

Heart/Small Intestine or Fire Element

Duties:

- Radiates the outward expression of life force (Qi) through the personality.
- Suffuses the physical body with conscious awareness.
- Collects and interprets sensual experience
- Assimilates the vital essence of emotional experience
- Decodes and generates symbolic communication.
- Initiates and monitors the flow of intra-cellular communication.
- Distributes warmth to all parts of the body.
- Provides the continuous flow of Blood throughout the body.
- Stores the *Shen*.

Characteristics of Healthy Fire:

- Passionate engagement with life.
- Expressive personality characterized by warmth, affection and good humor.
- Able to articulate thoughts, feelings and desires, especially joy and sorrow.
- Sensual appreciation of the physical world.
- Attracted to beauty, honesty and truth.
- Spiritually and emotionally aware.
- Rhythmic, steady cardiac function.
- Even circulation of blood and nerve sensations throughout the body.
- Restful sleep and good dreams.

Symptoms of Fire Imbalance:

Physical

- Cardio-vascular problems such as heart palpitations, arrhythmia, angina, heart weakness, high or low blood pressure, and poor circulation.
- Numbness in the extremities.
- Excessive heat with profuse perspiration, flushed complexion and rapid pulse or, excessive cold with cold hands and feet, cool, clammy skin, pale or ashen complexion and exhaustion.
- Speech problems: stuttering, muteness, speech impediments, constrained voice, general inability to control the tongue.
- Sleep problems: disturbing dreams, being jolted awake, nightmares, restless sleep and sleepwalking.
- Chronic problems with vertigo, dizziness and light-headedness.
- Tongue color is scarlet at the tip or purple at the center.
- Lack of libido.
- Physical exhaustion.

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Emotional

- Depression characterized by the inability to experience or express joy.
- Emotionally flat and unresponsive or cold and withdrawn.
- Poor concentration, easily distracted and forgetful.
- Unable to articulate emotions, ideas or abstract concepts.
- Emotionally insecure or unstable.
- Lack of spontaneity and creativity.
- Manic behavior.
- Inappropriate, loud or excessive laughter.
- Lacks a sense of humor.
- Signs of mental illness: irrational thoughts, hallucinations, hysteria, delerium, or psychosis.

Therapeutic Strategies for Balancing Fire

- Cardio-vascular tonics and circulatory herbs to support heart function and circulation.
- Nervine tonics and adaptogenic herbs to support the nervous system and help recover from the impact of shock and stress.
- Kidney Yin tonics and hepatic tonics as needed to support and regulate the heart.
- Hepatics to improve liver function and reduce Wood excess.
- Protection from harshness. Avoid television, print and electronic media, exposure to violent images and situations, over-stimulation, abusive treatment, loud noises, etc.
- Assess diet for sufficient levels of calcium and magnesium, appropriate use of hot or stimulating foods and spices, over-consumption of alcohol and other drying substances, and excessive amounts of cold or processed (mucus producing) foods.
- Increase consumption of cooling and moistening foods and beverages as needed.
- Spend time each day in nature immersed in the color green listening to the sounds generated by the elements.
- Develop a spiritual practice that fosters contemplation, reflection and gratitude.
- Engage the senses through artistic expression or appreciation. Listen to music, dance, sing, draw, garden, pick flowers, cook, make love, read poetry, visit an art exhibit, etc.
- Laugh, especially with others.

Fire Facts

- The Qi of the Heart and Small Intestine peak between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM each day. During this time one should be actively expressing her/his life purpose, interacting with others for mutual benefit and sharing love, affection, ideas, inspiration, plans, etc.
- The Sound associated with Fire is laughing. Inappropriate or excessive laughter or the inability to recognize and appreciate wit and humor indicates problems with Fire.
- Many Fire symptoms are worse with exposure to extreme heat.
- The free and generous expression of thoughts, ideas and emotions are the product of healthy Fire.
- Fire craves the stimulation and warmth generated by a variety of relationships and exposure to new ideas, experiences and opportunities to keep it burning strong. (Wood)
- The passionate expression and experience of life (Fire) is channeled into appreciation of the mundane rituals of everyday life and the stability of family and community. (Earth)
- The exuberant energy of Fire is regulated and cooled by the timeless wisdom of Water.
- Fire is responsible for providing the spiritual purpose and compassion needed for good judgement and healthy discrimination. (Metal)