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The Heart



Nona Taylor

ORIENTAL MEDICINE



The Heart

Conventional medical View

The heart is about the size of your fist & it sits in the middle of the chest slightly to the left.

The heart is part of our cardiovascular system along with the blood vessels & the blood. It is a muscle that works to pump blood to all the tissues in the body, delivering oxygen & nutrients to all areas & carrying away any waste products.

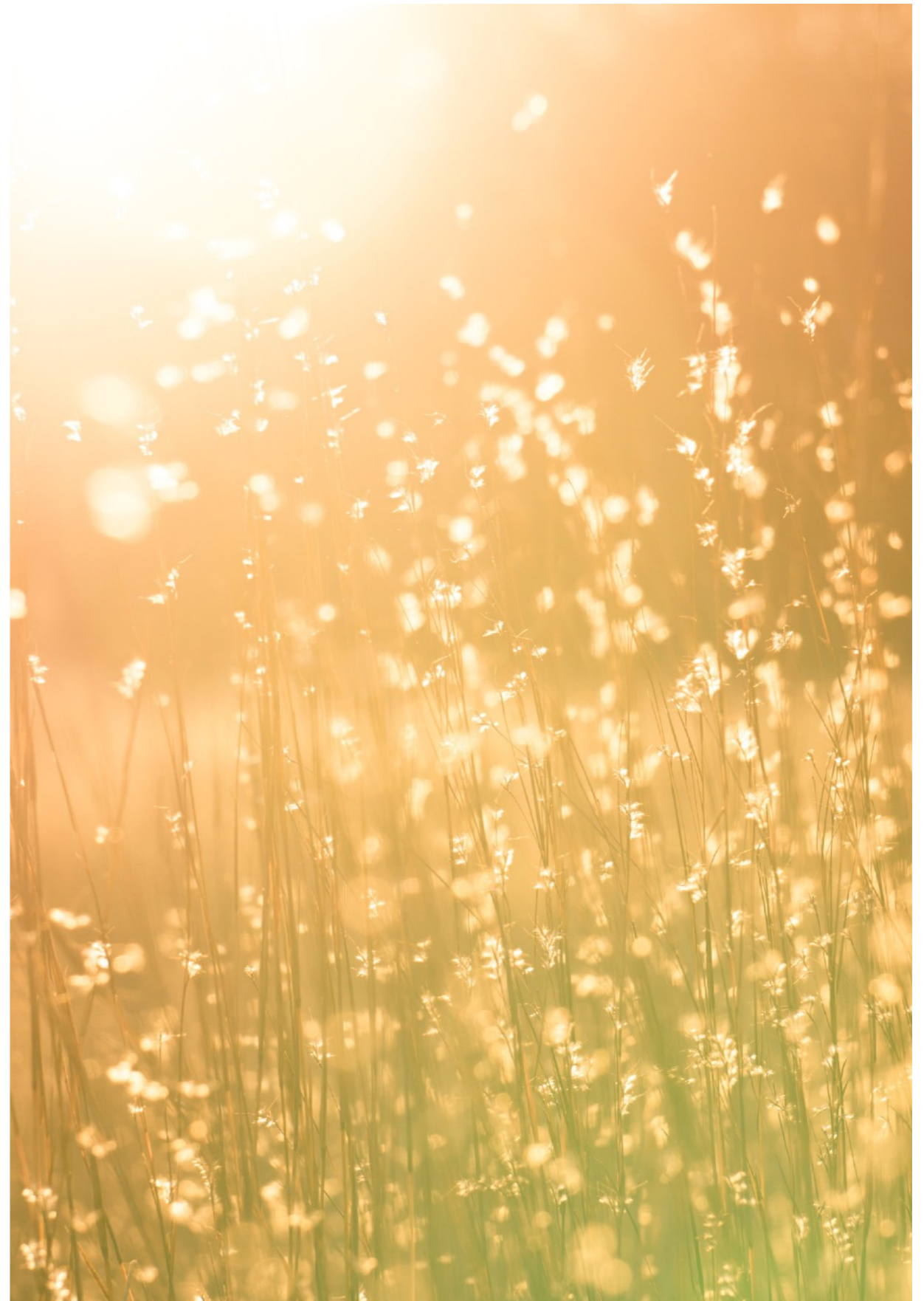
Your cardiovascular system also regulates body temperature & protects the body by circulating white blood cells & antibodies which help defend us against microbes & toxins.

Oriental perspective

All the organs have a greater role than just the physical as seen from western medicine - There is an energetic role effecting us on a mental, emotional & spiritual level as well. The energetic life force that flows within us is known as **qi**.

(Pronounced “Chee”)

Qi is seen to flow within channels throughout the body known as meridians, each one named after the internal physical organ to which it is connected. Qi is the energy that runs through all of us, it is what keeps us warm & every cell in motion - **Qi is life**. The quality and movement of Qi through the body determines our health. When you stimulate your blood flow or lymphatic flow it is the Qi that allows this movement - they are intrinsically linked. The ideal state is one of smooth flow with no imbalances or blockages, which are called stagnation or stagnant Qi. If you have stagnation, whether physical, emotional, mental or spiritual, this will eventually manifest as disease.





The role of the heart

The **heart** is paired with the **small intestine**

The element = **Fire**

The colour = **Red**

Direction = South

The season = **Summer**

Heart time = 11 am - 1 pm

Small intestine time = 1 - 3 pm

Emotion = Joy

Sound = Laughing

Spirit = “Shen” processing all incoming intuitive information & supervising the body/mind reaction to it.

The “Emperor”

The heart houses “**Shen**” (spirit) & **mind**. According to Chinese medicine the heart is considered to be the “**Emperor**” & is in control of all the organs in the body.

Heart imbalance does not mean heart disease, it is a subtle signal that your body is not in balance & the strain of that is impacting your heart energy, which may eventually lead to an issue over time. In the instance it may just be felt as **low-level anxiety, occasional palpitations or a lack of desire to socialise**. It is worth noticing these low level signs to stop things getting a foothold in the body & causing a greater problem further down the line.



Heart physical imbalance

Palpitations

Shortness of breath on exertion

Pale face

Crack across the ear lobe (see picture)

Sweating

Insomnia

Poor memory

Dizziness

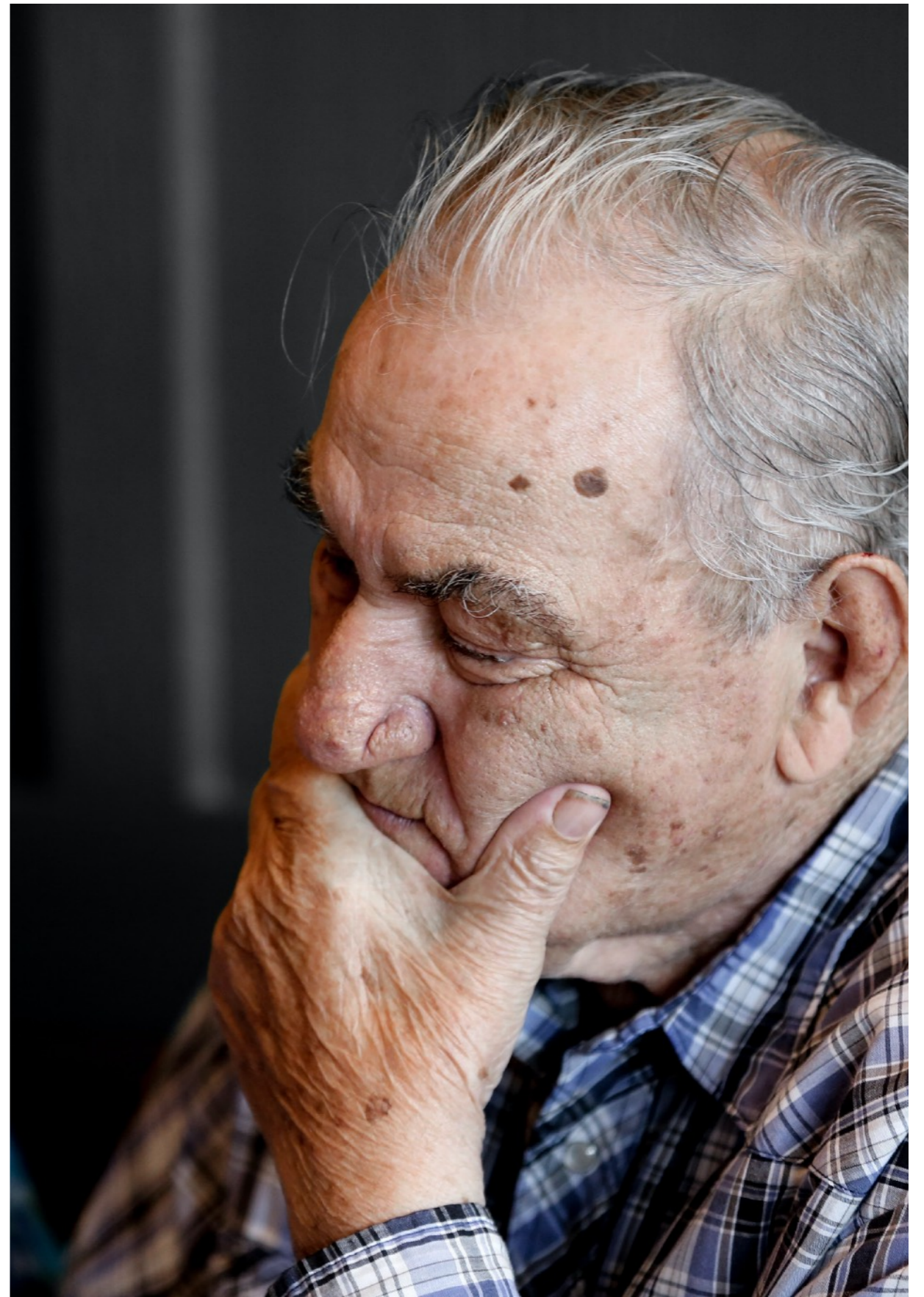
Chest pain

Pain down the left arm

Tongue pain &/or burning urine

Problems with speech, aphasia

Loss of taste or heightened taste





Heart emotional imbalance

In **Chinese medicine** we recognise that each of our emotions is connected to a different organ.

Emotions are something we cannot see, you cannot dissect a body & find one - yet we all feel them, so take them to be real. The notion that different emotions could be connected to different organs is also not alien to us. **Around the world the heart is equated with love.** In Chinese medicine the heart feels & responds to love. The heart is the source of **joy, happiness** & emotional protection: providing intimacy & generosity.

When properly nourished & balanced the heart maintains our contentment & emotional balance.

If there is mild **heart imbalance** you may experience a **lack of joy, anxiety or be easily startled.**

“Shen”

Often translated as “**spirit**” / “**mind**” (or **soul**) is said to belong to the **heart**. It is thought of as our **consciousness, mental faculties, mental health, our vitality or “presence”**. We see a persons “**Shen**” reflected in the eyes. If strong the eyes shine bright & vibrant if weak or disturbed the eyes seem dull or veiled.

“**Shen**” is said to reside in the blood vessels nourished by blood & retires to the heart to sleep at night. It is seen as a beautiful gold fish - if disturbed by say “**blood deficiency**” or “**internal heat**” there may be **insomnia or dream disturbed sleep**

In severe cases of **disturbance of Shen** we see **mental illness - schizophrenia**

Healthy “**Shen**” depends on the strength of the kidney essence (**Jing**) & the **Qi** produced by the **spleen & stomach** in digestion.

Jing, Qi & Shen are the 3 treasures in Traditional Chinese Medicine - All 3 need to be strong & balanced for optimal health.





Foods to benefit the heart

Incorporate red foods to nourish fire.

Bitter: is the flavour of fire.

Think: Radicchio, kale, endive, chicory, lettuce, dandelion or nasturtium leaves. Tea & Coffee are both bitter BUT contain caffeine so unfortunately will increase anxiety.

Beware: Bitter can easily be overdone. Unless you have **“heart fire blazing out of control”** - frenetic energy sensations rising up, strong agitated anxiety, feeling manic, feeling confused & energy scattered.

Heart Qi Deficiency - *Tired, low grade nervousness, mild sweat when anxious, chest pain, pale face, palpitations.* **Nervousness.** Eat small cooked meals, naturally sweet food eg: carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato, date.

Specific heart patterns

Heart Blood Deficiency: *insomnia, memory loss, dreams a lot, pale face, fatigued, **depression.***

Sprouts, leafy greens, spirulina, legumes, Shiitake mushrooms.

Heart Yin Deficiency: *Insomnia, memory loss, excess dreaming, feeling hot, night sweats, red cheeks, red tongue, **Irrational behaviour, despair, stress.***

Mung beans, goat milk, apple, cucumber.

Heart Blood stasis: *stabbing chest pain, palpitations, angina, purple lips & tongue **irritable, impatient.***

Aubergine, vinegar, chives, leek, adzuki bean, peach, rosemary.





Specific heart patterns

Heart Yang deficiency: *palpitations, cold body, water retention, fatigued, chest pain, **depression, mental despair.***

Lamb, butter, liver, cinnamon, onion, garlic, pumpkin, barley, oat.

Phlegm in the heart: *foggy heard, nauseous, poor focus, greasy tongue coating, drooling, **talks to oneself, mental confusion.***

Rye, amaranth, corn, celery, lettuce, pumpkin, turnip, brown rice, oats & mulberries.

Phlegm-fire in the heart: *feeling hot, red faced, crimson tongue with a greasy coating, violent behaviour, manic, shouting.*

Celery, watermelon, dandelion, chamomile, spirulina

Self help techniques

How to support & balance the heart

- * The heart meridian belongs to the **element fire & the season is summer**. So **spending time outside in sunshine** can help replenish the heart. This could be a sunbathing in the early morning or evening (so as to avoid the burning rays)
- * The **emotion of the heart is joy** - when you **express yourself honestly & openly** you are feeding the heart - live a joyful life & express your emotions freely!
- * **Laughing yoga!** Think how good it feels after a good laugh. So here you invoke laughter, you pretend to laugh & very quickly this will turn into genuine laughter. Try this with friends or family & see how quickly you are all enveloped in giggles! **Watch comedies** to invoke laughter!
- * **Rest** is important. Learn to take a **“cat nap”** - have a **siesta** in the afternoon.



Sing in the bath, shower car! Sing for joy!

- * Take up **singing** & sing from the heart. Singing brings joy to the singer & those who listen. For those who like it Opera feeds the heart
- * Practice the **healing sound** for your heart. This is **Hē (阿)(Haaaaaahaaaaa.....)**
- * Just something as simple as **holding your hands over your heart**, taking a breath in, **SMILE** and **with your mind & intention send positive energy to your heart** as you breath out. This will help to support & move energy. Why? Because **the qi follows the mind!**

More self help techniques

How to support & rebalance your heart

- * **Learn to tap the body** - The heart meridian begins in the axilla (armpit), travels down the inside arm to the end of the ring finger. It is paired with the small intestine meridian which begins on the outside of the little finger, travels up the outside arm onto the shoulder blade, over the shoulder & up the side of neck onto the jaw, cheek to culminate beside the ear (Tragus).
- * **Tapping:** Gently tap, with a cupped palm down the inside of your arm & then back up the outside to stimulate & move the qi through the Heart & small intestine meridians.
- * It is beneficial to tap all the meridians in the body daily following the natural flow of energy to keep the energy flowing smoothly and move any stagnation before it manifests into something more physical.



Meditation is the single best thing you can do to support your kidneys other than good sleep!

- * **The qi follows the mind** so learning with **meditation** to “**Tame & Train**” the mind, calm & settle the thoughts, will create the space inside to allow the energy to return to source & recharge our reserves.
- * There are **meditations** that can help such as “**Loving Kindness**” practice or “**Gratitude**” practice. There are regular online meditations available at **Dzogchen Beara**. http://www.dzogchenbeara.org/online_events/



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**“My wish is to
inspire you to
heal yourself
naturally.”**



www.nona-taylor.com