

INHERENT CONSTITUTIONS

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, individuals can be categorized to fit into one or two particular Elements. The state of an individual's health can be influenced by their "inherent" elemental status. An individual's inherent constitution influences the animal's body structure, health, emotions, and when exposed to the same stress factors, individuals of different constitutions will react in a different way, whether it is positively or negatively. When a constitution is in balance, there is harmony and health in the system. When unbalanced, there is disease.



EARTH

(SPLEEN AND STOMACH)

An individual with an Earth constitution is like a mother or good host who likes to care for others. The guiding principle of Earth types is harmony and togetherness. They are considerate, supportive, agreeable, sympathetic, sociable, wanting to please, relaxed and laid back even in stressful situations. Any breed of dog can have an Earth constitution, but Labrador Retrievers are the poster children for Earth. They are social creatures and happy when people are around them. Unlike Fire constitutions who are self-centered and think "What can YOU do for ME?", Earth constitutions are selfless and their thoughts revolve around "What can I do for YOU?" gaining happiness by nourishing and serving others around them. A balanced Earth type would never expect something in return for whatever they do; it spoils their enjoyment. But to keep this balance, they must themselves feel that they are being supported and nourished.

PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

- Laid back
- Easy going
- Friendly
- Sweet
- Slow moving
- Easily satisfied
- Tolerant

IF THEY WERE PEOPLE

- Peacemakers
- Host of the party
- Nurturing Mothers
- Nurses / Healers
- Therapists
- Pre-school teacher
- Camp Counselor

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Short but sturdy body
- Prominent musculature
- Big head
- Brown hair-coat
- Slow pulse
- Long life spans

EXCESSIVE EARTH ELEMENTALS

- Worried / Clingy
- Smothering
- Overprotective
- Possessive
- Quick to anger / lash out
- Obesity

DEFICIENT EARTH ELEMENTALS

- Emotional withdrawal
- Abdominal distention after eating
- Poor digestion
- Weakness of limbs
- Rectal prolapse
- Easily bruises

PREDISPOSED TO DISEASES

- Gastrointestinal disease
- Overweight / Obesity
- Constipation
- Muscle atrophy
- Skin conditions / Dermatitis
- Soft tissue masses / Tumors



EMOTION: Worry is the emotion that resonates with Earth. Worry is over thinking or obsessive thought – when the Spleen becomes imbalanced, one loses the ability to think clearly. Symptoms of worry in animals may involve keeping an object or person always in sight. They may show signs of separation anxiety or over protectiveness of an object, human or animal. Imbalanced individuals can become extremely clingy and possessive.

FUNCTION: The Spleen is the main organ of digestion in the body, facilitating assimilation of nutrients following digestion. Absorption of amino acids, glucose and fats by cell receptors within the intestines results from having sufficient Spleen Qi. If the Spleen function is Deficient, the products of ingestion will simply descend to be voided as diarrhea, resulting in tissue atrophy and weight loss. The Spleen is also charged with the responsibility of holding organs and Blood in the proper places. If the Spleen is Deficient, the result can be organ prolapse and hemorrhage / irregular bleeding issues. The Spleen in TCVM is the indirect source of all fluids within the body, including Blood.

SEASON: Late Summer is the time of year when everything is transforming and ripening when the fruits of the land are ready for harvest. In China Late Summer was the rainy part of the year, so “Damp” corresponds with the Earth element.

TIME OF DAY: Traditional Chinese Medicine recognized the need for a circadian rhythm of organ functions. It wouldn't be healthy for your Stomach to be fully functioning all the time: Being fully engaged with digestion is important after you eat a meal, however it doesn't help when you are trying to fall asleep. This circadian rhythm recognizes that having times when organs aren't functioning at full force is just as important as the times they are.

7 AM to 9 AM = Stomach high tide

7 PM to 9 PM = Stomach low tide

9 AM to 11 AM = Spleen high tide

9 PM to 11 PM = Spleen low tide

Note: Spleen deficient individuals frequently have difficulty with their energy level during low tide and those who overeat during low tide weaken their Stomach and Spleen functions.

TISSUES: The Spleen is in charge of the transformation and transportation of ingested food into nutrients such as amino acids, glucose, lipids and vitamins / minerals which are the sources of Qi and Blood. Because of this, the Spleen is the organ that governs the muscles in the body. When there is a deficiency of the Spleen, the subsequent lack of nutritional assimilation will cause the muscles to become atrophied and weak.

IDEAL DEVELOPMENTAL ENVIRONMENT: If your puppy has an Earth constitution, it is important that they learn balance and is cared for in such a way that develops their internal security. They must learn self-reliance while building relationships. Too much or too little support with over-dominating or over-protecting pet parents can impact these individuals considerably. The ideal trainer for Earth personalities should be a base of support (but not be over-supportive) and provide predictability in order to help the pet learn to rely on themselves.

PREVENTION AND THERAPY: The Spleen consistently works very hard without complaint until a big problem develops. The Spleen is the source of energy, muscular strength and defense for the whole body. It is sensitive to “Damp” conditions, which originate from different sources of food, drink, weather changes and environment. Dampness comes from failure to burn off or transform moisture in the body and is almost always associated with a weak Spleen. Avoiding cold, raw, greasy and dairy foods is ideal in these dogs.