

Kidney/Bladder or Water Element

Duties:

- Maintains the storehouse of vital essence (*Jing*) and reserves.
- Sets the rhythm for growth and maturation (genetic potential).
- Responsible for creating, storing, protecting and circulating Qi.
- Responsible for generating the essential fluids (Blood).
- Provides the innate wisdom that governs immunity.
- Source of the instinct to create, procreate and survive.

Characteristics of Healthy Water:

- Fully present in the moment. Aware of the lessons of the past and hopeful about the future.
- Healthy expression of curiosity, wonder, and intellect.
- Spiritually inclined. Able to use spiritual beliefs to explain, understand and cope with life.
- Visionary and creative.
- Able to move at will from rest to action and back again.
- Plenty of reserves for times of stress and illness.
- Strong bones and teeth.
- Thick, abundant head and pubic hair.
- Adequate moisture and fluids.
- Hearing, vision and memory are good.
- Excellent endocrine and immune system function.

Symptoms of Water Imbalance:

Physical

- Congenital health problems and constitutional weakness.
- Poor immune function.
- Problems with sexual maturation and the reproductive system.
- General signs of premature aging. Hair loss, poor memory, diminished vision and hearing, weakened immunity, and lack of vitality.
- Endocrine system problems. Adrenal insufficiency, hypo or hyperthyroidism, blood sugar imbalances, hormonal irregularities, etc.
- Physical inflexibility. Stiff or rigid posture. Arthritic or rheumatic conditions. Jerky movements. Joint problems.
- Sensations of coldness in the hands, feet, and low back.
- Urinary tract problems: Incontinence, frequent urination, prostatitis, kidney stones, frequent bladder infections.
- Edema, especially in the lower part of the body.
- Low libido. Impotence. Infertility. Amenorrhea (lack of menses).
- Dizziness, vertigo, tinnitus.
- Low vitality, lack of stamina. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

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Emotional:

- Fearful of change and the unknown.
- Mental inflexibility.
- Depression with hopelessness. Gloomy disposition.
- Lack of motivation and will power.
- No interest in food or other sources of nourishment.
- Cynicism and pessimism.
- Paranoid, fanatical. Forceful and defiant in the face of fear. Insecurity masked by aggressive or belligerent behavior.
- Obsessed with sex.
- Poor memory.
- Hypochondriac tendencies.
- Low self-confidence.
- Absent-minded and self-absorbed.

Therapeutic Strategies for Water

- Adaptogenic herbs, Kidney Yin and Yang tonics and nervines for long term use.
- Hepatics to support Wood and allow Kidney Yin to be restored.
- Support all other organ networks as needed to allow Kidney Yin to be restored.
- Improve digestion, sleep and elimination as needed.
- Assess diet to emphasize nourishing whole foods.
- Learn to use immune stimulating herbs to treat opportunistic infections.
- Create appropriate schedules to allow adequate balance between rest and activity.
- Practice stress reduction techniques and reduce or eliminate sources of on-going stress.

Water Facts

- The Qi of the Kidney and Bladder peaks between 3:00 PM and 7:00 PM. During this time one should rest or nap and begin to slow down in preparation for relaxed time with friends and family in the evening followed by restful sleep.
- The Sound associated with Water is groaning. This sound is made when one is exerting great effort in the face of exhaustion or fatigue. Groaning usually indicates that one is not resting enough to create reserves.
- Water is the source of all creativity and vision. It nourishes everything and gives life.
- Water provides the reserves used by all of the other Elements to maintain balance. An imbalance in any of the Elements that continues for any length of time will eventually drain the reserves of Water. If this happens, Qi and Blood are impaired and vital essence will be damaged.
- Nourishing Water is the purpose of all healing and longevity strategies.