss, and premature greying may all be associated with an excess of Yang energy.

Now let us consider why “healthy eating” is not always healthy for you personally—and how it can influence your energetic balance, draining your energy rather than replenishing it.



## A question for reflection:

Do the following foods seem like part of a healthy diet to you?  
crab, red caviar, lamb, salmon, eggplant, fresh garlic, onions, ginger, shrimp, parmesan?

Many would say “Yes,” arguing that these are natural foods. However, not everything natural is beneficial for your constitution. Some of these foods may intensify internal heat and fail to nourish or replenish Yin energy.

Could regular consumption of chili or hot peppers be linked to higher cancer rates in India and South Korea? The question remains open and invites reflection through the lens of TCM: there is a visible connection. Many foods—despite being natural—can cause daily harm, strongly draining your energy.

According to experienced masters, many modern health issues are rooted in the depletion of Yin energy and the penetration of “wind” into the body, which can manifest through various symptoms—not only through diet.

To summarize, if a person experiences issues such as noise or ringing in the ears, it may indicate the need for targeted nutrition aimed at replenishing Yin or Yang energy. Sometimes the imbalance may also be related to deficiency and the need to replenish Jing.

## ***Foods That Can Increase Internal Heat and Do Not Nourish Yin:***

- Crab
- Red caviar
- Lamb
- Salmon
- Eggplants
- Fresh garlic
- Onion
- Ginger
- Shrimp
- Parmesan

For example, until Yin energy has been replenished, consuming these foods may only worsen the imbalance. It is similar to trying to catch a departing train — you keep spending energy without being able to restore it.



After sleep, Yin energy is partially replenished, but in many people its level remains low.

It is important to understand that every person is unique, and what is beneficial for one may be harmful for another.

For example, people born in hot climates and those born in cold climates require different recommendations. In hot regions, predominantly “cold-type” people are born, meaning that spicy foods and a warm climate provide them with energy rather than draining it — the opposite of what happens in people born in cold regions.

According to the Five Elements (Wu Xing) theory, in the hottest countries, colder constitutions dominate, and the surrounding environment — including foods and animals — naturally balances them. This is why such individuals can drink coffee, eat chili peppers, stay in the sun all year round, and feel no harm — these foods and conditions originate in their environment. If a person naturally has abundant Yin energy, any Yang influence will support and benefit them, which aligns with nature and the principles of the Five Elements.

People born in cold climates are the opposite — they tend to be very “hot” by nature and correspond to the Yang essence. It follows that individuals born in cold regions must replenish and maintain Yin energy through food, climate, and daily rhythm.

For them, spending winters in hot countries and consuming large amounts of spicy, heating foods is extremely harmful. If Yin is not restored during winter, the body becomes depleted. One can observe patterns in people who were originally born in cold climates: signs of deficiency and excess Yang often manifest as pelvic pain, menstrual problems, tinnitus, hair loss and greying, as well as declining vision. These changes do not appear instantly but develop gradually over a few years, especially in men, as Yang energy is stronger in men than in women.

Look at women born in the coldest regions: their skin is pale, their hair often takes on a fiery (red) hue — this reflects their inherently hot constitution. Many cannot tan at all; their skin burns immediately, because two forces collide — a naturally “hot” body and the “hot” nature of sunlight — creating an intense fire that damages the skin.



When we understand how climate, lifestyle, and inherent constitution shape the balance of Yin and Yang, it becomes easier to explain why some foods give energy and stability, while others increase heat, cause depletion, or aggravate existing symptoms. This internal “body temperature” determines which flavors, properties, and directional tendencies of foods will support harmony and which will create additional tension.

As we move forward, we will explore the fundamental nutrition principles of Chinese medicine — beginning with the theory of flavors and their influence on the organs. Understanding the thermal nature, direction, and function of flavors allows us to create a diet that restores balance rather than disrupts it.

## ***The Theory of Flavors (Sweet, Sour, Pungent, Bitter, Salty, Astringent)***

In Chinese medicine, each flavor is associated with a specific organ and has a distinct effect on the body:

- **Sweet** — nourishes the spleen and stomach, provides energy, but in excess leads to dampness and weight gain.
- **Sour** — nourishes the liver, preserves body fluids, but in excess may cause tension and muscle pain.
- **Bitter** — nourishes the heart, clears heat and dampness, but too much bitterness weakens Yin.
- **Pungent (Spicy)** — nourishes the lungs, stimulates the circulation of Qi and blood, opens the pores. In excess, it depletes Qi.
- **Salty** — nourishes the kidneys, softens hardness, helps with constipation, but in excess retains water and damages vessels.
- **Astringent** — contracts, stops sweating and diarrhea, helps retain Qi and body fluids.

## ***The Theory of Channel Entry (Food Entering Specific Meridians)***

Each food has a directional action — it “enters” certain meridians and affects corresponding organs:

- **Liver channel:** green vegetables, sour foods.
- **Heart channel:** bitter herbs, certain spices
- **Spleen channel:** sweet foods, grains.
- **Lung channel:** pungent vegetables and spices.
- **Kidney channel:** salty foods, seafood.

This knowledge allows one to select a diet that purposefully supports specific organs and systems.

# *Foods That Replenish or Reduce (Qi, Blood, Yin, Yang)*

In TCM, foods are categorized according to whether they replenish or reduce excess conditions.

- **Replenish Qi:** rice, millet, jujube dates, chicken.
- **Replenish Blood:** liver, spinach, carrots, black sesame.
- **Replenish Yin:** dairy products, pears, watermelon.
- **Replenish Yang:** lamb, walnuts, ginger.
- **Reduce excess heat:** green tea, cucumbers, bitter melon.
- **Reduce dampness and phlegm:** barley, beans, radish.

## *Anti-Aging Foods*

In Chinese tradition, the right diet is believed to extend life.

- **Foods for the lungs:** pears, lotus seeds, white fungus.
- **Foods for the spleen:** rice, beans, pumpkin.
- **Foods for the kidneys:** black sesame, walnuts, seafood.

Such foods strengthen Qi and Jing, support the balance of Yin and Yang, and help prevent premature aging of the body.

## *Key Concepts: Yin and Yang, Jing, Qi, the Five Elements, and Meridians*

### *Basic Notions*

#### *Yang Energy: Its Meaning for a Person in the Context of Traditional Chinese Medicine*

Yang (阳) is a fundamental concept in Traditional Chinese Medicine, representing the active, warm, stimulating, and dynamic aspect of the body's energy.



## *The significance of Yang energy for a person:*

- 1. Warmth and heating:** Supports body temperature, warms the organs, and promotes metabolic activity.
- 2. Movement and activity:** Ensures the circulation of Qi and Blood.
- 3. Protective function:** Forms Wei Qi (Defensive Qi), which protects the body from external pathogens.
- 4. Transformation of substances:** Participates in metabolism and digestion.
- 5. Growth and development:** Stimulates tissue regeneration, growth, and overall vitality.

## *The necessary amount of Yang energy*

The balance of Yin and Yang is individual and depends on:

- **Age:** children naturally have more Yang; Yang declines with age.
- **Sex:** men tend to have more Yang; women more Yin.
- **Lifestyle:** physical activity and emotional stability influence Yang.
- **Climate:** cold climates require more Yang for warmth and function.

An optimal level of Yang energy is essential for health and prevention.

## *Yang Energy Deficiency*

Causes:

- **Chronic illnesses**
- **Improper diet (excessive cold or damp foods)**
- **Overwork and exhaustion**
- **Aging**
- **Climatic factors (cold, dampness)**

*Symptoms:*

- **Chills, cold hands and feet**
- **Fatigue**
- **Pale complexion**
- **Sluggish digestion**
- **Edema**

*Consequences:*

- **Weakened immunity**
- **Metabolic disorders**
- **Depression and apathy**

## *Excess Yang: Causes and Symptoms*

Causes:

- **Excessive spicy foods and alcohol**
- **Hot climate**
- **Yin deficiency (when Yin is weak, Yang becomes relatively excessive)**



### *Symptoms:*

- Heat sensations, flushed face
- Dryness
- Rapid pulse
- Irritability
- Insomnia

### *Consequences:*

- Inflammation
- Hypertension
- Increased risk of stroke
- Emotional imbalance

## *Foods That Increase Yang*

1. **Spicy foods:** chili pepper, ginger, garlic, horseradish, onion.
2. **Sweets:** white sugar, honey, chocolate (especially dark chocolate).
3. **Fried foods:** French fries, fried meat, fried fish.
4. **Meats:** lamb, pheasant.
5. **Seafood:** shrimp, crab, red fish (salmon), crayfish, tuna.
6. **Spices:** cinnamon, turmeric, cardamom, pepper (black, red).
7. **Nuts:** walnuts, almonds, chestnuts.
8. **Fruits:** oranges, cherries, peaches, mango.
9. **Dried fruits:** dates, dried apricots, raisins.
10. **Grains:** buckwheat, millet.
11. **Dairy products:** clarified milk, ghee.
12. **Beverages:** black tea, coffee, alcoholic drinks (wine, vodka, cognac).
13. **Alcoholic tinctures:** ginseng, eleutherococcus.
14. **Soups:** bone broths, meat soups with spices.
15. **Early rising** replenishes the necessary Yang.

## *Early Rising – A Source of Yang*

**Note:** The listed foods enhance Yang, but their benefits depend on the individual's condition. Most are beneficial—especially for people of cold northern constitutions—but it's essential to consider the method of preparation and avoid excessive heat, spiciness, or frying if internal heat is already present.

## *Foods and Factors That Increase Yang*

### *Foods That Replenish Yang*

Yang-strengthening foods are those with a warm or hot energetic nature that support the body's activity, vitality, and internal warmth:

- Lamb, venison
- Ginger, cinnamon, garlic, onion
- Walnuts, red wine
- Red wine in small amounts

These foods are used in cases of Yang deficiency, sensations of cold, low energy, and apathy.

## ***Foods That Replenish Yin***

These foods nourish body fluids, cool and soothe the system, and calm internal heat:

- Dairy products (goat's milk, yogurt)
- Fruits: pears, watermelon, grapes
- Cooling vegetables: cucumbers, tomatoes
- Seafood and soy products

They are essential in conditions of dryness, thirst, heat sensations, or depletion after illness.



## ***Incorrect Food Choices***

Chinese dietetics emphasizes that even healthy foods can cause disease if they are consumed improperly:

- **Excessive eating** — overloads the stomach and spleen, causes food stagnation and the formation of phlegm.
- **Fatty foods** — create phlegm and obstruct the movement of Qi, leading to spleen disorders.
- **Cold/raw foods** — weaken Qi and the kidneys, leading to depletion.
- **High-calorie foods** — excessive flour and sweets → obesity, diabetes.
- **Non-nutritious eating** — chronic under-eating weakens the kidneys and depletes Jing (essence).

## *A Case on Everest*

Let me make a digression and give an example from one of the ascents on Everest.

This case most clearly illustrates the importance of maintaining Yang energy. In the conditions of a severe blizzard, a group of climbers who were already descending to the camp split into two parts.

- One group decided to stop for sleep and rest, warming themselves in the blizzard by pressing against each other like penguins.
- The second group, on the contrary, continued the descent despite the storm.

In the morning, those who continued descending died from hypothermia. The reason lies in the loss of Yang. Yang energy itself is necessary for life and is the energy of movement and warmth; when the energy is exhausted, the body stops regulating heat, mental processes slow down, and the person does not realize the approaching danger.

In such a situation, it is easy to fall into a coma and freeze.

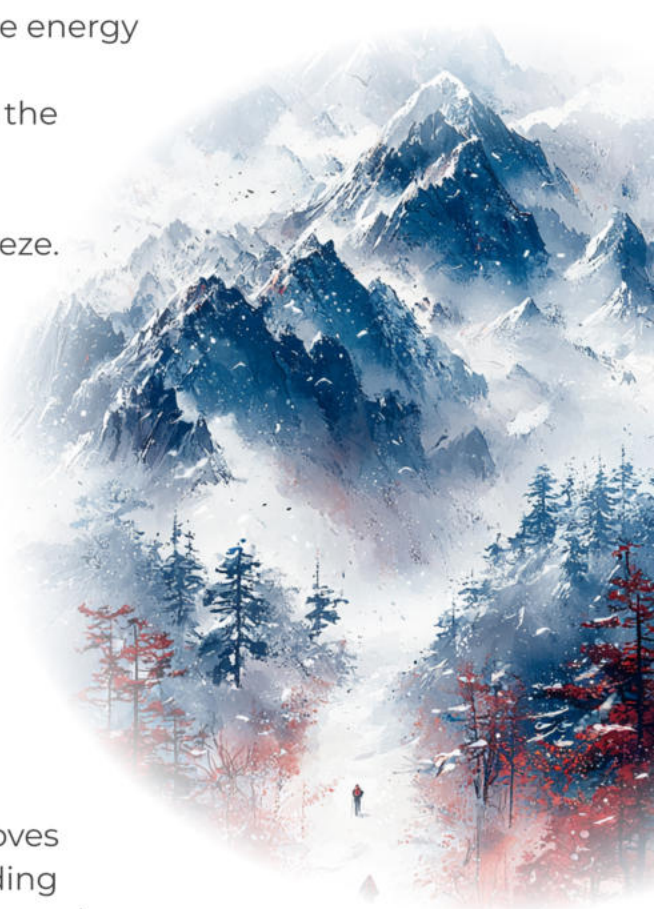
The first group managed to survive thanks to the correct approach: resting and protecting themselves from external factors, they preserved the remaining Yang and Qi, which allowed them to withstand the frost and wind. This case once again demonstrates the importance of a deep understanding of the interaction of Yang energy, Qi, and the environment.

### *Yang Energy in Everyday Life and Survival*

When a person is well-rested, Yang energy actively moves through the channels, warming the tissues and providing resilience against cold and other stresses. For example, such people can even go without gloves in freezing weather — their hands remain warm because Qi and Yang energy actively move through the channels and warm the tissues.

But if Yin is depleted, even warm clothing or gloves will not save from the cold, especially at extremely low temperatures when frostbite occurs.

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## *How I Would Prepare for Climbing Everest*

Knowing the importance of Yang energy, I would take the following measures:

- **Eating foods with Yang properties:** coffee, meat, tea, chocolate — everything that supports warmth and energy.
- **Careful planning:** rest every two hours, limiting walking time to 6 hours per day. This is based on my type of health and constitution; for some people, who may appear strong at first glance, even 2 hours of ascent may be the maximum allowable. Accordingly, why waste energy left and right when you can avoid wasting it.
- **Sleep and protection from the external environment:** using a tent, sleeping bags, and other shelters to restore energy.

Yin and Yang energy is given to each person in a certain amount. It is important to preserve and restore it. Understanding the mechanisms of these energies makes it possible not only to survive in extreme conditions, but also to maintain health in everyday life. Do not waste energy thoughtlessly — the right approach and awareness of your limitations can save your life.

Let us return to actions and foods with Yang properties, and analyze the foods that excessively increase Yang without real necessity. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), each food has energetic characteristics that can strengthen either Yin or Yang in the body.

An incorrect choice of foods may worsen an existing imbalance. For example, foods with pronounced Yang energetics (red fish, crabs, coffee) may be harmful in a state of Yin deficiency. At the same time, white fish with less pronounced Yang will be more beneficial.

Speaking of foods that have a positive effect: shellfish, mussels, oysters, seaweed, and algae. There is an assessment used by TCM masters to roughly understand how much Yang energy a product provides.

### **1. Crab (7/10 — strong Yang)**

- Increases Yang, reduces Yin.
- Recommended to eat rarely, in small amounts, and only in spring.
- May cause allergies.

### **2. Beef (2/10 — mild Yang)**

- Balances Yang when consumed in moderation.
- Suitable for frequent consumption, but not in excess.
- Especially beneficial for people born in hot climates, particularly in larger portions.



### 3. Red fish (5/10 — moderate Yang)

- Favorable in small portions (up to 100 g) or as part of rolls or sushi. In large quantities may cause allergies.

### 4. Coffee (7/10 — strong Yang)

- Leads to depletion of Yin, especially with regular use.
- Common side effects: impaired vision, hair loss (especially in men), nervousness, insomnia.
- With long-term, off-season use, it may also cause premature graying, depression, headaches, irritability.
- Men are more sensitive to the negative effects of coffee due to their natural predominance of Yang.
- Recommendation: drink coffee rarely, in winter, no more than once every 2–3 weeks.

### 5. Black tea (2/10 — mild Yang)

- Suitable for regular consumption, especially in cold seasons or in the morning hours.

### 6. Lamb (6/10 — pronounced Yang)

Increases heat, but is beneficial in small amounts (5–10 pieces in pilaf).

Contraindicated in Yin deficiency. TCM forbids cooking lamb by frying it to a “black crust.”

Such cooking:

- Damages male essence.
- Reduces cognitive function in children.

Softer cooking methods—baking, light frying, or boiling—are safe.

### 7. Red hot pepper (10/10 — very strong Yang)

Generates extremely strong Yang.

Not favorable for most white people; more suitable for individuals born in hot countries.

Chili nourishes Yang and supports energy, but its impact depends on climate and a person’s constitution—this is exactly why it grows in those regions, just like coffee and cacao.

If you are in the mountains and it is winter with freezing temperatures outside, the natural environment and climate will help balance the excess Yang in foods. But if it is summer, the same foods will generate even more heat, causing problems and heat-related conditions.

In the modern world, people have learned to grow fruits and vegetables year-round in any climate, but this does not mean that these foods are equally suitable for everyone at all times of the year.

The food we consume must correspond to the climate and a person’s constitution, otherwise energetic imbalance arises.



For example, in people of European origin, spicy food tends to overheat the body and deplete Yin-energy. For residents of hot regions such as India, Africa, Brazil, and most islands near the equator, spicy food, on the contrary, nourishes Yang and helps maintain the necessary energy, making it beneficial.

The truth is not that chili pepper is harmful, but that its effect depends on climate, a person's initial energy reserves, and their constitution. From this follows an important conclusion: chili pepper replenishes the energy of cold-type individuals living in hot climates — that is, in the same climate where it originally appeared.

But for hot-type individuals, especially those born in cold climates, chili pepper leads to significant depletion of Yin-energy, meaning it is not beneficial for them.

This is a fundamental principle of Traditional Chinese Medicine: what matters is not “healthy eating” based on general ideas of natural foods, but constitution-oriented nutrition — food that replenishes the energies that have been depleted and are needed for harmonious balance in your body.

This is only a brief overview. Further in the text, you will find a link to a section of the website where you can explore the full list of foods and learn what properties they have and what type of energy they replenish in your body.

This is only a brief overview. We have created a separate section on the website where you can explore the full list of foods and learn what type of energy they provide.

Most people in modern cities cannot imagine their day without coffee.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), coffee is considered a powerful Yang tonic that activates energy, warms the body, and stimulates the movement of Blood and Qi.

Its consumption can be beneficial for people with signs of internal cold, such as chilliness, slow metabolism, or low activity levels. Coffee helps improve concentration and temporarily increases endurance.

However, excessive coffee consumption can be harmful, especially for people with an excess of Yang-energy, which may manifest as irritability, anxiety, insomnia, or internal heat. Coffee can also worsen sensations of dryness and overheating if the body has insufficient Yin. It is important to avoid drinking coffee on an empty stomach, as it may irritate the digestive system and provoke stagnation in the Stomach meridian. It is better to drink coffee in the first half of the day to avoid negative effects on sleep.



Tea has a milder, yet still stimulating effect on Yang-energy. The stronger the coffee roast, the more “fire” is added to it. Some dietitians are concerned about the high content of acrylamide, which increases proportionally with roasting time and can lead to various inflammations in the body and to Yang imbalance.

Just like coffee, which strengthens Yang-energy, food cooked by frying also changes its properties, becoming hotter in nature. Any fried food, even if originally Yin in nature, becomes more Yang after high-heat cooking. For example, white chicken meat, which has cooling Yin properties, partially retains them even after frying, whereas lamb — already hot in nature — dramatically increases Yang-energy when fried.

Heat treatment above 100°C, from the perspective of TCM, contributes to the accumulation of “fire” in food. Even when no flame is visible, the high temperature of the oil and the heated pan transfer fire-energy to the food. This process accumulates Yang-energy in the dish, which is then transferred to the body.

Whether this effect is beneficial or harmful depends on the individual balance of Yin and Yang. People with weakened or depleted Yin-energy may poorly tolerate such food. For them, excess Yang will aggravate existing heat-related conditions, causing new imbalances and illnesses.

For example, there was a case of a girl who ate so much spicy food that she immediately began to feel severe stomach pain and started losing consciousness.

This is why both the nature of the base product and the type of spices and accompanying ingredients matter. For instance, frying in sunflower oil increases Yang because sunflower oil has a hot nature — the same applies to fried corn oil — while coconut oil or avocado oil have a cooling nature, which reduces the overall fire in the cooked dish.

Spicy food increases Yang and warms the body, but excessive consumption can damage the stomach lining, disrupt the movement of Qi, and provoke spasms or fainting.

According to TCM, a symptom or illness is the release of excessive or disharmonious energy that a person has introduced into the body. For example, such conditions as sore throat or tonsillitis are manifestations of accumulated cold that the body is trying to expel. Likewise, excessive Yang-energy can manifest through inflammatory processes, such as gastritis. The more serious the disease, the deeper the imbalance within the body.



The main goal of TCM is to prevent the body from reaching such states. Once illness appears, the body expends a significant amount of Qi to recover, which weakens and depletes it. Loss of Qi directly affects the organs, and disturbances in their functions alter one's perception of the world and emotional behavior.

For example, frequent consumption of spicy and fried foods, coffee, white sugar, and alcohol leads to the accumulation of fire in the Liver, causing an excess of Yang. This state manifests as aggression, irritability, and quick temper, because the Liver, overloaded with fire-energy, disrupts emotional balance. People in this condition heavily deplete their Yin-energy, as they become easily irritated by external circumstances, lose emotional stability, and cannot respond calmly to what is happening.

Every emotional outburst is accompanied by significant Qi loss, and depletion of Qi inevitably accelerates the body's aging.

It is not surprising that monks seeking inner peace choose ascetic diets. For example, rice is not just food but a tool that helps calm emotions, nourish Yin, and reduce excessive mental activity. Thanks to this, monks can maintain equilibrium and concentration, supporting the harmony of body and spirit.

TCM teaches that nutrition must be conscious and adapted to your condition in order to maintain the harmony of Yin and Yang, preserving health and inner stability.



## ***Yin Energy: Its Significance for the Human Body in the Context of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)***

Yin (阴) is a fundamental concept in TCM, representing the passive, cool, calming, and nourishing aspect of energy within the body.

### *The significance of Yin-energy for the human body:*

1. **Moisturizing and nourishing:** provides lubrication to organs and tissues, nourishes the blood and body fluids, and supports their normal functioning.
2. **Cooling and calming:** regulates the cooling of the body, prevents overheating and inflammation, and promotes relaxation.
3. **Storage and preservation:** associated with the body's vital reserves, providing resilience to stress and supporting endurance.
4. **Growth and restoration:** contributes to cell regeneration, tissue repair, and maintains structural integrity.
5. **Regulation of organ function:** harmonizes the functions of the kidneys, liver, and heart.

### *The required amount of Yin-energy depends on:*

The balance between Yin and Yang is individual for each person and depends on:

- **Age:** children have less Yin; it increases over time but declines in old age.
- **Sex:** women generally have more Yin than men.
- **Lifestyle:** activity level, diet, climate, and emotions influence Yin balance.
- **Climatic conditions:** hot regions require a greater amount of Yin.

### *Yin Deficiency*

Causes of Yin Deficiency:

- **Overwork** — excessive activity without proper rest.
- **Improper diet** — excess spicy and fried foods.
- **Emotional stress** — intense negative emotions.
- **Climate** — prolonged exposure to heat and dryness.
- **Aging** — natural decline over time.

Symptoms:

- **Dry skin, eyes, and hair.**
- **Heat in the palms, feet, chest, and night sweats.**
- **Insomnia, frequent awakenings.**
- **Tinnitus, dizziness.**
- **Weight loss, muscle weakness.**
- **Irritability, anxiety.**



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## *Consequences of Yin Deficiency:*

- Weakening of the organs: liver, kidneys, and heart.
- Chronic diseases.
- Immune deficiency.
- Emotional instability.
- Fatigue, apathy.
- Loss of vital energy.

## *Yin Energy Excess*

Causes of Yin Excess:

- Excess raw and cold foods (yogurt, salads, fruits, ice).
- Lack of movement.
- Excessive cooling of the body.
- Decline of Yang-energy, leading to relative Yin excess and internal imbalance.

## *Symptoms of Yin Excess:*

- **Feeling of cold:** persistent chill, especially in the limbs, intolerance to cold.
- **Heaviness and swelling:** fluid retention in the body, puffiness of the legs, face, or other areas.
- **Weakness and fatigue:** lethargy, lack of energy, constant tiredness.
- **Low mood:** apathy, depressive states, reduced interest in the world around.
- **Digestive disturbances:** bloating, heaviness after meals, diarrhea.

## *Consequences of Yin Excess:*

- **Slowed metabolism:** weight gain and obesity.
- **Organ dysfunction:** issues with the spleen, kidneys, and digestion.
- **Susceptibility to illness:** frequent colds, infections, inflammations.
- **Reduced vitality:** physical and mental exhaustion.
- **Qi stagnation — imbalance of Yin and Yang → chronic illness.**



# *Yin Nature of Foods and Lifestyle*

In TCM, every food and habit carries an energetic quality.

- 1. Fresh vegetables:** cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini, celery, leafy greens.
- 2. Fruits (Yin in nature):** watermelon, pear, fig, apricot, apple.
- 3. Dairy:** milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, whey.
- 4. Greens:** lettuce, spinach, Chinese cabbage, bok choy.
- 5. Seafood:** seaweed, mussels, clams, oysters, nori (seaweed sheets).
- 6. Legumes:** soy, green peas, mung beans, chickpeas.
- 7. Dairy products:** milk, white cheeses, yogurt.
- 8. Mushrooms:** shiitake, oyster mushrooms, white mushrooms, enoki — almost all edible mushrooms.
- 9. Nuts and seeds:** flax seeds, chia, pumpkin seeds.
- 10. Beverages:** green tea, herbal teas (mint, chamomile), coconut water.
- 11. Cold desserts:** fruit sorbets, jellies, agar-based desserts.
- 12. Plant oils:** olive oil, almond oil, oil from grape seeds.
- 13. Herbs and spices:** mint, fennel, cardamom (in moderate amounts).
- 14. Sugar substitutes:** syrups from agave.
- 15. Soy products:** tofu, soy milk, soy yogurt.
- 16. Sleep:** sleep before midnight, ideally by 10 PM, and gradually decreasing toward dawn — helps replenish Yin.
- 17. Cold climate and mountains:** help replenish Yin and are needed for complex issues and illnesses.

A person receives inherited energy (Yuan-Qi) and a supply of Yin and Yang from their parents. Throughout life, these reserves are replenished through nature, food, water, sleep, and climate.

To maintain balance and health, every action must be conscious.

Loss of Yin most often occurs due to an excess of Yang.

## *Cooling, Heat-Clearing, and Diuretic Foods*

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, such foods are used to eliminate heat, inflammation, and excess dampness in the body. They help restore Yin and fluid harmony.

**Cooling foods:** watermelon, cucumber, green tea, leafy salads.  
They reduce internal heat and thirst.

**Heat-clearing foods:** bitter melon, pear, lotus seeds, mint.  
Used for fevers and inflammatory conditions.



**Diuretic foods:** barley, beans, celery, radish, parsley.  
They help expel excess moisture and reduce swelling.

Such foods are often recommended during the summer or in conditions of “excess fire” in the liver and heart.

## *The Role of Water in Yin Energy Balance*

Modern recommendations to drink two liters of water per day are often given without explaining why this is necessary. Some mention maintaining water balance, but usually without understanding the essence. From the perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine, water has a Yin nature and replenishes the Yin potential of the kidneys, supporting the balance of Yin and Yang throughout the day. Regular consumption of warm water (approximately 1–1.5 liters per day) is especially important for maintaining long-term health.

The results become noticeable after several months (usually after 4 months): metabolism improves, the transformation of Qi from food becomes more active, organs and tissues are better nourished, more energy appears, mental clarity increases, and skin issues diminish — thanks to better Qi circulation, inflammation decreases, well-being normalizes, and this list can go on for a very long time.

However, water must be consumed correctly, and we are talking specifically about warm, closer-to-hot water. For example, in China, when people experience mild colds, they simply drink hot water without any medications to quickly expel cold from the body. Chinese people also avoid cold water and iced drinks because they contradict the first fundamental rule of TCM: replenishment and preservation must exceed energy loss. Cold water cools the stomach and slows the movement of Qi in the meridian. To warm the stomach again, the body begins heating the blood by increasing the heart’s temperature.

From this, two organs begin to suffer: the first is the spleen. Cold water is essentially a shock to the spleen — it weakens and stops properly transforming Qi from food. This is why people who eat fast food with cold drinks constantly feel hungry: there is no proper transformation of Qi from food, and therefore the organs and tissues receive insufficient nourishment, causing a persistent desire to eat more and more.

However, if they ate fast food with hot water or tea, they would not experience so many problems, because they would not gain weight so easily and would not feel such frequent hunger.



You can observe these examples yourself: when the spleen is weak, a person may eat the best food in the world, buy products from the best stores, buy organic food — and still not receive even 3/10 of the useful substances. That is why TCM masters first consider the state of a person's spleen and its ability to transform Qi, and only then think about diet and replenishing other organs.

The second organ that suffers is the heart. By heating the blood, the heart generates heat. According to the balance theory of the Five Elements (Wu Xing), this heat must later be balanced, because the body always strives for harmony. After warming the stomach, the body does not ask whether you want to spend your energy on cooling and calming the heart — it simply draws Yin from the kidneys to complete the balance. Thus, after drinking cold water, a person loses within five minutes:

Stomach Yang, Spleen Yang and Qi, Heart Yin, and Kidney Yin and Yang.

However, if you boil water to 100°C and then cool it to 40–60°C, you remove excess cold, and by drinking it relatively hot, you replenish Yin and Yang in the body: Yin through its inherent properties, Yang through the water's temperature. Warm water at 50–60°C excellently replenishes the body with necessary energy, rejuvenates, nourishes the tissues, and contributes to the overall strengthening of the body.

Any cooling of the stomach, as well as any cold product, generates cold that drains different types of energy from the body. The amount of energy is not infinite. The body contains many types of energy; for now, it is enough to know the following: Yang energy, Yin energy, Qi energy, and Jing energy.

Most people believe that when they eat different foods, they always receive energy. This is one of the biggest misconceptions. Here is how it actually works: energy does not come from nowhere. From the perspective of TCM, in order to obtain energy from food, one must first spend one's own energy to transform the Qi of the food.

This is where the most interesting part lies: We must obtain more Qi from food than our own Qi spent in the process of transformation. This is the moment where the body either weakens — losing Qi — or strengthens and increases its Qi.

So, if you eat a cold salad during winter, you will definitely expend more Yang and Qi than you gain — and this is where depletion begins.

Let's take a look at why this happens. First, vegetables and fruits do not grow in winter, especially if you were born in a region with winter. What can be eaten in winter? Meat, fish, poultry, vegetables preserved from autumn and summer (fermented), which are easy and beneficial to digest.



Grains harvested in summer are also available, but you won't see mangoes or avocados growing outdoors.

Of course, due to urbanization, stores now offer foods from all over the world, and the best way to eat fruits and vegetables in winter, out of season, is to expose them briefly to heat: blanching, short boiling, light frying, or full cooking. This is done to reduce the amount of Qi your body must spend. The least harmful winter foods, in small quantities, are fresh berries. But fruits and vegetables in their raw form will strongly deplete the spleen's Qi.

Many people eat fresh fruits and vegetables to obtain vitamins, but here is the misunderstanding: in order to obtain vitamins and beneficial properties from food, one must first spend their own energy. And the more complex a product is in its Qi transformation, the more energy it drains. Therefore, the advice is: in winter and spring, cook everything. In China, people fry nuts, cucumbers, tomatoes for literally 1–2 minutes — enough to remove excess Yin-cold and avoid draining spleen Qi.

Regarding vitamins, the truth is this: the foundation of health and longevity is preserving and replenishing energy. None of this is possible without following natural rhythms. So if mango does not grow outdoors in December in your climate, you are not meant to eat it. TCM teaches: the further a person moves away from natural rhythms, the more they suffer. We see this in the rise of chronic diseases among people who ignore seasonality in their diet.

If one eats in accordance with natural rhythms, the body begins to accumulate energy instead of wasting it. This helps restore strength, avoid illness, and even improve mood.

In winter — warm dishes and stored foods.  
In summer — fresh seasonal vegetables and fruits.  
This approach may become a key to longevity.

## *Medicinal Decoctions and Drinks*

In Chinese medicine, great importance is placed not only on the quality of water but also on its use in preparing decoctions and infusions. Medicinal drinks are used as a gentle method of correcting the body's condition.

**Grain decoctions (barley, oats, rice)** — strengthen the spleen and stomach, reduce inflammation, and help with depletion.



**Herbal teas (mint, chrysanthemum, jasmine)** — cool and calm the body, beneficial for heat conditions and headaches.

**Fruit decoctions (rose hips, dried apples, pear)** — nourish body fluids and support the lungs.

**Legume decoctions (red beans, mung beans)** — remove excess dampness and reduce swelling.

Such drinks are considered part of therapeutic nutrition and can be used preventively depending on the season and the condition of the body.

## ***Qi Energy***

At the foundation of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) lies the understanding that the human body is permeated by the vital energy Qi (气). This energy is a fundamental force that nourishes the body and ensures its growth, development, and maintenance of health.

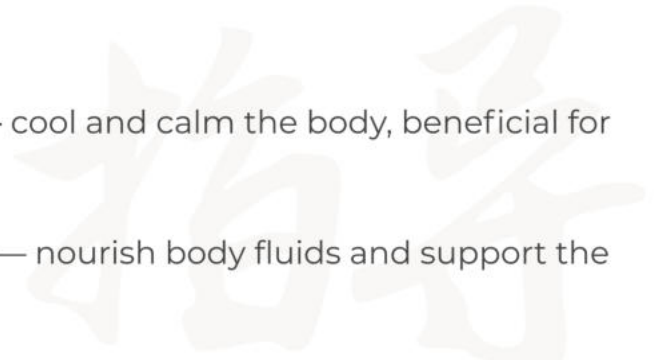
### ***How Qi is Generated and Where It Comes From***

Imagine a house with a built-in heating system (this is your congenital Yuan Qi) and an additional stove that runs on the fuel you add each day (acquired Qi). Whether there will be enough warmth in the house (the body) depends on the quality of the “fuel” you use — healthy nutrition, fresh air, physical activity.

If you choose high-quality “firewood” (wholesome food, clean water, sufficient rest), the house remains warm and comfortable — energy is abundant.

If instead you use “raw peat” (fast food, polluted air, lack of movement, chronic stress), the warmth gradually diminishes, and you begin to feel constant fatigue, low mood, and general weakening of health.

Thus, congenital Yuan Qi is the “basic reserve” you inherited. Acquired Qi is the “fuel” you provide daily to maintain and expand this reserve so that the body remains energetic and healthy.



# *The Importance of Qi Energy for a Person*

## **Supporting Vital Functions**

Qi plays a key role in maintaining the work of organs and tissues, supplying them with continuous energetic nourishment. It stimulates cellular renewal and ensures proper functioning of the body. You can think of it as the “fuel” each organ receives to operate steadily.

When Qi is sufficient, a person feels energetic, wakes easily, and maintains strength throughout the day. When Qi is deficient, weakness, sluggishness, and quick fatigue appear.

## **Regulating Circulation**

Qi ensures the smooth movement of blood and bodily fluids throughout the body, like a pump driving water through pipes. This is necessary for tissues to receive nourishment and hydration. Harmonious movement of Qi supports vascular health, reduces muscle spasms, and prevents edema.

## **Protective Function**

Proper Qi acts as a “shield,” protecting the body from viruses, colds, and other illnesses.

When Qi is strong, a person with robust defensive energy easily tolerates seasonal cold, while a neighbor may become sick immediately. This is because their energetic barrier is strong enough to resist external pathogens.

## **Providing Warmth**

Qi maintains optimal body temperature, preventing both excessive cold and overheating. People with a harmonious Qi balance adapt easily to weather changes: they warm up quickly in the cold and do not overheat in the heat. If the “internal heating system” works irregularly, cold extremities, chills, or excessive sweating may occur.

## **Coordination of Senses and Awareness**

A harmonious flow of Qi positively influences mental clarity, emotional stability, and coordination of movement. When Qi flows without obstruction, a person reacts quickly to external stimuli, stays calm in stressful situations, and thinks clearly.



### **Quality Sleep Restores Qi and Supports Overall Vital Energy**

According to TCM, sleep is the time when the body replenishes its energetic reserves and harmonizes Qi. Chronic sleep deprivation or irregular sleeping patterns can lead to depletion of Yuan Qi, manifesting as persistent fatigue, reduced immune function, and impaired cognitive abilities.

To improve sleep quality, it is recommended to establish a regular schedule, create a calm environment before bedtime, and avoid stimulants such as caffeine and electronic devices.

### **Breathing Practice in Nature**

In the morning, find a quiet outdoor place. Take several deep, slow breaths, extending each inhale and exhale. Feel the air filling your lungs as if nourishing energy is entering and permeating every cell.

According to TCM, this mindful breathing ritual helps “replenish” Qi and uplift the mood.

### **Balanced Nutrition**

Choose fresh, diverse foods. TCM holds that natural, “living” foods are the “building blocks” from which high-quality Qi is formed. For example, adding more seasonal vegetables and fruits to your diet promotes more harmonious digestion and helps you feel more energetic.

### **Social Connections**

Harmonious relationships help Qi flow freely and support emotional well-being. TCM emphasizes that positive interactions prevent stagnation of energy, while conflicts and negative emotions can block it. To maintain balance, it is important to communicate openly, cultivate empathy, and find constructive ways to resolve conflicts.

### **Moderate Physical Activity**

Practices such as qigong or taijiquan are often recommended in TCM to strengthen Qi. A master once showed his student gentle hand movements, explaining how “energy flows in a circle.”

The student noticed that the softer and steadier the movements, the deeper the breathing and the calmer the mind became. After just a few minutes, the body filled with pleasant lightness and the mind cleared from distractions.



## Emotional Balance

If you spend much time in worry, anxiety, or anger, try to dedicate a few minutes each day to relaxation. Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and imagine everything that troubles you temporarily dissolving.

This simple meditation helps clear the meridians of “emotional blockages” and allows Qi to flow freely.

## *Products That Replenish Qi Energy*

These foods help strengthen vital force, support the functions of the Spleen, Lungs, and Stomach, and promote recovery after overexertion or illness.

- **Grains:** rice, millet, oats — the nutritional foundation for replenishing Qi.
- **Fruits:** jujube dates, grapes, figs — nourish and moisten, strengthen the Spleen.
- **Vegetables:** sweet potato, carrot, pumpkin — support digestion and energy.
- **Protein foods:** chicken, beef, fish — replenish Qi and strengthen the body.
- **Legumes:** soybeans, red beans — strengthen the Spleen and eliminate excess Dampness.
- **Herbs and supplements:** ginseng, astragalus, licorice root — enhance Qi and are used in medicinal nutrition.

Such foods are especially beneficial in cases of weakness, chronic fatigue, reduced immunity, and shortness of breath.

## *Jing Energy: What Energies Nourish Your Body and Spirit?*

**Jing Energy** in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is the fundamental life essence that determines the quality and longevity of our lives. Jing is what makes us unique, grants life strength, and sustains us along the path of life.

Imagine within you an invisible source of strength — a deep well from which the energy for growth, development, and longevity is drawn. In TCM, this life essence is called Jing (精).

### *Prenatal and Postnatal Jing: Two Dimensions of Vital Strength*

#### **1. Prenatal Jing (Xian Tian Jing)**

Think of it as old capital — the wealth you received at birth.

This resource is finite, non-renewable, and must be preserved with care. It determines inherited vitality, constitutional strength, and, to a large extent, your lifespan. Preserving and wisely managing this reserve is the foundation of longevity.

## 2. Postnatal Jing (Hou Tian Jing)

This is like current income — the continuous inflow of nourishing substances derived from food, air, and water, which helps maintain and, in part, supplement prenatal essence. Postnatal Jing can be replenished and directly depends on how you live, eat, and breathe, although it can never fully replace prenatal Jing.

### *How Jing Influences Your Life*

Jing plays a key role at every stage of your existence. It is like the building material from which your body and health are “constructed.”

- 1. Growth and Development:** Jing governs how quickly and harmoniously you grow in childhood and adolescence.
- 2. Reproductive Health:** It regulates puberty, conception, and reproductive function.
- 3. Aging:** As Jing becomes depleted, gray hair, wrinkles, fatigue, and reduced immunity appear.
- 4. Immunity and Resilience:** Strong Jing helps the body resist illness and stress, keeping you vital and strong.

### *Kidneys: Guardians of Your Vital Essence*

In TCM, the Kidneys are considered the “storehouse” of Jing. Caring for the Kidneys means caring for your life potential. When the Kidneys function well, Jing is consumed slowly, and you feel energized and protected.

### *Signs of Jing Weakness*

If you experience constant fatigue, notice early graying, hair loss, memory decline, difficulty conceiving, or frequent illness, your internal reserve may be depleting and in need of support.

### *What Depletes Jing?*

Negative habits and an unhealthy lifestyle can quickly exhaust this resource:

- **Improper diet:** excess sugar, salt, fried and fatty foods.
- **Stress and anxiety:** constant emotional strain.
- **Overwork:** working without rest and recovery.
- **Harmful habits:** smoking, alcohol, stimulants.
- **Excessive sexual activity:** unnecessary expenditure of energy.



## *How to Strengthen and Preserve Your Jing?*

### **1. Balanced Nutrition:**

Choose whole grains, legumes, nuts, goji berries, black sesame, vegetables, and root crops. Avoid excessive sugar, salt, fatty and fried foods. Enrich your diet with nutrient-dense foods, including seafood and high-quality proteins.

### **2. Herbal Tonics and Natural Supplements:**

Ginseng, cordyceps, goji berries, shú dì huáng, and astragalus have long been used to strengthen vitality, immunity, and Jing.

### **3. Healthy Lifestyle:**

- Prioritize restorative sleep and rest.
- Practice moderate physical activities — yoga, tai chi, or qigong — to improve energy circulation.
- Learn relaxation techniques such as meditation, breathing practices, and creative activities.

### **4. Emotional Balance:**

- Learn to manage emotions and negative thoughts, communicate with loved ones, seek support and positive experiences.

### **5. Living in Harmony with Nature:**

- Adapt your diet and activity to seasonal rhythms, spend more time outdoors, absorbing the energy of the sun and earth.

## *Additional Tips for Strengthening Jing*

- Drink clean water to support Kidney function.
- Monitor your health regularly; do not postpone treatment.
- Choose eco-friendly foods to minimize exposure to toxins.

## *A Mindful Approach to Jing – The Path to Long Life and Health*

Preserving and replenishing Jing is a comprehensive process that includes nutrition, lifestyle, emotional well-being, and respect for natural rhythms. By caring for your Jing, you strengthen your health, improve your quality of life, and maintain youth and vitality for many years.

## *Products That Strengthen the Kidneys and Replenish Jing*

Since Jing is closely connected with Kidney function, particular attention is given to foods that nourish and strengthen this system. They help slow aging, restore vitality, and support reproductive health.



- **Grains: buckwheat, millet** — strengthen the Spleen and Kidneys.
- **Seeds and nuts: sesame, walnuts, pine nuts** — nourish Jing, strengthen the brain and bones.
- **Organ meats: liver, animal kidneys** — replenish Blood and essence.
- **Seafood: oysters, shrimp, marine fish** — strengthen the Kidneys and support reproductive function.
- **Legumes: black beans, mung beans** — nourish the Kidneys and promote recovery.

Regular inclusion of such foods in the diet helps preserve Jing energy and supports the vitality of the body.

## *Shen Spirit*

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the concept of Shen (神) plays a central role in understanding a person's psycho-emotional and spiritual health. Shen is often translated as "soul," "spirit," or "mind," but its meaning is much deeper and more multifaceted. Below are the key aspects of Shen from the perspective of TCM, including its characteristics, imbalance, and methods for maintaining harmony.

Shen is translated as "spirit" and is considered one of the three vital substances, along with Qi (energy) and Jing (essence). Shen represents our conscious and unconscious mental activity, including thoughts, emotions, memory, and awareness. One can say that Shen is what makes us alive, filling our mind and heart with life.

In TCM, Shen is believed to reside in the Heart (the Heart is regarded as the emperor of the organs, governing Shen). A healthy Shen is expressed as clarity of thought, calmness, the ability to concentrate, and a positive emotional state.

Imagine a garden lovingly cared for with attention and devotion. In this garden grow a variety of plants, each playing its own part in overall harmony. The Spirit Shen in Traditional Chinese Medicine resembles a wise gardener who tends to the well-being of the entire garden, ensuring its prosperity and beauty. Let us take a journey to understand what Shen is and how it influences our health and well-being.



## 1. *Methods for Caring for the Garden of Shen*

To help the garden of Shen flourish, constant attention and care are needed. In TCM, various methods support the harmony of Shen:

### 1. **Nourishing the Soul:**

Just as plants need water and sunlight, Shen requires proper nourishment. A diet rich in fresh vegetables, fruits, and natural foods supports the health of the Heart and, therefore, Shen.

### 2. **Emotional Balance:**

Emotions are like weather in the garden. Excessive anger, anxiety, or sadness can become storms that destroy harmony. It is important to learn to manage emotions to maintain the clarity and calmness of Shen.

### 3. **Physical Activity:**

Exercise, like tending the garden, promotes the circulation of Qi and improves the overall state of the body. Yoga, tai chi, or simple outdoor walks help maintain the health of the Heart and Shen.

### 4. **Meditation and Mental Practices:**

Just as a gardener observes his garden, we must observe our thoughts and feelings. Meditation calms the mind, frees it from unnecessary thoughts, and strengthens Shen.

## *Imagine Your Own Shen Garden*

- Close your eyes and imagine your inner garden.
- What plants grow in this garden? Are they bright flowers, healthy trees, or are some leaves wilted?
- Is this garden peaceful and full of life, or does it lack care?

## 2. *Characteristics of Shen*

- **Stored in the Heart:** As mentioned earlier, Shen is housed in the Heart. The Heart controls the circulation of Qi and Blood, which nourish Shen.
- **Connection to Mental Functions:** Shen is responsible for thought, decision-making, memory, and concentration.
- **Emotional Stability:** A harmonious Shen is expressed in emotional balance, the ability to cope with stress, and the maintenance of a positive mood.
- **Connection to Sleep and Wakefulness:** Shen influences the quality of sleep, dreaming, and the ability to wake refreshed.



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### 3. Shen Imbalance

An imbalance of Shen can manifest through various psycho-emotional and physical symptoms:

- **Excess Shen:**
  - Anxiety, irritability, insomnia
  - Frequent headaches
  - Overactivity of the mind, difficulty relaxing
- **Deficient Shen:**
  - Fatigue, apathy, depression
  - Problems with memory and concentration
  - Excessive sleepiness, difficulty waking
- **Turbid or unclear Shen:**
  - Difficulty concentrating, confused thinking
  - Decline in cognitive functions

### 4. Causes of Shen Imbalance

In TCM, Shen imbalance can be caused by various factors:

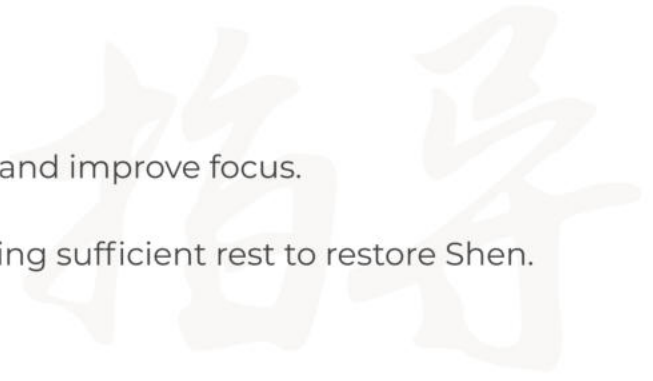
- **Emotional Strain:** Excessive or suppressed emotions such as anxiety, anger, or sadness.
- **Physical Overexertion:** Lack of rest, poor sleep patterns.
- **Improper Diet:** A diet that disrupts Qi and the nutrients needed for Heart function.
- **External Factors:** Stress, negative environments, chronic illnesses.

### 5. Supporting Shen Harmony

TCM applies various approaches to support the balance of Shen:

- **Acupuncture:**  
Stimulating specific points helps regulate Qi and restore the balance of Shen.
- **Herbal Medicine:**  
Medicinal herbs strengthen the Heart and nervous system, reduce anxiety, and improve sleep.
- **Diet:**
  - Eat foods that support Heart health, such as nuts, seeds, and green vegetables.
  - Avoid overly spicy, fatty, and heavy foods that may burden Qi.
- **Physical Exercises:**  
Tai chi and qigong improve Qi circulation, promote relaxation, and enhance mental clarity.





- **Meditation and breathing practices:**

Techniques that calm the mind, reduce stress, and improve focus.

- **Regular sleep routine:**

Maintaining a stable sleep schedule and ensuring sufficient rest to restore Shen.

## 6. Preventing Shen Imbalance

- **Emotional Hygiene:**

Managing stress, developing positive thinking, and maintaining healthy relationships.

- **Healthy Lifestyle:**

Regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, avoiding harmful habits.

- **Psycho-emotional Support:**

Seeking help from professionals at early signs of Shen imbalance and participating in relaxation practices.

- **Environmental Improvement:**

Creating a calm and supportive environment; avoiding excessive stimulation and negativity.

## 7. Shen's Interaction with Other TCM Elements

Shen is closely connected with other aspects of the body:

- **Qi:**

Qi enables the movement of Shen, its circulation, and nourishment.

Deficiency of Qi may weaken Shen.

- **Jing (Vital Essence):**

Jing nourishes Qi and Shen.

Deficiency of Jing can lead to chronic fatigue and weakness of spirit.

- **The Five Elements:**

Shen belongs to the Fire element, which interacts with the other elements (Wood, Earth, Metal, Water), influencing the overall condition of the body.

Shen in TCM represents the fundamental component of a person's psycho-emotional and spiritual health. Maintaining its balance requires a comprehensive approach that includes physical, emotional, and mental practices. Understanding and caring for Shen promotes harmonious existence, improved quality of life, and overall well-being.

### ***Meridians: How Energy Pathways Support Our Health***



In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), there is a special understanding of the body: beyond muscles, bones, and organs, there is a system of “energy channels.” These are called meridians. Vital energy — Qi — flows through them, and according to Chinese physicians, it lies at the heart of all vital processes.

## ***Meridians: How the Energetic Pathways Supporting Our Health Work***

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), there is a unique understanding of the human body: in addition to muscles, bones, and organs, the body contains a system of “energetic channels.” These channels are called meridians. Life energy — Qi — circulates through them, and according to Chinese physicians, it underlies all vital processes.

## ***What Meridians Are and Why They Matter***

To understand the idea of meridians, imagine a large river nourishing fields and cities. If the river’s flow becomes blocked, plants begin to wither and cities face water shortages. In a similar way, meridians nourish our tissues and organs: when Qi flows freely, we feel healthy, energetic, and emotionally balanced. But when an “energetic blockage” (Qi stagnation) occurs in a certain area, it may manifest as pain, weakness, or discomfort. In TCM, meridians are believed to connect all parts of the body — just like roads connect cities into a single transportation network. Health depends not only on the condition of the organs (the “stations”) but also on how well the energetic pathways between them are “built and cleared.”

### ***Main Functions of the Meridians***

#### **1. Transporting Qi and Nutrients:**

Meridians deliver energy and “building materials” to various systems of the body, ensuring their proper function.

#### **2. Connection between organs and the body’s surface.**

From a TCM perspective, internal organs “project” onto different areas of the skin and muscles through the meridians. This is why pain in the lower back may not only be related to the spine but also to an imbalance in the Kidneys, which correspond to a specific meridian.



### 3. Regulation of the body's balance.

When there is “excess” energy somewhere, or when it is lacking, meridians help redistribute resources, striving for harmony and equilibrium.

#### *Signs of Problems in the Meridians*

##### 1. Pain or discomfort in a specific area.

For example, sitting for long periods may cause the neck to stiffen — a signal that tension has formed in the meridians passing through that area.

##### 2. Reduced vitality and frequent colds.

If you constantly feel tired and easily catch viruses, TCM would explain this as insufficient Qi circulation in the meridians responsible for the body's defense.

##### 3. Emotional instability.

According to TCM, meridians influence not only physical health but also emotional well-being. If you frequently experience irrational anger, resentment, or anxiety, it may indicate stagnation or imbalance in the corresponding meridians.

#### *Methods for Restoring and Supporting the Meridians*

##### 1. Movement and Stretching:

- Daily walks.  
Even 20–30 minutes of walking can help disperse stagnant energy.
- Simple gymnastic exercises.  
Gentle bends, torso twists, and stretches improve blood flow and release meridians from blockages.

##### Example:

If you feel tension in your lower back after work, try performing a few slow forward bends and stretches to move the energy along the lumbar meridian.

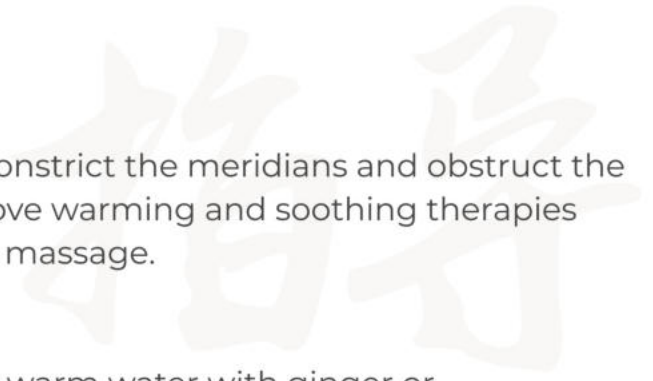
##### 2. Breathing Practices:

TCM places great importance on proper breathing — it is believed that inhalation “refuels” us with fresh Qi, while exhalation “cleanses” us of stagnant energies and tension.

##### Example:

Find a quiet place, stand upright, and take several deep breaths, imagining calmness and strength entering your body with each inhalation. On the exhale, mentally release fatigue and negativity. This simple ritual helps remove energetic stagnation, especially when practiced regularly.





### 3. Warmth and Relaxation

Accumulated stress or exposure to cold can constrict the meridians and obstruct the free flow of Qi. That's why TCM practitioners love warming and soothing therapies such as herbal baths, compresses, and gentle massage.

#### Example:

After being out in cold weather, soak your feet in warm water with ginger or chamomile. From a TCM perspective, this warms the meridians of the legs, enhancing microcirculation and overall resistance to illness.

### 4. Mindful Nutrition

In TCM, a significant portion of Qi is formed from food, water, and air. “Low-quality” foods worsen well-being and may provoke stagnation in the meridians. It is important to choose fresh, varied foods and avoid heavily processed dishes and alcohol.

#### Example:

If you frequently experience bloating and heaviness, TCM would recommend adding more light vegetable broths and warm liquid dishes to your diet, as they positively influence the digestive system's energy.

### 5. Psycho-Emotional Balance

Negative emotions, overwork, and chronic stress constrict not only muscles but also energetic channels. Regular relaxation practices (meditation, calm walks, creative activities) help “untie knots” within the meridians.

#### Example:

If you've had a stressful day, spend at least 5 minutes with your eyes closed, imagining a gentle stream of warm light flowing through your body. This visualization helps relax the system and improve Qi movement.



In TCM, the body is viewed as a complex system in which physical anatomy and energetic channels complement one another. Meridians act like invisible pathways connecting all organs and areas of the body, ensuring their coordinated work. When Qi flows freely through the meridians, we feel energized, calm, and emotionally stable. But when a “blockage” forms, the body signals it through pain, malaise, and negative emotions.

To maintain healthy meridians, you don't need to master advanced Eastern practices. Simple habits — regular movement, deep breathing, mindful eating, staying warm, and making time for rest and relaxation — are often enough. As a result, the body and mind work in harmony, and you feel more energized and content in everyday life.

## *Theory of How Foods Enter the Channels*

In TCM, it is believed that every food has a directional action and “enters” specific channels. This explains why the same foods may influence people differently depending on their internal imbalances.

Foods are used for targeted support of organs and for harmonizing energy.

### *Food Lists by Channels*

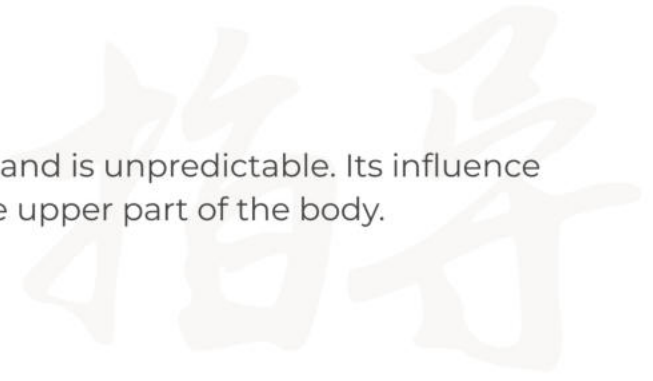
- **Liver Channel:** green vegetables, sour foods (sorrel, spinach, lemon).
- **Heart Channel:** bitter foods and herbs (chicory, bitter melon, St. John’s wort).
- **Spleen Channel:** sweet foods and grains (rice, millet, pumpkin, jujube dates).
- **Lung Channel:** pungent foods (radish, onion, garlic, ginger).
- **Kidney Channel:** salty foods and seafood (seaweed, shrimp, mussels).
- **Stomach Channel:** warm-natured foods (chicken, beef, carrot).
- **Intestine Channel:** coarse fiber and gentle laxative foods (cabbage, beetroot, plums).
- **Bladder Channel:** diuretic foods (barley, parsley, celery, cucumber).

Such categorization helps use nutrition as a targeted tool for prevention and therapy.



## *Six External Pathogenic Factors*

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, human health is closely connected with the surrounding environment. The six external pathogenic factors — Wind, Cold, Summer-Heat, Dampness, Dryness, and Fire — can enter the body and disturb its internal harmony like uninvited guests, triggering uncomfortable symptoms.



### 1. Wind (风, Fēng)

Wind is like a sudden gust — it arrives quickly and is unpredictable. Its influence can be compared to a sharp storm striking the upper part of the body.

- **Sign:** headache, dizziness, muscle spasms.
- **Season:** spring.
- **Vulnerable organs:** lungs, liver.

**Example:** Imagine going for a walk on a cool, windy day without a scarf. The next morning your neck muscles feel tight, and your head aches — Wind has “attacked” your body.

### 2. Cold (寒, Hán)

Cold resembles ice: it slows and constricts. It is an invisible frost that penetrates deeply, causing pain and discomfort.

- **Sign:** spasms, slowed circulation, cold extremities.
- **Season:** winter.
- **Vulnerable organs:** kidneys, spleen.

**Example:** You stand outside in the cold without gloves. Later, you feel a deep ache in your joints that persists even in warmth. Cold has “frozen” in the tissues, slowing the movement of Qi.

### 3. Summer Heat (暑, Shǔ)

Summer-Heat is like scorching sun — drying and overheating. Its influence can exhaust the body like an overheated machine.

- **Signs:** fever, sweating, thirst.
- **Season:** summer.
- **Vulnerable organs:** heart, lungs.

**Example:** On a hot day you spend too much time under the sun. Later you feel weak, thirsty, and excessively sweaty — Summer-Heat has entered, depleting fluids and energy.

### 4. Dampness (湿, Shī)

Dampness resembles stagnant water. It is heavy, sticky, and slow, filling the body with a sense of heaviness and apathy.

- **Symptoms:** swelling, heaviness in the limbs, digestive disorders.
- **Season:** damp weather.
- **Vulnerable organs:** spleen, stomach.



**Example:** After spending hours in a damp room or walking in rainy weather, you feel tired and heavy, as if carrying extra weight. Dampness has “settled” in the body.

### 5. Dryness (燥, Zào)

Dryness acts like a desert wind, drawing moisture out of the body. It dries and depletes, leaving the body desiccated.

- **Signs:** dry skin, dry throat, cough.
- **Season:** autumn.
- **Vulnerable organs:** lungs.

**Example:** In autumn, the air becomes dry, and you notice cracked lips and an irritating cough. Dryness is “stealing” internal fluids.

### 6. Fire (火, Huǒ)

Fire rises upward like flames and intensifies, causing heat and inflammation.

- **Signs:** high fever, inflammation, restlessness.
- **Origin:** external and internal factors.
- **Vulnerable organs:** heart, liver.

**Example:** After intense stress, you feel heat, irritability, and insomnia. This is internal Fire flaring up due to emotional strain.

## *Examples of How External Pathogens Affect the Body*

### • Wind (风, Fēng):

You go outside in early spring without a scarf, and the piercing wind enters the body. The next morning your neck is stiff, your head aches, and you feel discomfort — Wind has penetrated, causing spasms and headaches.

### • Cold (寒, Hán):

You spend a long time outdoors in winter without warm clothing. When you return inside, your joints ache and your lower back hurts — Cold has slowed Qi and Blood, causing pain.

### • Dampness (湿, Shī):

You spend the day in a humid environment or walk in drizzle. Later you feel heaviness, sluggishness, and fatigue — Dampness causes stagnation and discomfort, especially with prolonged exposure.



- **Summer Heat (暑, Shǔ)**

On a scorching day you stay too long in the sun. Weakness, overheating, and excessive sweating later appear — Summer-Heat has overtaxed your body, leading to dehydration.

- **Dryness (燥, Zào)**

In autumn the air becomes dry; your skin and throat dry out, and a cough develops. Dryness strips the body of moisture.

- **Fire (火, Huǒ)**

After emotional stress you feel internal heat, irritation, and insomnia — internal Fire rises and disrupts the balance of Qi and Yin-Yang.

## *The Five Elements (Wu Xing) in Traditional Chinese Medicine*

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the concept of the Five Elements (五行, Wǔ Xíng) forms the basis for understanding the interconnectedness between our body and the external world. These five elements — Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water — represent different stages of transformation and interaction of Yin and Yang energies, creating a dynamic picture of life and health.

### *General Concept of the Five Elements*

#### **1. Dynamics and Cycles**

Imagine the cyclical rhythm of nature, where each element transitions seamlessly into the next, like notes in a melody. This continuous process of creation and control resembles a dance of energies, with each element playing its unique role in maintaining harmony and balance.

#### **2. Correspondence and Symbolism**

Each element is linked to specific organs, tissues, emotions, seasons, tastes, and colors. It is like a puzzle where every piece fits perfectly into the larger picture of health and well-being.

#### **3. Balance and Harmony**

Maintaining equilibrium among the elements is the key to preserving health. Just as in a symphony, where each instrument must stay in harmony with the others, every element in the body must remain balanced.



*A detailed description of each element with examples follows.*

# Detailed Description of Each Element with Examples

## 1. Wood (木, Mù)

**Season:** Spring — the time when nature awakens, and all living things begin to grow and develop.

**Organs:** Liver and Gallbladder — like the roots of a tree, they support vital processes and regulate the movement of Qi.

**Emotion:** Anger — like a storm that erupts when the Wood element is disturbed.

**Color:** Green — symbolizing growth, renewal, and freshness.

**Taste:** Sour — associated with cleansing and strengthening.

**Example in the body:** The Liver regulates the smooth flow of Qi and stores blood, much like the roots of a tree nourish it. When balance is disrupted, irritability, headaches, and muscle tension arise — like a tree suffering under harsh conditions.

**Example in the external world:** The rapid growth of plants in spring symbolizes the upward, expanding energy — reflecting our own body's natural drive for renewal and restoration.

## 2. Fire (火, Huǒ)

**Season:** Summer — the peak of solar activity, when energy reaches its maximum.

**Organs:** Heart and Small Intestine — the Heart, like the sun, governs circulation and consciousness, while the Small Intestine processes food.

**Emotion:** Joy — a bright, vivid emotion reflecting warmth and light.

**Color:** Red — symbolizing passion, vitality, and life force.

**Taste:** Bitter — associated with cleansing and stimulation.

**Example in the body:** The Heart governs blood circulation and houses the spirit (Shen), just as the sun nourishes and animates life. Imbalance manifests as insomnia, restlessness, and tachycardia — like a forest suffering from wildfire.

**Example in the external world:** Summer's peak solar heat symbolizes maximum warmth and energy, similar to the Heart working intensely to sustain vital processes.

## 3. Earth (土, Tǔ)

**Season:** Late summer or transitional periods between seasons — times of stabilization and preparation for change.

**Organs:** Spleen and Stomach — like fertile soil, they transform and transport nutrients.

**Emotion:** Overthinking and worry — internal states connected with reflection and analysis.

**Color:** Yellow — symbolizing steadiness, support, and nourishment.

**Taste:** Sweet — associated with comfort and satisfaction.



**Example in the body:** The spleen is responsible for transforming and transporting nutrients, as well as controlling blood, much like fertile soil supports the growth of plants. Imbalance shows up as fatigue, bloating, and digestive problems — like soil that has lost its fertility.

**Example in the external world:** Fertile soil is the foundation for plant growth, just as the spleen supports our body, providing it with essential resources.

#### 4. Metal (金, Jin)

**Season:** Autumn — the time of harvest and preparation for winter, when nature cleanses and renews itself.

**Organs:** Lungs and Large Intestine — they purify, filter, and eliminate.

**Emotions:** Sadness and grief — calm, clarifying emotions associated with autumn's coolness.

**Color:** White — symbolizing purity, clarity, and completion.

**Taste:** Pungent — linked to sharpness and penetrating qualities.

**Example in the body:** The Lungs govern breathing and control the skin and pores, much like metal refines and gives structure. Imbalance manifests as cough, shortness of breath, and dry skin — like metal losing its sharpness and shine.

**Example in the external world:** Falling leaves in autumn symbolize reduction, cleansing, and preparation for a new cycle — just as the Lungs purify no longer needs.

#### 5. Water (水, Shui)

**Season:** Winter — the time of rest, conservation of resources, and preparation for rebirth.

**Organs:** Kidneys and Bladder — like water, they store and regulate vital resources.

**Emotions:** Fear — deep, hidden emotion linked to inner reserves.

**Color:** Black or blue — symbolizing depth, stillness, and hidden power.

**Taste:** Salty — associated with preservation and storage.

**Example in the body:** The Kidneys store essence (Jing) and govern the bones and brain, much like water stores vital resources and sustains life. Imbalance appears as lower back pain, weak knees, and urinary problems — like water losing its strength and clarity.



**Example in the external world:** Animal hibernation in winter represents conserving energy until spring — just as the Kidneys conserve vital forces for renewal.

### *Interaction between the elements*

Elements interact through two main cycles: **the Generating (Creation) Cycle** and **the Controlling (Regulation) Cycle**.

#### **Generating Cycle (Shēng Cycle):**

- 1. Wood generates Fire:** Just as wood fuels a flame.
- 2. Fire generates Earth:** Ashes from fire enrich the soil.
- 3. Earth generates Metal:** Metals form within the earth.
- 4. Metal generates Water:** Condensation on metal surfaces forms water droplets.
- 5. Water generates Wood:** Water nourishes plants and enables growth.

#### **Controlling Cycle (Kè Cycle):**

- 1. Wood controls Earth:** Just as wood fuels a flame.
- 2. Earth controls Water:** Ashes from fire enrich the soil.
- 3. Earth generates Metal:** Metals form within the earth.
- 4. Metal generates Water:** Condensation on metal surfaces forms water droplets.
- 5. Water generates Wood:** Water nourishes plants and enables growth.

### *Application in diagnosis and treatment*

**Diagnosis:** Identifying imbalance within the elements helps locate the root cause of disease.

For example, if a patient shows symptoms related to the Metal element — chronic cough, shortness of breath, or dry skin — this points to imbalance in the Lungs and Large Intestine.

**Treatment:** Herbal medicine, acupuncture, and diet are used to restore balance among the elements.

For example:

If the Metal element is weakened, a TCM practitioner may strengthen the Water element to stabilize the cycle. This may include stimulating specific acupuncture points, prescribing herbal formulas, and adjusting the diet seasonally and individually.



## VERY IMPORTANT!

When symptoms of “**heat and fire**” arise in the body, it is beneficial to use remedies and methods that “**nourish Water**”, because **Water extinguishes Fire**. It often happens that a person living in a hot climate recovers faster by moving to a colder region, restoring elemental balance.

Many people naturally have strong internal Fire. There are countless cases of completely healthy individuals who move to hot climates and significantly weaken their health.

In such situations, it is crucial for these individuals to return to cold, allowing the elements to rebalance.

## *Primary Organ States in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)*

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), each organ has its own “personality” and “character.” Harmony is achieved through the balance of Yin, Yang, and Qi. When any of these aspects weaken, the body sends signals — ranging from mild discomfort and fatigue to significant issues affecting health or emotional stability. Let’s examine how this works by reviewing the possible imbalances: Yin Deficiency, Yang Deficiency, and Qi Deficiency. Each state can be seen as the loss of an essential quality:

- Yin Deficiency — lack of moisture and nourishment
- Yang Deficiency — lack of warmth and strength
- Qi Deficiency — weakened supporting energy

### • **Heart Yang Deficiency (心阳虚)**

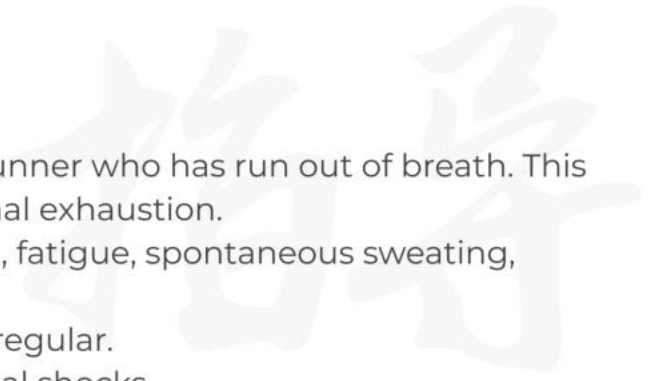
A heart lacking Yang is like a fire that cannot ignite. Insufficient warmth slows blood circulation, resulting in coldness and weakness.

**Symptoms:** Cold sensation in the chest, weakness, low pulse, pallor, lethargy.

**Tongue and pulse:** Pale, swollen tongue. Pulse weak, deep, sometimes slow.

**Causes:** Cold exposure, chronic illness, age-related decline.





• **Heart Qi Deficiency (心气虚)**

When Heart Qi weakens, it resembles a tired runner who has run out of breath. This often occurs after prolonged illness or emotional exhaustion.

**Symptoms:** Palpitations with minimal exertion, fatigue, spontaneous sweating, shortness of breath, susceptibility to colds.

**Tongue and pulse:** Pale tongue. Pulse weak, irregular.

**Causes:** Chronic fatigue, overexertion, emotional shocks.

**Liver (肝, Gān)**

When Liver Yin weakens, you feel as if under scorching sun: the eyes dry out, emotions “burn out.” This state is often accompanied by irritability and headaches.

• **Liver Yin Deficiency (肝阴虚)**

Dry eyes, gritty sensation, headaches, night sweats, poor sleep.

**Symptoms:** Dry eyes, gritty sensation, headaches, night sweats, poor sleep.

**Tongue and pulse:** Reddish tongue with little coating. Pulse thin, rapid.

**Causes:** Chronic stress, Blood deficiency, staying up late.

• **Liver Yang Deficiency (肝阳虚)**

Liver Yang governs movement and warmth. Its deficiency feels like heaviness and cold: cold limbs, slowed movements.

**Symptoms:** Cold body, heaviness in limbs, worsening vision, muscle spasms.

**Tongue and pulse:** Pale, moist tongue. Pulse weak, deep.

**Causes:** General energetic decline, cold climate, chronic body weakness.

• **Liver Qi Deficiency (肝气虚)**

Liver Qi is the fuel that ensures smooth energetic movement. Without it, stagnation and irritability arise.

**Symptoms:** Discomfort in hypochondrium, fatigue, depression, reduced muscle tone.

**Tongue and pulse:** Pale tongue. Pulse weak.

**Causes:** Long-term stress, overwork, poor nutrition.

**Spleen (脾, Pí)**

In TCM, the spleen is the “chief cook” of the body, transforming food into energy, nourishing muscles, and maintaining fluid balance.

• **Spleen Yin Deficiency (脾阴虚)**

Imagine a kitchen without water. Everything is dry, work does not flow. This condition is accompanied by fatigue and poor appetite.



**Symptoms:** Dry mouth, muscle weakness, loss of appetite.

**Tongue and pulse:** Dry tongue with coating. Pulse thin.

**Causes:** Poor diet, overburdening the Spleen with sweets or greasy foods.

- **Spleen Yang Deficiency (脾阳虚)**

Without Yang, digestion becomes cold and sluggish, as if food simply won't "transform." This leads to edema, bloating, and fatigue.

**Symptoms:** Bloating, diarrhea, weakness, cold limbs.

**Tongue and pulse:** Pale, moist tongue. Pulse weak.

**Causes:** Cold foods, chronic overwork, damp climate.

- **Spleen Qi Deficiency (脾气虚)**

When the spleen's Qi weakens, body warmth seems to evaporate, leading to weakened digestion and decreased energy.

**Symptoms:** Pale complexion, dry skin and mucous membranes, poor appetite, weakness.

**Tongue and pulse:** Pale tongue, weak pulse.

**Causes:** Poor nutrition, irregular eating habits, chronic gastrointestinal diseases.



## Lungs (肺, Fèi)

In TCM, the Lungs are the "meeting point" of the external world and internal energy.

They regulate breathing, support immunity (Defensive Qi), and moisten the skin.

- **Lung Yin Deficiency (肺阴虚)**

Imagine morning air without dew: dry, harsh, irritating to the throat. Without Yin, the Lungs lose smoothness, resulting in dry cough and throat tightness.

**Symptoms:** Dry cough, dryness of skin and mucosa, hoarseness, sensation of "dry breathing."

**Tongue & Pulse:** Reddish, dry tongue. Pulse thin, slightly rapid.

**Causes:** Chronic cough, smoking, dry climate, fluid depletion.

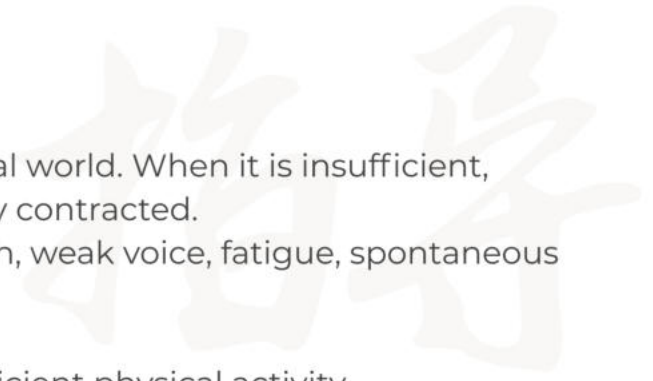
- **Lung Yang Deficiency (肺阳虚)**

When Yang weakens, the Lungs stop "warming" the breath. A cold heaviness in the chest appears, along with shortness of breath and weakness — like a cold mist enveloping the lung tissue.

**Symptoms:** Cold chest, shortness of breath, weak cough, low stamina, tendency to colds.

**Tongue & Pulse:** Pale, moist tongue. Pulse weak, deep.

**Causes:** Long-term respiratory illness, cold climate, low overall vitality.



- **Lung Qi Deficiency (肺气虚)**

Lung Qi is your inner shield against the external world. When it is insufficient, vulnerability increases, and infections are easily contracted.

**Symptoms:** Frequent colds, shortness of breath, weak voice, fatigue, spontaneous sweating.

**Tongue & Pulse:** Pale tongue. Pulse weak.

**Causes:** Overwork, chronic lung disease, insufficient physical activity.

## Kidneys (肾, Shèn)

In TCM, the Kidneys are the root of life force — the source of congenital energy responsible for growth, development, bone strength, hearing, and reproduction.

- **Kidney Yin Deficiency (肾阴虚)**

Without Yin, the Kidneys resemble a drying well. Internal “dry heat” appears: tinnitus, dizziness, night sweats.

**Symptoms:** Dryness, night sweats, dizziness, tinnitus, weakness in the legs and lower back.

**Tongue & Pulse:** Reddish tongue with slight coating. Pulse thin and rapid.

**Causes:** Chronic overwork, night shifts, excessive sexual activity, prolonged illness.

- **Kidney Yang Deficiency (肾阳虚)**

A lack of Kidney Yang is like the life “hearth” cooling down. The person feels cold, weak, depleted; libido decreases.

**Symptoms:** Cold body, low temperature, weakness, edema, low blood pressure, weakness in the lower back and knees.

**Tongue & Pulse:** Pale, swollen tongue. Pulse deep and weak.

**Causes:** Cold exposure, age-related decline, long-term chronic illness.

- **Kidney Qi Deficiency (肾气虚)**

Kidney Qi holds the body's foundational energy.

When it is insufficient, stability is lost: frequent urination, incontinence, lower back weakness.

**Symptoms:** Frequent or involuntary urination, chronic fatigue, pain and weakness in the lower back and knees.

**Tongue & Pulse:** Pale tongue. Pulse weak.

**Causes:** Prolonged illness, aging, overexertion.

- **Kidney Essence (Jing) Deficiency (肾精虚)**

When Kidney Jing becomes depleted, the deep “reserve of life” drains away. The foundation for development, reproduction, and regeneration weakens.



**Symptoms:** Slow growth and development (in children), premature graying and hair loss, decreased hearing, weakened teeth, reduced sexual function, poor memory and concentration.

**Tongue & Pulse:** Tongue pale or without distinct features. Pulse deep, weak, with low dynamism.

**Causes:** Congenital weakness, hereditary factors, long-term chronic illness, extreme overwork, depletion from lifestyle mistakes and aging.

## Gallbladder (胆, Dǎn)

The Gallbladder assists the Liver, symbolizing decisiveness and the ability to make clear choices. It stores and excretes bile and supports courage of spirit.

### • Gallbladder Yin Deficiency (膽阴虚)

Without Yin, the Gallbladder behaves like a dried-up stream: irritability appears, the skin and mucosa dry, headaches arise.

**Symptoms:** Irritability, dry skin, headaches, night sweats, reddish and dry tongue, thin and slightly rapid pulse.

**Causes:** Prolonged stress, emotional instability, fluid depletion.

### • Gallbladder Yang Deficiency (膽阳虚)

When Yang is weak, there is not enough “drive” to make decisions. Cold, weakness, and brittle nails appear. It feels like you cannot “turn on the light” in a dark room full of doubts.

**Symptoms:** Cold, weakness, low motivation, brittle nails, pale tongue, weak pulse.

**Causes:** General weakness, insufficient energy, digestive disruption.

### • Gallbladder Qi Deficiency (膽气虚)

Without adequate Qi, it is difficult to be bold and decisive. Persistent insecurity arises, decision-making becomes difficult, fatigue appears.

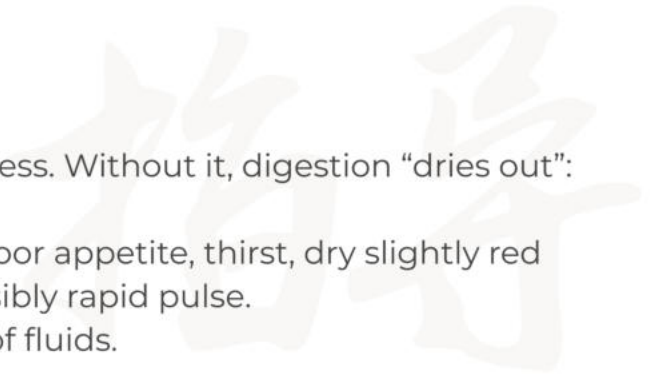
**Symptoms:** Weakness, fatigue, decreased courage, pale tongue, weak pulse.

**Causes:** Psycho-emotional strain, chronic stress, insufficient Liver support.

## Stomach (胃, Wèi)

The Stomach is the “furnace” of digestion — the beginning of transforming food into nutrients and energy.





- **Stomach Yin Deficiency (胃阴虚)**

Stomach Yin is the “water” of the cooking process. Without it, digestion “dries out”: heartburn, dryness, thirst appear.

**Symptoms:** Dry mouth, heartburn, dry stool, poor appetite, thirst, dry slightly red tongue (especially in the center), thin and possibly rapid pulse.

**Causes:** Hot, spicy food, chronic gastritis, lack of fluids.

- **Stomach Yang Deficiency (胃阳虚)**

Without Yang, the Stomach cannot “warm” the food — like trying to cook on a stove that is turned off. Cold in the abdomen, bloating, and weakness appear.

**Symptoms:** Cold in the abdomen, low appetite, bloating, diarrhea, weakness, pale moist tongue, weak deep pulse.

**Causes:** Cold food, cold exposure, chronic digestive fatigue.

- **Stomach Qi Deficiency (胃气虚)**

When Qi is insufficient, the Stomach cannot mix and move food. There is heaviness, weakness, and no joy from eating.

**Symptoms:** Weak digestion, poor appetite, bloating, fatigue, pallor, pale tongue, weak pulse.

**Causes:** Overwork, poor diet, chronic digestive disorders.

## Large Intestine (大肠, Dà Cháng)

The Large Intestine is the final “station” of digestion, separating useful from unnecessary.

- **Large Intestine Yin Deficiency (大肠阴虚)**

Without Yin, the intestine dries out like waterless channels: stool becomes hard and dry.

**Symptoms:** Constipation, dry stool, dryness of skin and mucosa, dry reddish tongue, thin rapid pulse.

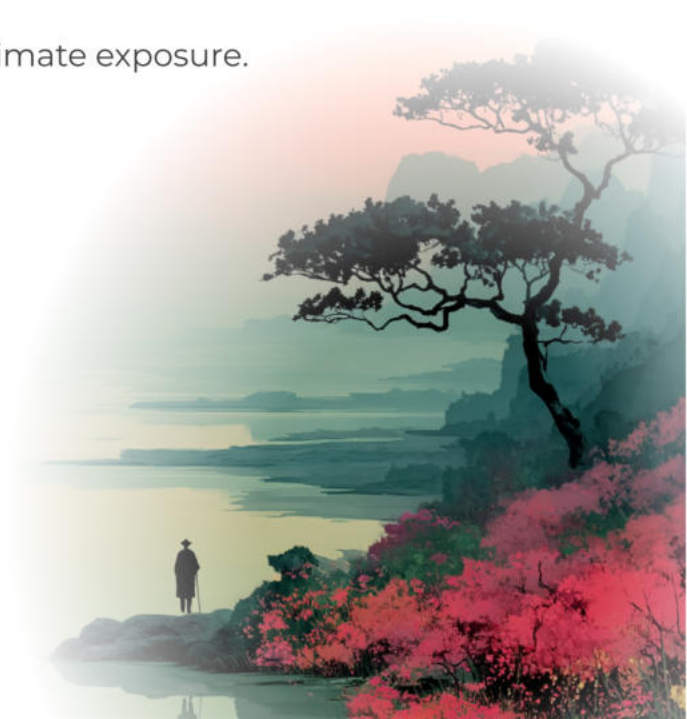
**Causes:** Lack of fluids, hot foods, prolonged dry climate exposure.

- **Large Intestine Yang Deficiency (大肠阳虚)**

A lack of Yang makes peristalsis sluggish. Cold, diarrhea, and bloating indicate the “digestive fire” has gone out.

**Symptoms:** Cold in the lower abdomen, diarrhea, bloating, weakness, low appetite, pale moist tongue, weak deep pulse.

**Causes:** Cold foods, cold exposure, weak digestive system.



- **Large Intestine Qi Deficiency (大肠气虚)**

Without Qi, the intestine cannot move its contents properly. Stool is irregular; peristalsis is weak.

**Symptoms:** Tendency toward diarrhea or incomplete bowel movements, fatigue, weakness or bloating in the lower abdomen, pale tongue, weak pulse.

**Causes:** Chronic digestive illness, overexertion, lack of energy.

## **Bladder (膀胱, Páng Guāng)**

The Bladder is a reservoir that regulates fluid storage and excretion.

- **Bladder Yin Deficiency (膀胱阴虚)**

Without Yin, the Bladder becomes a “dry well,” causing frequent urination and irritability.

**Symptoms:** Frequent urination in small amounts, thirst, dry skin, irritability, reddish dry tongue, thin pulse.

**Causes:** Fluid deficiency, overwork, prolonged inflammation.

- **Bladder Yang Deficiency (膀胱阳虚)**

Without Yang, the Bladder cannot move fluids — stagnation and cold in the lower body arise.

**Symptoms:** Cold, weakness, frequent urination, edema, low libido, pale moist tongue, weak deep pulse.

**Causes:** Cold climate, Kidney weakness, chronic urinary tract disorders.

- **Bladder Qi Deficiency (膀胱气虚)**

Without Qi, urinary incontinence becomes common; energy declines.

**Symptoms:** Incontinence, frequent urination, lower back weakness, fatigue, pale tongue, weak pulse.

**Causes:** Aging, general body weakness, chronic illness.



The principle of a holistic approach to body and spirit in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is an art of seeing a person not as a mechanical set of organs or a cluster of symptoms, but as a living, dynamic, energetic world in miniature. In TCM, we are not simply a “biological machine,” but a microcosm reflecting the rhythms, laws, and harmony of the entire universe. Our body, psyche, and emotional states are interconnected so closely that the condition of one inevitably affects the others.

This approach is built on the foundational concepts of TCM: the dynamic balance of Yin and Yang, the interaction of the Five Elements, the movement of vital energy Qi, the nourishment of the body by Blood (Xue), the support of deep reserves of life essence Jing, and the development of the spiritual component Shen.

## *Imagine yourself as a large, harmonious orchestra:*

The organs are the musicians, each with its own instrument and part to play;

- Yin and Yang are two conductors striving to keep the music balanced and harmonious—Yin as shadow and stillness, Yang as light and activity;
- Qi and Blood are the “notes” and “melodies,” flowing smoothly and filling the body’s sound with strength and rhythm;
- Shen is the presence of the orchestra on stage—its ability to inspire, convey emotion, and give meaning.

When all elements work in harmony, the “music” of your life sounds coherent and vibrant, filling you with health, clarity, and emotional balance.

## *The Interconnection of Qi, Blood, Yin, and Yang*

Health is the balance between Yin (shadow, cold, rest, depth) and Yang (light, warmth, activity, movement). Imagine a garden where the plants grow under the gentle warmth of the sun (Yang) and drink the life-giving moisture of the night’s dew (Yin). If Yin-energy dries up, the garden withers, and a person begins to “burn from within”: anxiety appears, the skin dries, irritability increases, sleep becomes disturbed.

If Yang-energy is lacking, the garden becomes cold: a person feels down, weak, and chronically fatigued.

Qi and Blood are the “sap” of the garden, the nourishing currents that sustain life in every organ.

Any imbalance—whether a lack of “moisture” or “sunlight”—affects both inner well-being and outward appearance.

In TCM, there are no ready-made universal solutions because every person is unique. We come into the world with a certain constitution (strength of Jing), heredity, and temperament. Our well-being is influenced by seasonal climate changes, nutrition, daily rhythm, and the social and natural environment.

TCM teaches us to feel these rhythms: in winter—adjust to the cold and strengthen Kidney energy with warm foods and rest; in spring—help the Liver “sprout” with renewed strength using green vegetables and gentle activity; in summer—protect the Heart from excessive heat; in autumn—support the Lungs and fortify immunity.



Every person has their own path and their own palette of methods and recommendations.

### ***Harmony of Shen as the highest goal:***

When the body is filled with Jing and Qi, when the organs function in harmony, emotions remain balanced and thoughts clear—Shen (spirit, consciousness) shines brightly. A sense of deep inner calm appears, a wiser perspective on life, and the strength to face challenges without fear.

### ***The inseparability of body, emotions, and spirit:***

In TCM, each organ not only performs a physiological function but also corresponds to an emotional and spiritual aspect. For example:

- **The Liver (肝)** is closely linked to anger, planning, and determination. When Liver Qi stagnates—as if a musician cannot reach the needed note—a person becomes irritable, experiences headaches, and muscle tension. But once the Liver is harmonized, clarity of thought and confidence return.
- **The Spleen (脾)** is associated with care and thought processes. When unbalanced, a person tends toward overthinking, worry, and problems with concentration.
- **The Kidneys (肾)** store your innate energy and willpower. Weak Kidneys can manifest not only as fatigue, lumbar weakness, or tinnitus but also as reduced motivation and hesitation when facing life's challenges.

Thus, any physical issue may have an emotional root, and emotional instability may reflect in the body. By eliminating energetic “disruptions,” we help body and spirit resonate in unison.

### ***Prevention Through the Harmonization of the Whole Body***

The holistic approach in TCM is not a pursuit of eliminating already-present illnesses but a practice of ensuring they do not arise. This includes:

- **Proper nutrition:** choosing foods according to the season and your personal constitution to nourish Qi and Blood.
- **Qigong and Taiji practices:** gentle movements that help Qi flow freely, strengthen the body, and calm the mind.
- **Herbal support:** using the power of nature to restore internal balance.
- **Tui Na massage:** manual techniques that enhance circulation, move Qi, and relieve tension.



These methods work together as parts of one ensemble, strengthening the foundation of your health rather than battling the “weeds” of disease that grow upon it.

## ***Dietary Principles (Ayurveda + Chinese Tradition)***

Both Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine view nutrition as the primary tool for maintaining health. Despite differences in terminology, the two systems share many similar approaches.

- Regularity and moderation. Eating meals at the same time each day strengthens the Stomach and Spleen. Overeating or prolonged fasting weakens Qi.
- Seasonality. Food should correspond to the time of year: warming dishes in winter, light vegetables in spring, cooling foods in summer, and moistening foods in autumn.
- Quality of food. Preference is given to fresh, natural ingredients, while excessively processed or old foods are avoided.
- Combination of flavors. A balanced diet includes all main tastes—sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, salty, and astringent—to harmonize the organs and emotions.
- Mindfulness. It is important to eat without haste, in a calm environment, so that Shen (consciousness) participates in the process.

Thus, nutrition becomes not only a source of energy but also a tool for harmonizing Yin and Yang, preventing illness, and supporting longevity.

## ***Sattvic Nutrition (Concept and Practice)***

The concept of “sattvic nutrition” comes from the Indian tradition but has many parallels with Chinese medical philosophy. Sattva represents purity, clarity, and harmony, and nutrition in this context serves to support the body, mind, and spirit.

Key features of sattvic nutrition include:

- Food should be fresh, natural, and easy to digest
- Foods that provoke overstimulation or sluggishness—excessively spicy, oily, old, or overly processed—are excluded;
- The diet includes fruits, vegetables, dairy products, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and honey;
- Moderation is essential: food should not overburden the body but also should not leave one hungry.



The practice of sattvic eating is aimed not only at physical health but also at mental clarity and inner harmony. It supports calmness, lucidity of mind, and is beneficial for spiritual disciplines. In Chinese tradition, this corresponds to nutrition that nourishes Shen and harmonizes Yin and Yang.

## *Incorrect Food Choices*

Traditional Chinese Medicine emphasizes that even beneficial foods can harm the body when used improperly.

- Abundant eating overloads the Stomach and Spleen, causing food stagnation, phlegm, and dampness.
- Insufficient eating leads to depletion of Qi and Blood, weakens the Kidneys, and reduces vitality.
- A calorie-dense diet (excessive sweets, flour products, fatty foods) leads to obesity, diabetes, internal heat, and blockages.
- A prolonged low-calorie diet exhausts the body and disrupts the balance of Yin and Yang.

Incorrect food choices are considered one of the main causes of illnesses—ones that can be prevented with mindful attention to diet.

## *Vegetarianism and Fasting*

Buddhist practices introduced the tradition of vegetarianism into Chinese culture. Diets were based on vegetables, grains, legumes, and fruits. Meat was completely excluded, and nutrition was viewed as support for spiritual discipline and compassion.

Daoist practices developed the system of bigu—abstaining from grains. Instead, herbs, vegetables, nuts, and seeds were used. It was believed that this approach slowed aging, strengthened Qi, and prolonged life.

Fasting was used as a method of cleansing body and mind:

- short-term fasting (1–3 days) to relieve heaviness and restore mental clarity;
- seasonal fasting (especially in spring) to renew the body and expel stagnant energy;
- prolonged fasting, practiced by Daoists, as a path toward spiritual refinement and strengthening Jing.

These approaches were not seen as an end in themselves, but as tools for harmonizing body, energy, and spirit.



# *Self-Study and Identifying Imbalances*

In this section, we focus on understanding your current state of health through the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Gaining awareness of the underlying patterns of imbalance in the body will help you make informed choices about recovery and prevention.

## *Why Self-Study Matters*

According to TCM, health is achieved through harmony between the internal organs, the movement of Qi, and the balance of Yin and Yang. When this harmony is disrupted, the body may express it through specific syndromes that influence your emotional state, overall well-being, and physical condition. Understanding the unique characteristics of your own body allows you to identify the predominant imbalance and successfully adapt the recommendations needed to restore harmony.



## *How to Use This Section*

To work with this material, you will need your workbook. Open the section titled “Self-Study and Identifying Imbalances” on page 20.

This section includes questions designed to help you:

- Assess your current state
- Identify key signs of imbalance
- Determine which type of imbalance or syndrome most closely matches your condition

## *How to work with the material*

Answer the questions in your workbook as honestly as possible, focusing on your sensations, symptoms, and emotional background.

Based on your answers, identify which imbalance predominates in your body. Then move to the description of the corresponding syndrome in this program to study its mechanisms, manifestations, and approaches to recovery.

This process will not only help you understand yourself more deeply, but will also enable you to choose recommendations that restore your inner balance and improve your overall well-being. By working to correct imbalances, you will be able to apply TCM knowledge to support long-term health and prevention. The following pages contain descriptions of syndromes associated with different internal organs, along with their signs, mechanisms of development, and methods of restoration.

# List of Syndromes

## *Kidney Yin Deficiency (Shèn Yīn Xū)*

### **Mechanism of development:**

In TCM, the Kidneys are the root of inherited vitality and the foundation of the body's Yin and Yang. Kidney Yin represents the body's nourishing, cooling, and moistening substance—the “water” of the system. When Kidney Yin becomes depleted (due to aging, overwork, chronic illness, or an imbalanced lifestyle), the body loses its ability to cool and moisten tissues, which affects the ears and can lead to tinnitus.

### **Signs and symptoms:**

- A soft, persistent ringing in the ears, often worse at night or during fatigue
- Dry throat, thirst, night sweats
- Increased tinnitus after overexertion
- Insomnia, low energy, soreness of the lower back and knees
- Tongue: thin with a reddish coating
- Pulse: thin and rapid

### **Restoration strategies:**

- Nourish and replenish Kidney Yin using Liu Wei Di Huang Wan (六味地黄丸)
- Diet: include Yin-nourishing foods such as tofu, black sesame, goji berries, blueberries, and sea fish
- Avoid excessive spicy or heating foods
- Adjust daily routine to prevent overexertion and support recovery

## **2. Kidney Yang Deficiency (Shèn Yáng Xū)**

### **Mechanism of development:**

Kidney Yang provides the body with “warmth” and metabolic strength. When it is deficient (due to chronic diseases, overcooling, age-related changes, poor diet), the warming function weakens, blood circulation to the hearing organs diminishes, which can lead to ringing in the ears.

### **Signs and symptoms:**

- A dull, fluctuating ringing in the ears, worse in the cold or early morning
- Cold extremities, weakness in the lower back and knees, frequent nighttime urination
- Edema, fatigue, decreased libido
- Tongue: pale, swollen, moist
- Pulse: deep and weak



### ***Restoration strategies:***

- Warm and restore Kidney Yang using You Gui Wan (右归丸) or Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan (金匮肾气丸)
- Diet: favor warming foods—lamb, ginger, cinnamon, onion, garlic, brown rice, buckwheat; avoid raw and cold foods, reduce cooling fruits and salads
- Keep the body warm, especially the lower back area
- Neck massage (Kidney region reflex zones) and foot massage to stimulate Yang and improve circulation

### ***3. Kidney Essence Deficiency (Kidney Jing Deficiency)***

#### **Mechanism of development:**

Jing (Essence) is the deep foundational substance that governs growth, development, reproduction, and longevity. When Essence is depleted (due to aging, congenital weakness, or long-term illness), Kidney function weakens and sensory organs—including the ears—are affected, often leading to tinnitus.

#### ***Signs and symptoms:***

- Gradually developing tinnitus alongside reduced vitality
- Hair loss, brittle teeth, declining vision
- Weakness in the lower back and knees; signs of premature aging
- Tongue: pale
- Pulse: deep and weak

### ***Restoration strategies:***

- Nourish and rebuild Kidney Essence using Zuo Gui Wan (左归丸), a formula that deeply restores Jing
- Diet: include Jing-replenishing foods such as black sesame, walnuts, goji berries, beans, lotus root, eggs, lean proteins, and bone broths
- Ensure sufficient sleep, balanced physical activity, and proper rest cycles
- Ear massage (Kidney reflex areas) and foot reflexology for strengthening Jing and supporting vitality

### ***4. Rising Liver Yang (Gān Yáng Shàng Kàng)***

#### **Mechanism of development:**

The Liver ensures smooth movement of Qi and stores Blood. When Liver Yin becomes depleted—often due to stress, emotional strain, or chronic



tension—Liver Yang begins to rise upward like “fire,” rushing toward the head and ears and triggering tinnitus or headaches.

### ***Signs and symptoms:***

- Loud, sharp ringing in the ears, especially during stress or irritation
- Headaches, dizziness, flushed face and eyes, irritability
- Dry eyes, bitter taste in the mouth
- Tongue: red along the edges
- Pulse: wiry and tight

### ***Recovery methods:***

- Subdue rising Liver Yang and nourish Liver Yin using Tian Ma Gou Teng Yin (天麻钩藤饮)
- Diet: include green leafy vegetables, sprouts, fresh fruits, green tea, and light broths; reduce spicy, greasy foods and alcohol
- Practice relaxation techniques, meditation, and gentle breathing exercises



## ***Dietary Recommendations by Organ***

- Liver — Foods with a sour flavor and green color: sorrel, spinach, lemons, green apples. These help preserve body fluids and support the elasticity of the tendons.
- Heart — Foods with a bitter flavor: chicory, bitter melon, green tea, dandelion greens. They reduce internal heat and strengthen the vessels.
- Spleen — Foods with a naturally sweet flavor: rice, pumpkin, carrots, dates, honey. They tonify Qi, improve digestion, and enhance overall energy.
- Lungs — Foods with a pungent (acrid) flavor: radish, ginger, garlic, green onion. They promote the movement of Qi and help protect against colds.
- Kidneys — Foods with a salty flavor: seaweed, sesame seeds, nuts, seafood. They nourish Kidney Essence (Jing), strengthen the bones, and support reproductive function.

## ***Examples of Therapeutic Recipes for Each Organ***

- **For the Liver**
  - Sorrel and spinach decoction  
Improves blood circulation, relieves spasms, and supports Liver function during springtime.
  - Green vegetable salad with lemon juice  
Refreshes and nourishes the Liver, aids in detoxification, and promotes smoother Qi flow.

指子

- **For the Heart**

- Chrysanthemum and green tea infusion  
Reduces internal heat, calms the Spirit (Shen), and strengthens Heart vitality.
- Millet porridge with bitter melon  
Helps with insomnia, irritability, and symptoms of Heart heat.

- **For the Spleen**

- Rice porridge (congee, zhōu)  
Light, nourishing, and easy to digest; strengthens the Spleen, improves digestion, and supports recovery after illness.
- Pumpkin soup  
Tonifies Qi, reduces Dampness, and supports healthy stomach function.

- **For the Lungs**

- Pear and honey decoction  
Moistens the Lungs, eases dry cough, and soothes throat irritation.
- Radish and ginger soup  
Promotes Qi circulation, helps relieve cold symptoms, and strengthens respiratory function.

- **For the Kidneys**

- Black sesame and walnut decoction  
Nourishes the Kidneys and bones, supports hair health, and slows premature aging.
- Shrimp and mung bean soup  
Replenishes Kidney energy and improves the function of the bladder and lower burner.

