

GEH1070_Tutorial 2

How to diagnose your body
constitution?

Learning Outcomes:

- ▶ 1. Understand the **concept** of body constitution.
- ▶ 2. Recognize basic **types** of body constitution.
- ▶ 3. Identify **your own** type of body constitution.

► 1. What is body constitution?

- Human constitution is defined as a special state of a population or an individual with a relative stability in function, structure, and metabolism, formed during growth, development and aging under the effect of the environment and on the basis of individual heredity. (based on TCM theory and clinical experience.)

►
By Kuang DY, 1977

➤ **1) a special state**

Physical conditions: shapes, muscles, odour, voice, breath, limbs, etc.

Physiological conditions: bowel and urinary habits, appetite, etc

Psychological conditions: optimistic/pessimistic, anxious/depressed, patient/impatient, warm/short temper, etc.

➤ **2) the state is relatively stable**

This is because of the governance of family inheritance or genetics, race and gender.

► 3) the state is changeable

Internal factor: age, mental state

External factor: exercise and eating habit, bodily disease and treatment, living environment, cultural situations

** Disease vs body constitution

- Disease: its entire course of pathological changes
- Body constitution: susceptibility to pathogens and disease development

- ▶ Body constitution lays foundation for diagnosis, treatment and disease prevention.

- ▶ *Huang Di Nei Jing*

Treat an illness before it happens 治未病/未病先防

personal responsibility for the length and quality of one's life

2.1 How to diagnose your body constitution?

► The four methods of diagnosis in TCM:

► Observe/See

Smell/Hear

Inquiry/Ask

Feel/Touch



- ▶ **Observe/See:** patient's facial color, tongue sign, external appearance.
- ▶ **Hear:** patient's voice and coughing sound
- ▶ **Smell:** patient's body odour
- ▶ **Inquiry/Ask:** ask about patient's complaint
- ▶ **Feel/Touch:** touch and inspect patient's body part and read his pulse.

2.2 How many types of body constitution in TCM?

What are they?

- 1) Neutral 平和质
- 2) Qi Deficient 气虚质
- 3) Yang Deficient 阳虚质
- 4) Yin Deficient 阴虚质
- 5) Phlegm and Dampness Type 痰湿质
- 6) Damp-heat Type 湿热质
- 7) Blood stasis 血瘀质
- 8) Qi Stagnation 气瘀质
- 9) Special Constitution Type 特禀质

Other Classifications:

Strong constitution & weak constitution

Different ways to divide constitution

- Yin & Yang
Butt, Gary & Frena Bloomfield, *Harmony Rules: The Chinese Way of Health through Food*. UK: Arrow Books, 1985.
Part 2: Human types [Yin and Yang types]
- Five Elements
- Etc.

9 constitution types

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLzhocw4jkA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEnIEHJJOLY>

Most of us are actually not in a yin-yang balanced state. Generally, our body constitution can be diagnosed as asthenic yin (sthenic yang) or asthenic yang(sthenic yin).

Asthenic Yin 阳盛阴衰	Asthenic Yang 阴盛阳衰
Hot (sweating, limbs feel hot, fever)	Cold (limbs feel cold)
Dry (eyes feel dry, thirsty)	Humid (heaviness of the body)
Blood Deficiency	Qi deficiency
Insomnia	Sleepiness
Irritable	Quiet and introvert
...	...

1) Neutral/Balance/Yin-Yang Harmony Type 平和质

- ▶ Strong physique
- ▶ Stable mental state
- ▶ Optimistic
- ▶ Lustrous complexion and hair
- ▶ Bright eyes
- ▶ Proper senses of smell and taste
- ▶ Red and moisture lip
- ▶ Uneasy to feel fatigue
- ▶ Good sleep and appetite
- ▶ Normal bowel and urinary habits
- ▶ Adaptable to environmental changes



2) Qi deficient type 气虚质

- ▶ Flabby muscles
- ▶ Introvert and timid
- ▶ Feeble voice
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Catching cold or flu easily
- ▶ Sweating
- ▶ Sensitive to environmental changes
- ▶ Weak in immune functioning
- ▶ Taking a longer time to recover



3) Yang deficient type 阳虚质

- ▶ Flabby muscles
- ▶ Quiet and introvert
- ▶ Cold hands and feet
- ▶ Sensitive to low temperatures or noises
- ▶ Sleepiness
- ▶ Discomfort after eating cold foods
- ▶ Pale and bulky tongue (teeth marks)
- ▶ Feel uncomfortable in windy, cold and humid environments



► 4) Yin deficient type 阴虚质

- Thin
- Outgoing and impatient
- Warm palms and soles
- Mouth dryness
- Dry nose
- Preference for cold drinks
- Dry stool or constipation
- Uncomfortable in hot and dry environments
- Susceptible to cough, fatigue, insomnia



Yin Deficiency

► **5) Phlegm and dampness type 痰湿质**

- Overweight and have tummy
- Mild temper, steady and patient
- Oily face
- Sweating
- Preference for sweet and greasy foods
- Thick tongue coating
- Uncomfortable in humid and rainy environments
- Susceptible to diabetes, metabolic syndrome or cardiovascular diseases



► 6) **Damp-heat type** 湿热质

- Normal or thin
- Irritable and short-tempered
- Oily face
- Bitter taste in the mouth
- Fatigue and heaviness of the body
- Dry stool and yellow urine
- Yellow and greasy tongue coating
- Sensitive to humid and hot environments
- Susceptible to skin problem and urinary difficulties



► 7) **Blood stasis type** 血瘀质

- Impatient and forgetful
- Dull complexion
- Spots on the face
- Dark-red lips
- Dark circle under eyes
- Rough skin
- Unknown bruise of the body surface
- Uncomfortable in cold environments
- Susceptible to bleedings, painful conditions and abnormal growths



Blood Stasis

► 8) Qi stagnation type 气瘀质

- Mostly thin
- Emotional unstable
- Depressed mood, nervous or anxious
- Timid
- Frequent sighing
- Susceptible to insomnia, depression, anxiety disorder



9) Genetic Deficient Type (Special constitution type)

- ▶ Inborn weakness
- ▶ Nasal congestion, sneezing, running nose
- ▶ Itchiness and even purple spots or patches under the skin
- ▶ Very sensitive to drugs, foods, smells or other environmental allergens



3. Identify your own type of body constitution

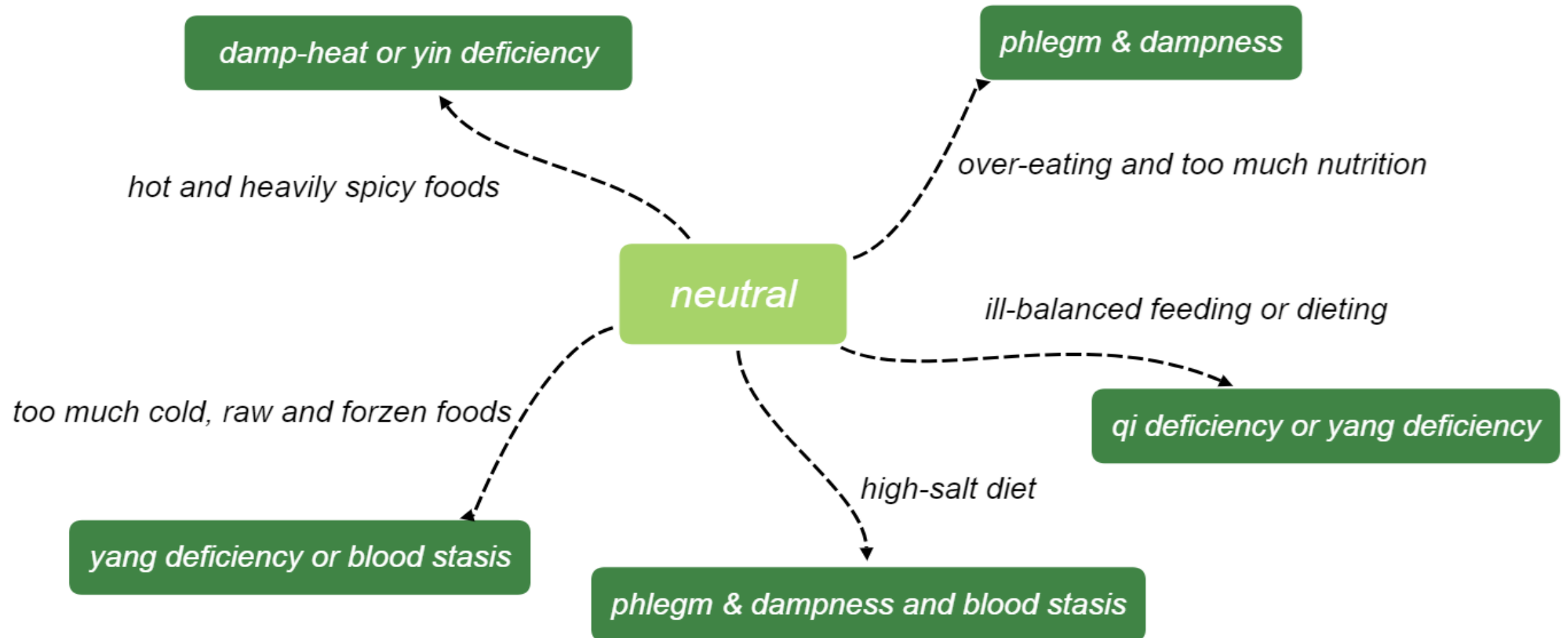
► **Pair working**

- 1. Identify your individual constitutional type.
- 2. Discuss the diagnosis with your partner.

Name:	Manifestations/Reasons
Main constitutional type	1 2 3
Minor constitutional type	1 2

** Health tips for different body constitutions

- ▶ A person's body constitution is **not constant and unchangeable**
- ▶ Factors: living environment, mental state, diet, daily activities and diseases



Qi deficient type

- ✓ Eat more foods that help invigorate the spleen and stomach → promote qi production
- ✓ A weak digestive system → the diet should be light and easily digested
- ✓ Mushrooms, potato, cherry, fish, chicken ...

Yin deficient type

- ✓ Cut back on heavily spiced, deep fried foods
- ✓ Eat more nourishing and lubricating foods
- ✓ A light and easily digested diet & Drink water, fruit juices and soups regularly
- ✓ Pear, honey, egg, fish...

Yang deficient type

- ✓ Eat more warm
- ✓ Foods in cool or cold not advised even in summer days
- ✓ Some medicinal dishes in winter
- ✓ Beef, mutton, peanut, longan fruit...

Not too much during summer
Summer—heart

Phlegm & dampness type

- ✓ Eat more foods but not too full
- ✓ Limit the amount of greasy, fatty, and sweet foods
- ✓ A light and easily digested diet
- ✓ Cabbage, red bean...

Damp-heat type

- ✓ Light and easily digested food
- ✓ Warm or hot energy foods should be limited
- ✓ Seek professional opinion before taking any herbal supplement
- ✓ Celery, cucumber, tomato, banana, water melon

Qi stagnation type

- ✓ Eat more food that help promote qi flow and soothe the liver
- ✓ Avoid stimulants such as tea and coffee
- ✓ Take supplements with caution
- ✓ citrus fruits, onion, peppermint...

Blood stasis type

- ✓ Eat more foods that help activate and nourish blood, resolve stasis, regulate qi and smooth the flow of meridians
- ✓ Limit greasy, frozen and stimulating foods
- ✓ Black soy bean, seaweed, green tea, red wine

Special constitution type

- ✓ Light and easily digested food
- ✓ Drink plenty of water
- ✓ Avoid frozen and raw foods
- ✓ Foods in cold and cool energies such as mung bean, lotus seeds can help ease the discomforts during attacks

Conclusion

- ▶ Why is body constitution so important in the prevention of disease?

- ▶ “Treating an illness before it happens”, that is to give **intervention or treatment** according to **one’s body constitution** whenever it shows changes **in patterns** and thus appears to be unhealthy.
- ▶ Body Constitution reflects one’s **bodily condition and functioning**.
- ▶ People are empowered to take care of themselves with **lifestyle modifications** and/or **proper dietary practices**, according to their BC prior to any illness occurrence.
- ▶ Knowing one’s BC is one of the most important steps to promote his/her health condition, as well as his/her quality of life.
- ▶ The ultimate goal in TCM: promote health, prevent disease and enhance longevity.

Further reading

- ▶ <http://www.shen-nong.com/>
- ▶ Hong, Hai & Karen Wee, *Pursuing the Elixir of Life: Chinese Medicine for Health*, Singapore: World Scientific, 2017.
 - ▶ Chapter 4: The Inner Workings of the Human Body: A unique narrative drawn from experience [4.3.1 Functions of the zang organs]
 - ▶ Chapter 5: Why We Fall Ill: Diagnosis and principles of therapy [5.5 Therapeutic Principles]

Thank you!