Finding Balance: Using traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) to achieve better health

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), a more than 5000 year-old system of healing, there are five basic constitutional types, based on the five Chinese elements: water, wood, fire, earth and metal. Discovering your predominate constitutional type and balancing the elements is a key to maximizing your health in Chinese medicine philosophy. To find out which element(s) you need to balance look over the list of characteristics on the survey on the next page. If the personality trait or health tendency currently describes you, put a 2 in the white circle to the right of the characteristic. If it is a problem or trait you used to have, put a 1 in the circle. Total your scores at the bottom. The element with the highest score generally indicates your constitutional type and what element you should use supplements for first.

Which constitutional type describes you?

*Complete the survey on the next page to discover your Chinese constitution and which element you need to balance your health according to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).*

**Water**—related to the kidneys and bladder. Water people are calm, patient and peaceful.

**Wood**—related to the liver and gallbladder. Wood people are bold, driven and decisive.

**Fire**—related to the nervous, circulatory and glandular systems. Fire people are charismatic and charming.

**Earth**—related to the stomach and pancreas. Earth people are nurturing, helpful and loyal.

**Metal**—related to the lungs and colon. Metal people are precise, orderly and reserved.

How to use the Chinese formulas

When using NSP Chinese formulas, pick the one that most closely matches your profile and use it first. Example: If your highest score is wood start with wood formulas. Determine whether you are experiencing an excess or deficient condition and choose accordingly. After that area improves, you can try another formula if you have another strong imbalance.

Some of NSP’s Chinese formulas contain over 15 synergistic herbal ingredients, representing ancient Chinese herbal recipes. For dose and risk information refer to the product label. This information is for educational purposes only and not meant to replace your health care provider’s advice or treat or diagnose any disease.

*Source:* The source and inspiration of the Traditional Chinese Medicine information in this Guide came from the work of Steven Horne and his Tree Of Light Institute. We are greatly indebted to the knowledge and inspiration he has provided to the world on the use of herbal formulas in TCM.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Wood</th>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>Earth</th>
<th>Metal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdominal pain or discomfort</td>
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<td>Angry and defensive</td>
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<td>Anxious and nervous</td>
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<td>Arthritis or osteoporosis</td>
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<td>Asthma, hayfever or bronchitis</td>
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<td>Bad breath or foul belching</td>
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<td>Burning or painful urination</td>
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<td>Sugar cravings</td>
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<td>Discouraged or depressed</td>
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<td>Easily excited</td>
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<td>Fearful, indecisive or timid</td>
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<td>Feeling “burned-out”</td>
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<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
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<td>Food sits heavy on stomach</td>
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<td>Forgetful or absent-minded</td>
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<td>Frequent colds</td>
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<td>Frequent digestive problems</td>
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<td>Frequent respiratory problems</td>
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<td>Frequent urinary problems</td>
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<td>Gallbladder problems</td>
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<td>Headaches or migraines</td>
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<td>Intestinal gas or bloating</td>
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<td>Irritable and impatient</td>
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<td>Lack of muscle tone or overweight</td>
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<td>Loss of appetite or poor appetite</td>
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<td>Low back pain or backache</td>
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<td>Muscle tension or cramps</td>
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<td>Morning fatigue or sluggishness</td>
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<td>Nervous and excitable</td>
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<td>Prostate or vaginal problems</td>
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<td>Reserved and analytical</td>
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<td>Restless sleep or disturbed dreams</td>
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<td>Sinus headaches or congestion</td>
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<td>Skin problems (acne, rashes, etc.)</td>
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<td>Tightness in chest</td>
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<td>Waking up frequently at night</td>
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<td>Water retention or edema</td>
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<td>Weak knees, legs or ankles</td>
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<td>Wheezing or shortness of breath</td>
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<td>Withdrawn, grieving or sad</td>
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Total each column here:
Water Element
Related to the kidneys and bladder. Water people are calm, patient and peaceful.

**Excess condition:** Scantly or clear urine; fluid retention, edema; damp tongue with moist coating; puffy under eyes.
**Deficient condition:** Frequent, urgent urination; brittle bones, weak structure; pale tongue, often dry; dark circles under eyes.

**K-C (Excess condition)**
- Decreases water energy.
- The Chinese call this formula *qu shi*, which can be translated as “to get rid of dampness.”
- K-C is designed to promote kidney function and help clear retained water from the body, which may positively affect joints.

**KB-C (Deficient condition)**
- The water element in TCM philosophy is related to the kidneys and bladder.
- The Chinese call this formula *jian gu*, which can be translated to mean “strengthen the bones.” In TCM water is believed to carry nourishment for the bones and regulate metabolism through the urinary system.

Wood Element
Related to the blood and the liver and gallbladder. Wood people are bold, driven and decisive.

**Excess condition:** Reddish complexion; menstrual pain; angry, irritable feelings; active and tense.
**Deficient condition:** Depressed, discouraged feelings; fatigue. When the wood element is deficient, the person can feel discouraged and lose his/her drive and ambition.

**LIV-C (Excess condition)**
- The wood element in TCM philosophy is related to the liver and gallbladder.

**BP-C (Deficient condition)**
- The therapeutic principle for strengthening the wood element is called *Bu Xue*, which means in TCM to “nurture the blood.”
- Wood formulas for deficient conditions usually contain tonic herbs thought to support the Yin.
Earth Element
Related to the stomach and pancreas. Earth people are nurturing, helpful and loyal.

**Excess condition:** Acute acid indigestion; belching with foul taste in mouth; abdominal pain or discomfort; heavily coated tongue.

**Deficient condition:** Lack of HCl (hydrochloric acid), poor protein digestion; food sits heavy in the stomach; chronically poor appetite; pale tongue.

### AG-C (Excess condition)
- Dispels excess earth.
- The therapeutic principle for relieving the excess earth element is called *xiaodao*, which can be translated to mean “clear the congestion.”

### UC-C (Deficient condition)
- Increases earth energy.
- The Chinese call this formula *wenzhong*, which can be translated to mean “warm the centre.” Chronic weakness of the digestive organs, including the intestines, is considered to be a “cold” condition.

Fire Element
Related to the nervous, circulatory and glandular systems. Fire people are charismatic and charming.

**Excess condition:** Restless, fast moving; mania, overly enthusiastic; difficulty getting to sleep; red tip on tongue.

**Deficient condition:** Extreme fatigue; feeling “overwhelmed” and burned out; difficulty staying asleep; quivering tongue.

### STR-C (Excess condition)
- Decreases fire or hyper personality and stressful.
- The Chinese call this formula an *shen*, which can be translated to mean “to pacify the spirit.”

### HS-C (Deficient condition)
- HS-C is a TCM tonic formula relating to the Fire Element and the seat of fire being the heart, nerves and glands.
- The principle of strengthening the Fire Element is called *Yang Xin*, which means to nurture the ‘broken’ heart.
Metal Element
Related to the lungs, colon and mucosal membrane.
Metal people are precise, orderly and reserved.

**Excess condition:** Heavy mucus production; acute respiratory congestion; productive (damp) cough, moisture; excessive grieving, sadness.

**Deficient condition:** Scant mucus production; chronic respiratory weakness; dry cough, tightness in chest; aloof and emotionally distant, repressed grief.

**Tiao He Pak:** *Body cleanse to restore balance*

Tiao He Pak is a 10-day balancing and cleansing program to gently cleanse the intestinal system to stimulate the elimination of intestinal buildup and promotes proper functioning of the bowel. Tiao He is a Chinese phrase denoting the restoration of harmony and balance.

- Overall body cleanse.
- Supports the intestinal system.
- Supports intestinal regularity.
- May improve energy and well-being.

**Para-Pak:** *Support for healthy organisms*

A 10-day elimination program. Supports the efforts of the intestinal system in cleansing as it creates an environment that supports healthy organisms.

- Is safe, natural, gentle and effective
- Cleanses and detoxifies.
An important concept in Chinese medicine is *chi* (also known as *qi*). Chi is the vital life energy of the body and is considered essential for all life. The chi flows through the body following pathways called meridians. Meridians flow through the internal organs and are named after the organ which they flow through. Illness and imbalance occurs when the chi is blocked or becomes stagnant in any of these meridian channels. Therefore, the goal in Chinese medicine and herbalogy is to keep the chi flowing unobstructed in order to maintain optimum health.

The other important concept in Chinese medicine is *yin* and *yang* which stems from a basic Chinese concept of the interdependence and relationship of opposites. Much like hot cannot be understood without cold, yin cannot exist without its opposite yang, and vice versa. Together the two poles are complementary and form a whole, much like a battery cannot generate a charge without its positive and negative poles. In relation to health issues, *yin* deficiency means the body’s organs do not have enough raw material to function; in *yang* deficiency, the body’s organs don’t react adequately when needed. In traditional Chinese medicine, the goal is to balance the *yin* and the *yang*. Imbalances disrupt energy flow and compromise optimum health.

**Chi-regulating Formulas**

Chinese herbal combinations to enhance and maximize the flow of chi throughout the body systems and organs.

**Deficient chi:** General weakness and lethargy; pale face and tongue; lack of appetite; soft-spoken, quiet; shallow breathing.

**Stagnant chi:** Soft lumps; dark purplish tongue; rebellious chi (energy flowing in the wrong direction); wiry or tense pulse; anxiety and depression.

**IMM-C**

*(Increase deficient chi)*

- Increases chi.
- In TCM this formula is designed to strengthen a weakened energy constitution.
- Deficient conditions in TCM.
- IMM-C is a TCM formula designed to build and strengthen the immune system. The principle of therapy is called *sheng mai* which can be translated to mean “generate the pulse.”

**Chinese Mineral Chi Tonic**

*(Increase deficient chi)*

- Overall chi tonic.
- Provides electrolytes for energy.
- Provides 180 mg of potassium per tablespoon (15 mL).
- Exclusive TCM formula liquid mineral concentrate and time-honoured Chinese tonic herbs.
When rhythms get out of sync, we get sick. This has led scientists to coin a new term: **dynamical diseases.** Dynamical diseases are diseases characterized by abnormal temporal organization, or variations of rhythms outside of normal limits, or appearance of new rhythms where none existed previously. Dynamical diseases show imbalances in the relationship between what the Chinese would call *yin* and *yang.*

— *Chinese Healing Herbs: The Simple Principle That Works* by Dean Black

### AD-C
(Formula to unblock and move stagnant chi)

- Considered a chi-regulating formula
- In TCM this formula is thought to unblock stagnant chi.
- The Chinese call this formula *jie yu,* which can be translated to mean "relieve anxiety and tension." According to TCM, when the liver is functioning at its peak, positive mood may be maintained.
- Excess conditions in TCM.

### Interesting:

When rhythms get out of sync, we get sick. This has led scientists to coin a new term: **dynamical diseases.** Dynamical diseases are diseases characterized by abnormal temporal organization, or variations of rhythms outside of normal limits, or appearance of new rhythms where none existed previously. Dynamical diseases show imbalances in the relationship between what the Chinese would call *yin* and *yang.*
Yin & Yang-regulating Formulas
Chinese herbal combinations to balance the complementary forces of yin and yang.

Deficient yin: Burning sensation in skin, palms and feet; night sweats, insomnia; dry skin, eyes, mouth; constant thirst with frequent urination; agitation.
Excess yang: Fever or fever with chills; sore throat, gums; eye irritation (red, bloodshot); heat, dryness; craving for cold foods and drinks; bright red tongue; redness, acute inflammation; rapid, floating pulse.

HY-C (Increase deficient yin)

• Yin nourishing formula.
• For the person experiencing what is called in TCM “heat syndrome” with a deficient or weakened Constitution.
• The therapeutic principle is Bu Yin, literally meaning to supplement the Yin, which is the fluid portion of the body, according to TCM philosophy.

IF-C (Reduces excess yang)

• Yang formula (heat).
• Main TCM principle of therapy called Qing Re, which means to clean the heat.
• IF-C, according to TCM, quenches the fire element and restores balance by clearing toxins.
• Similar to traditional Western herbology, blood purifying formulas, but differs in that the therapies in TCM are much broader in scope.

HRP-C (Reduces excess yang)

• Reduces yang (heat).
• Increases chi.
• HRP-C is a yin-yang balancing formula developed by the traditional Chinese doctor, Wenwei Xie.