

## TCM Nine Body Constitutions

*Gratitude to Eu Tong Sen for this information*

You may know your body well, but do you know how it could be classified in TCM? This illustrated guide can help you lead a lifestyle that's healthier for your body type.

In TCM, every individual has a unique body constitution, or body type, which changes over time. Your body constitution affects how you feel and behave, and how your body responds to causes of illness. Undesirable health conditions and illnesses arise when the body becomes imbalanced.

To show how one might reduce or avoid imbalances, explore our guide to nine different body constitutions in TCM. One thing to note: like many people, you may be a mixture of body constitutions. If you think this is the case, you can refer to the type that corresponds with your dominant symptoms.

### 1. Neutral Constitution

#### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with neutral constitution would consist of the following: radiant complexion, energetic manner and ability to adapt to environment.

#### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat in moderation and maintain a balanced diet</li><li>• Avoid foods that are too oily or spicy</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After meals, take a stroll instead of sleeping</li><li>• Participate in exercises suitable for age</li><li>• Maintain a positive attitude</li></ul>

*Note: Neutral is the most balanced body constitution and is the least susceptible to illness. Following the diet and lifestyle tips recommended for your body constitution helps make your body constitution more neutral.*

## 2. *Qi* Deficient Constitution

### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with *Qi* deficient constitution would consist of the following: breathlessness, feeling tired easily, sweating spontaneously and tendency to catch cold.

### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat more foods that tonify <i>Qi</i> and invigorate the spleen, e.g. soybeans and chicken</li><li>• Avoid foods that consume <i>Qi</i>, e.g. coriander, garlic and raw radish</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure adequate sleep and keep warm at all times</li><li>• Avoid windy areas after strenuous exercises</li><li>• Do mild exercises regularly, e.g. brisk walks</li></ul>

## 3. *Yang* Deficient Constitution

### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with *Yang* deficient constitution would consist of the following: cold limbs, inability to tolerate cold weather, discomfort after eating cold food and vulnerability to diseases related to cold & dampness.

### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat more foods that are <i>Qi</i>-beneficial and warming, e.g. beef and garlic</li><li>• Eat less of foods that are raw and cold, e.g. cucumber and winter melon</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid staying in air-conditioned rooms for long periods</li><li>• Keep the feet, back and lower abdomen warm</li><li>• Do mild exercises, such as jogging and tai chi</li><li>• Use hot springs and saunas</li><li>• Listen to songs that lift the spirits and relieve anxiety</li></ul>

#### 4. Yin Deficient Constitution

##### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with *Yin* deficient constitution would consist of the following: hot flushes and red cheeks, adapting poorly to hot and dry weather, irritability and vulnerability to sore throat & fever.

##### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat more foods that are cooling and nourishing, e.g. duck and green beans</li><li>• Eat less of foods that are drying and warming, e.g. mutton and onion</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid caffeinated drinks and staying up late</li><li>• Do exercises of mild to moderate intensity, such as tai chi and swimming</li><li>• Avoid the sauna if suffering from very dry skin</li><li>• Listen to soothing music or go travelling to find peace within oneself</li></ul>

#### 5. Blood Stasis Constitution

##### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with Blood stasis constitution would consist of the following: skin is often bruised, inability to tolerate cold & windy weather, dry & coarse skin, even painful at times; dull or pigmented complexion, and dark circles under the eyes.

##### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat more foods that promote blood circulation, disperse <i>Qi</i> and soothe liver <i>Qi</i>, e.g. red beans, seaweed and green tea</li><li>• Eat less of foods that are greasy, e.g. fatty meat or dairy products</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid being too sedentary to prevent congestion of <i>Qi</i> and blood</li><li>• Carry out activities that promote blood circulation, e.g. tai chi, dance and acrobatics</li><li>• Massage can help maintain smooth flow of energy through the meridians</li><li>• Listen to soothing music to calm the emotions</li></ul>

## 6. Phlegm-Dampness Constitution

### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with phlegm-dampness constitution would consist of the following: profuse sweating, heavy limbs, lethargy and adapting poorly to rainy seasons & damp environments.

### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain a bland diet</li><li>• Eat less of sweet, stodgy and greasy food such as fatty meat</li><li>• Eat more onion, garlic, seaweed, winter melon, carrot, kumquat, lime, barley and wasabi</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refrain from a sedentary lifestyle</li><li>• Avoid outdoor activities during cold and humid weather</li><li>• Exercise at a pace you can sustain over the long term</li><li>• Keep calm; avoid extreme emotions</li></ul>

## 7. Damp-Heat Constitution

### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with damp-heat constitution would consist of the following: oily skin, often has bad breath & bitter taste in mouth, susceptibility to acne, jaundice & illnesses with heat symptoms and adapting poorly to damp & hot environments.

### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat more foods that have dampness- and heat-removing properties e.g. red beans and water chestnut</li><li>• Eat less of foods that are heaty, astringent and greasy, e.g. deep-fried and barbequed food, chinese chives and eels</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Living environment should be dry and well-ventilated</li><li>• Avoid outdoor activities when the weather is hot and humid</li><li>• Maintain adequate and regular sleep</li><li>• High-intensity exercises are suitable, e.g. ball games and martial arts</li></ul>

## 8. Qi-Stagnation Constitution

### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with *Qi*-stagnation constitution would consist of the following: often depressed & easily stressed, frequent chest palpitations, tightness in the throat and susceptibility to insomnia & depression.

### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat more foods that disperse <i>Qi</i>, remove stagnation, aid digestion and refresh the mind, e.g. wheat, parsley, onion, garlic, lily, seaweed, radish, kumquat, hawthorn, betel nuts, and roses</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Living environment should be quiet; ensure regular sleep</li><li>• Consider doing outdoor and vigorous exercises, e.g. mountain climbing, swimming and martial arts</li><li>• Engage in group exercises and games, such as dance, ball games and chess, to enhance social life</li></ul>

## 9. Intrinsic Constitution

### Symptoms

The common symptoms of a body with intrinsic constitution would consist of the following: sensitive to medications, food, smell & pollen, nasal & skin allergies, e.g. blocked nose & rashes, tendency to have asthma and susceptibility to chronic conditions may be triggered by changing seasons.

### How to Balance This Body Type

<b>Diet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain a bland and balanced diet with sufficient vegetables and meat</li><li>• Eat less of foods that are spicy, contain allergens, cause irritation or considered to have stimulating effects, such as buckwheat, crab and strong tea</li></ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Living environment should be well-ventilated and clean</li><li>• Maintain good hygiene; blankets and bedsheets should be washed and sunned regularly to prevent dust mites</li><li>• Avoid keeping pets and contact with known allergens</li><li>• Exercise to increase immunity</li><li>• Keep warm when exercising in the cold</li></ul>

This information is helpful but does not replace the accurate diagnosis of a TCM practitioner.

Talk with me if you are interested in a referral.