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The Kidneys



Nona Taylor

ORIENTAL MEDICINE

The Kidneys

Conventional medical view

The Kidneys are 2 fist size organs that sit just below the rib cage either side of the spine.

The kidneys are responsible for filtering the blood to maintain a healthy balance of water, salts & minerals as well as removing any waste. **The Bladder** receives the waste & excess water which is then excreted as urine.

Finally the **Kidneys** produce a hormone erythropoietin (EPO) to help control **blood pressure** & produce **red blood cells** in your bone marrow.



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. 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 kidneys** in Chinese medicine are considered the **“root of life”** - our reserve of energy, like a deposit account. One we draw upon throughout life as needed. As such great emphasis is placed on how to preserve Kidney qi.





The role of the Kidneys

The kidneys are so much more than filtration of waste & blood pressure

Kidneys belong to the element **water**.

The colour is **blue / black**.

The season is **winter**.

Kidney time of day is **5-7pm**

Their paired organ is the **bladder**

Bladder time of day is **3-5pm**

The kidney meridian goes from the sole of the foot, up the inside of the leg through the genitals, up to the crown of the head & influences all along its pathway.

Kidney controls: ankles, knees, lower back, spine, bones, brain, our hearing, teeth, the strength of our hair, our libido, fertility, birth, development, ageing, our willpower & wisdom.

The Minister of Power

In Chinese medicine the kidneys are called the **“Minister of Power”** They are seen as a reservoir of energy or **“Jing”** like a battery whose power we can pull on when energy is low elsewhere in the body.

Our constitutional health is dependent on our kidneys. It is said we inherit kidney essence or **“Jing”** from our ancestors. This Jing is connected to all the organs, it is like the pilot light that fires the organ qi up. This reserve can be pulled upon as needed. Like when you have been out partying all night but then have to put in a full days work the next day. But it is limited!
When this energy becomes depleted it will eventually reflect in ill health.





Kidney Imbalance

Some physical signs:

Developmental issues

Enuresis (bed wetting)

Thinning or grey hair.

Back pain.

Knee pain.

Sagging skin around the jaw & chin.

Dizziness.

Tinnitus.

Vertigo

Memory loss.

Deafness.

Night sweats.

Urinary issues.

Sexual dysfunction

Signs of old age!

Oriental Wisdom

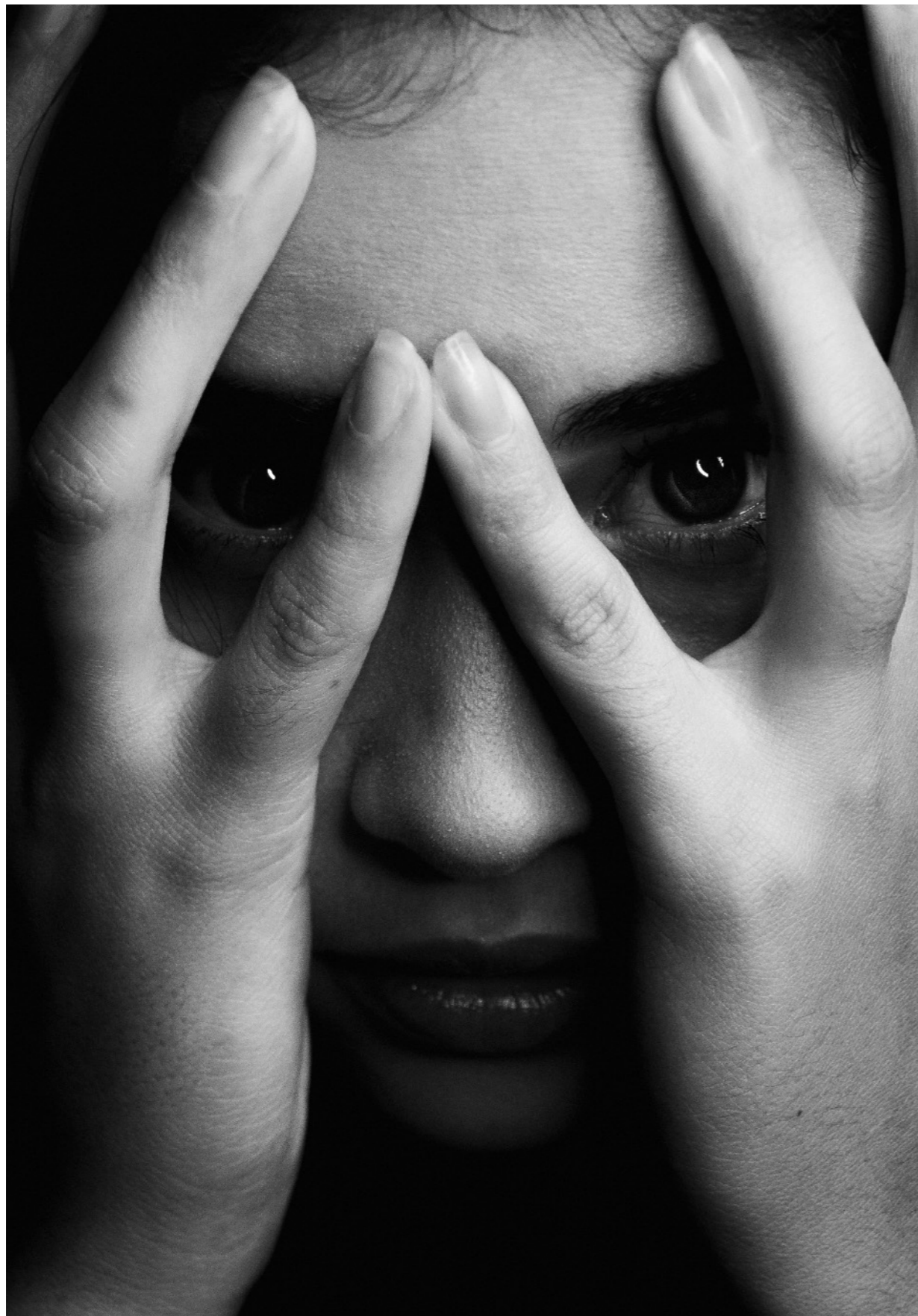
In Chinese wisdom looking after & preserving your Kidney energy is of paramount importance for good health.

In Japan Sumo wrestlers traditionally stored hot hard boiled eggs in little pockets in their “Mawashi” to keep the kidneys warm & add strength.

Cold depletes the kidney “yang” so wearing low slung trousers exposing the “builders bum” or a midriff top or maybe not wearing a vest in the cold weather will all deplete the kidneys.

Too much sex, or too many pregnancies can also deplete the kidneys.





Kidney imbalance

Emotional:

In Chinese medicine we associate a different emotion to each organ/meridian. For the kidneys this would be **fear or nervousness.**

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. If we think of love, immediately it is associated with the heart Alternatively we might say, "I feel sick to my stomach" - (worry knots the stomach qi). Or I was "frozen with fear". A sudden shock or fright can cause us to wet ourselves or even turn a person's hair white over night. The latter relate to the **kidney/bladder meridians.**

Kidney Yin & Yang

The kidneys hold 2 types of essence.

Kidney yin & Kidney yang.

A lack of either can cause imbalance which will eventually lead to health issues.

Kidney yang is in charge of energy & **Kidney yin** body fluid.

If we imagine our body were a car. The **Kidney yang** would be the engine that powers the car. While **kidney yin** would be the petrol & oil that is consumed to provide the movement & lubricate the engine.

If you **lack kidney yang** the engine does not work properly, will only run on slow.

If you **lack kidney yin** you do not have the petrol & oil to run the car - there will be general deterioration, wear & tear, everything dries up.



Kidney Yang Deficiency

Some signs:

Cold body - cold limbs, cold abdomen, poor circulation, irregular menstruation, pale complexion.

Soreness & pain - mostly waist & knees, lower back soreness or weakness.

Lack of energy - easily fatigued, often tired, out of sorts.

Frequent urination - especially at night, urine in greater amounts than usual, pale urine, **oedema** on lower limbs, **loose stools**.



Kidney Yin Deficiency

Hot body - hot hands & feet, especially at night. Wanting to stick your feet out from under the bed covers. Burning feeling in the chest

Frequent feelings of **anger or irritability**, feeling fried, short fused.

Thirsty, dry mouth, scanty dark urine, dry stools, constipation.

Quick to sweat - especially **night sweats**.

Feeling dried up - withered, dry vagina, dry cracking joints.

High blood pressure.



Self help techniques:

How to support & rebalance your kidneys

- * The kidney/bladder meridian belong to the **element water**. So **spending time near water** can help replenish them. This could be a stream, lake, the sea, even a water feature, a fish tank or set your screen saver to a water scene!
- * **Swim or bathe** as long as the water is warm or it does not make you feel cold..
- * Always make sure your **feet are warm**, wear socks & slippers - do not go around bare foot if you have cold feet. The kidney channel starts on the sole of the foot (kidney 1) it is easy for cold to enter the channel and lead to physical symptoms of “cold”
- * Rub your hands together to bring warmth to your palms & place them over your lower abdomen, the **“Dan Tien”**, the area below the belly button. You can adopt the **“Qi Kung” pose** of knees slightly bent, tail bone tucked under your spine. Hold the hands with the elbows bent & the arms rounded. Imagine that the energy is radiating from your palms to the **“Dan Then”** like a laser light, to recharge your kidneys. With practice you will start to feel this area warm up with this exercise.



Kidneys element is water - spend time near water.

- * Practice the **healing sound** for your kidneys. This is **Chui (choooooeEEEEEEEE.....)**
- * If you like jewellery & gemstones - think black or very dark blue - black or very dark blue sapphire, black onyx, black pearl or black tourmaline, A curved shape would be most appropriate.
- * Add **foods that are black** to your diet - black beluga lentils, black beans, black rice, black sesame seeds
- * Incorporate some **Miso soup, seaweed or bone broth** into your diet 2-3 times a week.
- * **Stay hydrated** - ensure you drink adequate good quality water

More self help techniques

How to support & rebalance your kidneys

- * **Learn to just BE** rather than do - as the Beatles song says: *“let it be”!* Try to find time to just be still, to rest. Rather than be thinking, rushing, doing loads. **JUST BE!** This will help conserve & build the kidney energy.
- * Both getting enough **sleep & rest** is really important. Learn to take a **“cat nap”** - have a **siesta** in the afternoon.
- * **Rest more in the winter** - go to bed earlier! Traditionally we would have gone to bed when it gets dark & got up with the light. But with the invention of electric light this has stopped.
- * **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.
- * Just something as simple as **holding your hands over your kidneys** or the lower “Dan Tien” area, taking a breath in, **SMILE** and **with your mind & intention send positive energy to your kidneys** as you breath



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

out. This will help to support & move energy. Why? Because **the qi follows the mind!**

- * Establish quiet, **alone time** - take a nice relaxing bath, maybe with some aromatherapy essence & epsom salts. Or read a book - just enjoy some silence.
- * Spend time with professional support - **facing your fears.** This can be a wonderful gentle & transformative process.
- * 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.”**



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