

Traditional Chinese Medicine: Diagnostic Signs

Like his counterpart in 'western medicine' the practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) arrives at a medical diagnosis through a set of guidelines and observations.

However, TCM's diagnostic methods uniquely include:

- looking at the *shen* – the client's complexion, movement, tongue etc.;
- hearing the speech, respiratory pattern and detecting the body odour etc.;
- asking about past history, present symptoms etc.;
- examining the pulse.

From the results, the TCM physician makes a conclusion about his client's medical condition. While TCM has many ways of identifying illness, one commonly used system is the 'Eight Principles Syndrome Differentiation'.

Its 8 principles, abstracted from the individual characteristics of specific syndromes, provide a guideline check for

- exterior and interior syndromes
- cold and heat syndromes
- deficiency and excess syndromes
- *yin* and *yang* syndromes

'Deficiency syndromes', for instance, refer to a lack of healthy *qi* and deficiencies in *yin*, *yang*, *qi*, blood and body fluids. These can be caused by or aggravate poor health. Arising from deficiency syndromes, pathogenic factors can attack the body to cause disease.

The table on the next page summarises some common deficiency syndromes, and is followed by a list of simple tonic recipes for better health.

Please consult a physician if symptoms of poor health persist or cause concern.

<i>Yin Deficiency</i>	<i>Yang Deficiency</i>	<i>Blood Deficiency</i>	<i>Qi Deficiency</i>
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Appearance of the Individual

Very thin	Lethargic	Pale-looking	Lethargic
Flushed cheeks	Lack interest in normal activities	The white of the eye, the lips and nail beds look pale	Lack interest in normal activities Lack inclination to talk

Complaints Experienced by the Individual

Excessive thirst	Afraid of the cold	Dizziness	Pale tongue
Feeling hot in the palms, chest and soles	Body extremities are cold at room temperature	Blurred vision occasionally Rapid heart rate (when at rest)	Dizziness Shortness of breath with minimal exertion
Reduced urine output	Little thirst and preferring hot drinks	Insomnia	
Dry, hard stools	Loose stools	Poor menstrual flow	
Red tongue	Diarrhoea in the early morning (5am)	Pale tongue	
Faster than normal heart rate			
Irritable	Fatigue Pale tongue Feeling of tastelessness in the mouth		

Perspiration Pattern

Sweating at night, for no obvious reason	Sweating without reason		Spontaneous sweating that is worse during exertion
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