

# How Emotions Affect our Health

## Learn how emotions are related to body systems and symptoms

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In [traditional Chinese medicine](#), emotions and physical health are intimately connected. Sadness, nervous tension and anger, worry, fear, and overwork are each associated with a particular organ in the body. For example, irritability and inappropriate anger can affect the liver and result in menstrual pain, headache, redness of the face and eyes, dizziness and dry mouth.

A diagnosis in traditional Chinese medicine is highly individualized. Once an organ system is identified, the unique symptoms of the patient determine the practitioner's treatment approach.

Using the liver again as an example, breast distension, menstrual pain, and irritability during menses are treated with certain herbs and acupuncture points, and migraines headaches, dizziness, and inappropriate anger with redness of the face point to a different type of liver pattern and is treated in a different way.

What does the liver have to do with migraines? Organ systems in the traditional Asian sense may include the Western medical-physiological function, but are also part of a holistic body system. The liver, for example, ensures that energy and blood flow smoothly throughout the body. It also regulates bile secretion, stores blood, and is connected with the tendons, nails, and eyes.

By understanding these connections, we can see how an eye disorder such as conjunctivitis might be due to an imbalance in the liver, or excess menstrual flow may be due to dysfunction in the liver's blood-storing ability. Besides emotions, other factors such as dietary, environmental, lifestyle, and hereditary factors also contribute to the development of imbalances.

### Spleen

- Emotions - worry, dwelling or focusing too much on a particular topic, excessive mental work
- Spleen Function - Food digestion and nutrient absorption. Helps in the formation of blood and energy. Keeps blood in the blood vessels. Connected with muscles, mouth, and lips. Involved in thinking, studying, and memory.
- Symptoms of Spleen Imbalance - Tired, loss of appetite, mucus discharge, poor digestion, abdominal distension, loose stools or diarrhea. Weak muscles, pale lips. Bruising, excess menstrual blood flow, and other bleeding disorders.

### Lung

- Emotions - grief, sadness, detached.
- Lung Function - Respiration. Forms energy from air, and helps to distribute it throughout the body. Works with the kidney to regulate water metabolism. Important in the immune system and resistance to viruses and bacteria. Regulates sweat glands and body hair, and provides moisture to the skin.
- Symptoms of Lung Imbalance - Shortness of breath and shallow breathing, sweating, fatigue, cough, frequent cold and flu, allergies, asthma, and other lung conditions. Dry skin. Depression and crying.

## **Liver**

- Emotions - anger, resentment, frustration, irritability, bitterness, "flying off the handle".
- Liver Function - Involved in the smooth flow of energy and blood throughout the body. Regulates bile secretion, stores blood, and is connected with the tendons, nails, and eyes.
- Symptoms of Liver Imbalance - breast distension, menstrual pain, headache, irritability, inappropriate anger, dizziness, dry, red eyes and other eye conditions, tendonitis.

## **Heart**

- Emotions - lack of enthusiasm and vitality, mental restlessness, depression, insomnia, despair.
- Heart Function - Regulates the heart and blood vessels. Responsible for even and regular pulse. Influences vitality and spirit. Connected with the tongue, complexion, and arteries.
- Symptoms of Heart Imbalance - Insomnia, heart palpitations and irregular heart beat, excessive dreaming, poor long-term memory, psychological disorders.

## **Kidney**

- Emotions - fearful, weak willpower, insecure, aloof, isolated.
- Kidney Function - Key organ for sustaining life. Responsible for reproduction, growth and development, and maturation. Involved with lungs in water metabolism and respiration. Connected with bones, teeth, ears, and head hair.
- Symptoms of Kidney Imbalance - Frequent urination, urinary incontinence, night sweats, dry mouth, poor short-term memory, low back pain, ringing in the ears, hearing loss, and other ear conditions. Premature grey hair, hair loss, and osteoporosis.

## **Sources:**

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**Reference website:** <http://altmedicine.about.com/cs/anxietydepression/a/EmotionsTCM.htm>