



The Root of Emotional Imbalance, According to Your Organs...

by [Isabella Gucci-Ruffalo](#) May 03, 2016 in [DiscoverHome Base](#)

The mind and the body are inseparable.

Ancient Eastern civilizations have long understood the way ***our mental and spiritual bodies inform our physical nature.*** Western science too has begun to understand the interdependence between

the emotional and physical body: we know the ‘gut’ acts as our second brain and stress is toxic.

In fact, *every organ corresponds to the energy of a certain emotion*, and *every disease stems from an imbalance in an organ or its meridians* (energy channels). This is a fundamental idea in Chinese Medicine. Many times *a physical disorder linked to a certain organ actually stems from an imbalance in the emotion* associated with that organ. The reverse could be true: *an imbalanced organ can heighten the specific emotion experienced* by an individual. It can become a vicious cycle.

All emotions are inevitable, physiologically normal and will not cause disease when they arise in daily life. *Chinese medicine only considers emotions as pathological when they are repressed, contained, or expressed intensely, often, without control, or out of context.*

Specific herbs and foods with each organ’s correlating energies can be used to appropriately *strengthen, tonify, and detoxify the organ* to help even the scariest emotions to pass through easily! Likewise, the more we decide to *participate in our emotional lives through awareness exercises like journaling and meditation*, the more we can help treat the energetic organ systems.

GRIEF + DEPRESSION

Grief is the emotion of the **lungs** and **the large intestine**, organs associated with the *metal* element. Loss of any kind will often trigger a cold, a feeling of being energetically drained, and difficult bowel function. Grief can stay with us for a while, and can go unresolved until we decide to release it. When grief is unresolved and becomes chronic, depression and an inability to ‘let go’ of things can arise from this lung Qi Deficiency. This could eventually interfere with lung function and oxygen circulation. Since our lungs

control the flow of energy in our bodies, it's important that we give ourselves space to deal with painful events rather than stifling them!

To Balance: pungent flavoured and/or white colored foods and herbs. Onion, radish, mustard greens, daikon radish, scallions (white part), almonds, white meat, white rice, white beans, white mushrooms, ginkgo nut, white mustard seed, angelica root tangerine peel

Reduce: eggs, dairy, rich, processed or fatty foods that cause congestion

FEAR

Fear is the emotion of the **kidneys** and the **bladder**, organs associated with the *water* element. It is a normal adaptive emotion, but can become chronic when we ignore it. Kidney issues often arise when we are dealing with fear, such as a change in life direction or unstable living conditions. When we experience extreme fright, our kidneys struggle to hold qi and we can quite literally pee our pants. Involuntary urination like this is often seen in 'stage fright'.

To Balance: salty flavoured and/or [black colored foods and herbs](#). Black beans, walnuts, black sesame, mushrooms, water chestnuts, seaweed, blackberries, black tea, psoralea root, lotus seed, stephania root

Reduce: cheese, salt, heavy meat, sugars, excessively cooling foods

WORRY + NERVOUSNESS

Worry is the emotion of the **spleen** and the **stomach**, organs associated with the *earth* element. Too much pensiveness, worrying and insecurity can weaken our ability to digest. When we are anxious, we find it hard to digest and accept a situation or life event. Lack of trust and ease towards the experiences and the foods we take in to our lives will make it impossible for us to digest them.

This can make us feel tired, lethargic, and unable to concentrate: a bit of a paradox, too much mental stimulation can actually cause mental heaviness. A weak spleen can also be the cause of stubborn weight problems!

To Balance: sweet flavoured and/or yellow, orange, brown colored foods and herbs. Root veggies! Carrots, sweet potato, pumpkin, parsnip, squash, chestnuts, fig, taro, liquorice root, ginger root, jujube date, astragalus root

Reduce: meats, cold, raw, and all frozen foods, iced drinks, excess refined sugars

ANGER + FRUSTRATION

Anger is the emotion of the **liver** and the **gallbladder**, organs associated with the *wood* element. Emotions like rage, fury or aggravation can indicate that this energy is in excess, and when we experience these emotions consistently, our liver can get further damaged. At this point, headaches and dizziness can be common. An imbalanced gallbladder can be caused by longstanding feelings of repressed anger, such as resentment, frustration, and irritability.

Avoiding outbursts of anger will protect liver and gallbladder health.

To Balance: sour flavoured and/or green colored foods and herbs.

Dandelion greens, beetroot, green bell pepper, peas, sprouts, bok choy, string beans, cabbage, zucchini, mung beans, avocado, citrus, barbat skullcap, fo shou, milk thistle, Chinese wolfberry fruit

Reduce: soft dairy, crabmeat, buckwheat, alcohol, fried foods, peanuts, and excess citrus

HAPPINESS + JOY

Joy is the emotion of the **heart** and the **small intestine**, organs associated with the *fire* element. When we experience true joy and happiness, we are nourishing our heart and small intestine energy: we feel mentally clear and able to process experiences. When we are

lacking joy in our lives, the heart suffers and we can feel stuck, mentally chaotic, and have difficulty sleeping. Mania or obsessive joy can indicate excess scattered heart energy, and can be the cause of severe mental emotional disorders. Over stimulated heart energy could also cause agitation, insomnia and palpitations. Even the good emotions can be out of balance!

To Balance: bitter flavoured and/or red colored foods and herbs. beet, tomato, okra, cherry, watermelon, broccoli rabe, bitter melon, lettuce, arugula, dandelion, berries, chillies (in moderation), green tea, lotus root, sour jujube seed, arbor-vitae seed, mimosa tree bark, ginseng, hawthorn berries

Reduce: excess spicy foods, chocolate, sugar, salt, vinegar, garlic

ANXIETY

Anxiety can have one of 4 origins according to TCM:

If related to the **lungs** and **large intestine** (*metal*), qi blockage can provoke shallow and irregular breathing or even holding of breath. The large intestine can be detrimentally affected by anxiety, making one more prone to issues like ulcerative colitis and IBS.

Kidney and **bladder** (*water*) issues could also be at the root of this emotion. Our adrenals regulate our stress response and when adrenal problems become chronic, they can cause anxiety. TCM recognizes the adrenal glands as the same as the kidneys. Anxiety can also be caused by disharmony between the kidneys and a blazing heart fire, in this case rapid heart palpitations are experienced.

Anxiety can stem from **liver** (*wood*) imbalance too, when longstanding anger and irritation goes unresolved. In this case anxiety manifests as nervous tension, irritability, and insomnia.

Anxiety from excess worry and pensiveness stems from **spleen** and **stomach** (*earth*) imbalance. This can cause stomach swelling and bloating after eating.

General anxiety aids: cooling foods to build yin, celery, tofu, valerian, chamomile, plums, tangerine, liquorice, ginseng

Reduce: caffeine, stimulants, alcohol, cinnamon

**Chinese herbs are usually more effective in formulas than alone. Always check with a trained TCM physician before taking anything new. Foods should not be restricted to these suggestions, they are simply a guide!*

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