

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.



WATER

(KIDNEY AND BLADDER)

An individual with a Water constitution is like a philosopher or an observer – they contemplate deeply and carefully make their decisions. Water types tend to be fearful and prefer to run from danger and hide. Any breed of dog can have a Water constitution, but Giant breed dogs like Newfoundlands are the poster children for Water. They are comfortable in groups but do not necessarily need the group; it is not uncommon for them to be very happy leading solitary lives. Their emotional status is often challenging to read. They usually prefer to stand back and observe, analyzing events occurring around them. Balanced Water elementals have strong inner strengths, are tenacious and are not easily discouraged by their chosen task. They value safety and reassurance above all things and are particularly good at providing safety and reassurance to those around them. They are the “rocks” that others turn to for support.

PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

- Candid
- Solitary
- Quiet
- Self-sufficient
- Unobtrusive
- Hesitant
- Observant

IF THEY WERE PEOPLE

- Philosophers
- Wallflowers
- Introverts
- Scientists
- Psychiatrists
- Support group leader

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Thin, middle-sized body
- Black hair coat
- Deep, big eyes
- Large ears
- Cold intolerant
- Deep, slow pulses

EXCESSIVE WATER ELEMENTALS

- Emotionally inaccessible
- Undemonstrative
- Unforgiving
- Suspicious
- Loneliness / Isolation
- Withdrawn
- Loss of will

DEFICIENT WATER ELEMENTALS

- Overly fearful / phobias
- Wary of people and places
- Overcautious
- Don't like new things or situations
- Overwhelmed easily
- Lack drive and ambition

PREDISPOSED TO DISEASES

- Developmental diseases
- Congenital conditions
- Dental / periodontal disease
- Bone issues
- Back pain / spinal problems
- Urinary diseases
- Reproductive deficiency



EMOTION: Fear is the emotion that resonates with Water. When the Water element is balanced, we can evaluate risks, determine the appropriate degree of threats, and take appropriate action to protect ourselves.

FUNCTION: The Kidneys are the repository of the body's stores of Yin, particularly Jing (Essence). This Yin is what Heart Yang mingles with to generate the Source Qi which is the basic engine of life. When bodily Yin and Essence stores are depleted, life is extinguished. The Jing one is born with diminishes as an individual ages. This gradually causes a loss of vitality, dulling of senses, and inability to reproduce. The rate of Jing depletion can be increased through over-work, excessive behavior patterns, lack of sleep, and chronic disease. In general, Jing is easy to deplete but hard to replace. When acquired Jing (through healthy eating habits and lifestyle) is plentiful, it can help decrease the draw upon congenital Jing.

SEASON: Water correlates with Winter, the darkest and coldest time of the year. During the Winter, water freezes over, animals hibernate and the seeds of plants lie dormant underground. The nature of Water is to be Cold. Fire and Water are opposites, representing Yang and Yin. Water is the most Yin of the elements, moving energy downward.

TIME OF DAY: Traditional Chinese Medicine recognized the need for a circadian rhythm of organ functions. It wouldn't be healthy for your Bladder to be fully functioning all the time: Being fully engaged with urination is important when you have a full bladder, 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.

3 PM to 5 PM = Bladder high tide

3 AM to 5 AM = Bladder low tide

5 PM to 7 PM = Kidney high tide

5 AM to 7 AM = Kidney low tide

Note: Waking between 3 AM to 5 AM to urinate is common in older dogs, since it is the low tide for the Bladder. Waking up between these times with anxiety or Heat may indicate issue with the Water element such as a Kidney Yin Deficiency.

TISSUES: The Kidneys correspond with the Bones and Marrow. Marrow is the transformation of the Kidney Jing (Essence) whose specific task is to nourish the Bones. Bone marrow nourishes bone, spinal marrow nourishes the spine, and brain marrow nourishes the brain. The brain is the densest concentration; hence it is called the "Sea of Marrow." Ancient texts considered the hair on the head as extensions of the brain. Continuing this thought process, the growth and overall appearance of the hair on the head reflects the status of the Kidneys. Lackluster, thinning, and graying hair on the head point to decreasing levels of Kidney Jing. Also, the teeth rely on nourishment from the Kidneys and are considered "the surplus of bones." If the Kidneys are healthy, the teeth are firm, if the Kidneys are deficient; they become loose and fall out.

IDEAL DEVELOPMENTAL ENVIRONMENT: In early development and puppyhood, the boundaries between reality and fantasy are blurred. Puppies who cannot stop being afraid are unbalanced Water elementals. They find it difficult to evaluate and respond to their fears and they perceive threats where others do not. Young Water elementals must be provided with calm, nurturing environments that emphasize social interaction and safety.

PREVENTION AND THERAPY: The Kidney is very sensitive to Cold, so foods and herbs with warming properties are beneficial to Water elementals. Therapy for the Kidney should maintain balance between Kidney Yang and Kidney Jing. Recommended foods include pork kidney, eggs, duck, mussels, sweet potato and black beans.