

## 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.



## **WOOD**

(LIVER AND GALLBLADDER)

An individual with a Metal constitution is goal-oriented, constantly moving, and always planning their next move. Any breed of dog can have a Wood constitution, but Terriers are the poster children for Metal. When faced with a challenge, they have one thing in mind: to fulfill that task. They are alert, respond quickly to stimuli and adapt speedily to changing conditions. Wood's mantra can be described as *"I WILL do this!"* Action compels the Wood personality and these animals do exceptionally well under pressure. They do not like situations of stagnation or lack of movement and are always determined to keep going, sometimes to the detriment of their health. Wood elementals tend to overdo, over-perform, and over-direct.

### **PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS**

- Dominant
- Extroverted
- Competitive
- Confident
- Fearless
- Adaptive
- Intolerant

### **IF THEY WERE PEOPLE**

- C.E.O. of a company
- Salesman / Sales Rep
- Pioneer
- Surgeon
- Military General
- Music director / Maestro
- Sports Coach

### **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

- Thin body
- Big eyes
- Wiry pulses
- Strong and healthy nails
- Quick and nimble movement
- Variable performance

### **EXCESSIVE WOOD ELEMENTALS**

- Angry
- Chronic frustration
- Aggressive – lashes out
- Erratic behavior
- Will not tolerate "No!"
- Compulsive
- Anxious / Tense

### **DEFICIENT WOOD ELEMENTALS**

- Hypersensitive
- Low self-confidence
- Easily dominated by others
- Passive
- Fearful of situations that require force

### **PREDISPOSED TO DISEASES**

- Nail problems
- Hair coat problems
- Tendon / Ligament issues
- Nerve inflammation
- High blood pressure
- Ocular / Visual problems
- Tremors / Seizures



**EMOTION:** Anger is the emotion that resonates with Wood. Anger causes energy to flare upwards and outward. A balanced Wood is able to express anger in a controlled manner. An imbalanced Wood elemental loses control of the anger, lashing out without cause, with excessive force. Of all emotions, anger has the most detrimental effect on the movement of Qi within the body.

**FUNCTION:** The Liver regulates and monitors the flow of Qi and Blood through the body. The Liver stores the Blood and the Blood carries the Qi. The Liver is responsible for maintaining the evenness and clarity of the emotions. A healthy Liver provides the drive, the flexibility, and adaptability to cope with the trauma and tribulations of life.

**SEASON:** Wood is associated with Spring, the time of year when new growth appears. After the cold of Winter, plants break through the ground, extending their stalks upward, leaves outward, and roots downward. Similarly, the flow of Liver Qi within the body is in all directions. In China, the climate of Wind is dominant during Spring and is therefore associated with Wood. Wood Elementals are more inclined to develop problems with Wind such as itching, seizures and tremors.

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

11 AM to 1 PM = Gallbladder high tide

11 PM to 1 AM = Gallbladder low tide

1 AM to 3 AM = Liver high tide

1 PM to 3 PM = Liver low tide

Note: Animals who have insomnia in the early morning hours are often having a hyperactive Liver.

**TISSUES:** Blood nourishes the hair and in the Classics, hair is considered to be a surplus of Blood. The health of the hair coat is a direct reflection of the health of the Liver. A thick, lush, soft hair coat with intense luster and shine suggests a healthy Liver. The Liver is also said to "open the eyes." When awake, our eyes are always active, allowing us to see and react to the environment. The Liver gives us vision and sight, both physically and mentally. The Liver enables us to plan and look ahead, to see the options available and to choose the best option.

**IDEAL DEVELOPMENTAL ENVIRONMENT:** Young developing Wood Elementals do better in environments with defined structure and boundaries during their formative years. They learn limits, they learn to assert themselves, to move forward, but they are also learning how to yield when circumstances do not go their way. A Wood elemental given too much leeway may never learn to control their excessive traits, while those excessively restricted may never learn to assert themselves. The most effective training includes providing stability, consistency with no emotion. The tasks should be repetitive, one goal at a time.

**PREVENTION AND THERAPY:** Even small amounts of stress can impede flow of Liver Qi in Wood Elementals. They can benefit from a diet containing harmonizing foods because they can regulate Liver function. Recommended foods include chicken liver, green vegetables (spinach, cabbage, mustard greens), carrots, and citrus fruits.