

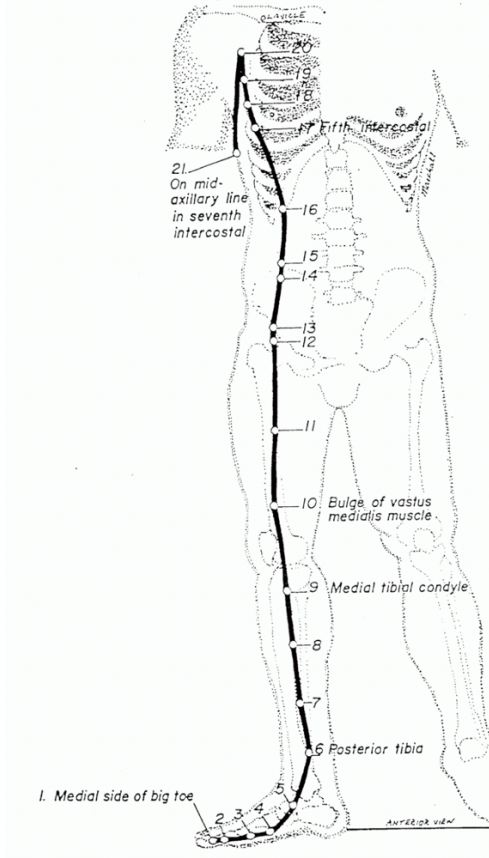
SPLEEN DAMPNESS

In Chinese medicine, the spleen / pancreas meridian associated, along with the Stomach meridian, with the Earth Element and in the West often becomes out of balance due to the damp climate, lifestyle factors and excess sweet foods. The spleen / pancreas meridian rules the muscles. The spleen is connected to the pancreas and one symptom of diabetes is wasting of the muscles.

The spleen is about nourishment, of the body and the mind. Too much, or too little. Perhaps lack of nourishment through foods, or from the mother, or excess thought or over care for someone. Thought, mental function and concentration have to do with the spleen. Empathy, understanding, and compassion are signs of a balanced Earth Element, but excess or lack can also imbalance the Earth Element. If the spleen is out of balance, you can feel anxious, worried, and too sympathetic or sensitive. When in balance you feel calm, soothed, more discriminating, and self-determined. You feel like singing. Many with a spleen imbalance are either having to over care for someone or are in a job that involves care, and they are usually in need of self-nurture to bring themselves back to balance. Someone with an Earth imbalance might feel they were not nurtured by their mother when young, or perhaps were sent to boarding school, or away from their mother for a long time, which they struggled with. Hoarding, excess weight, or underweight are also Earth imbalances.

The spleen meridian starts on the outside of the big toe and goes up the inside of the leg to the chest area. Some problems relating to a spleen meridian imbalance can be big toe issues, inner knee pain, swelling of the inner leg, diaphragm issues, oesophagus or tongue symptoms, cold sores on the lips. Lung conditions, tightness in the chest, feeling of something in the throat (plum pit) and eye pain.

SPLEEN/PANCREAS



SPLEEN DAMPNESS

Spleen Acupoint

Spleen 6 - three yin junction
Liver, kidney and spleen channels meet at this point on both sides

Location: Put 4 fingers together and measure this length above the inner ankle bone, the point is located just behind the Bone (tibia)

Benefits: poor digestion, insomnia, anaemia, water retention, menstrual or female organ problems, calms the spirit

For acupressure, use your middle or index finger at a 90 degree angle to the points.

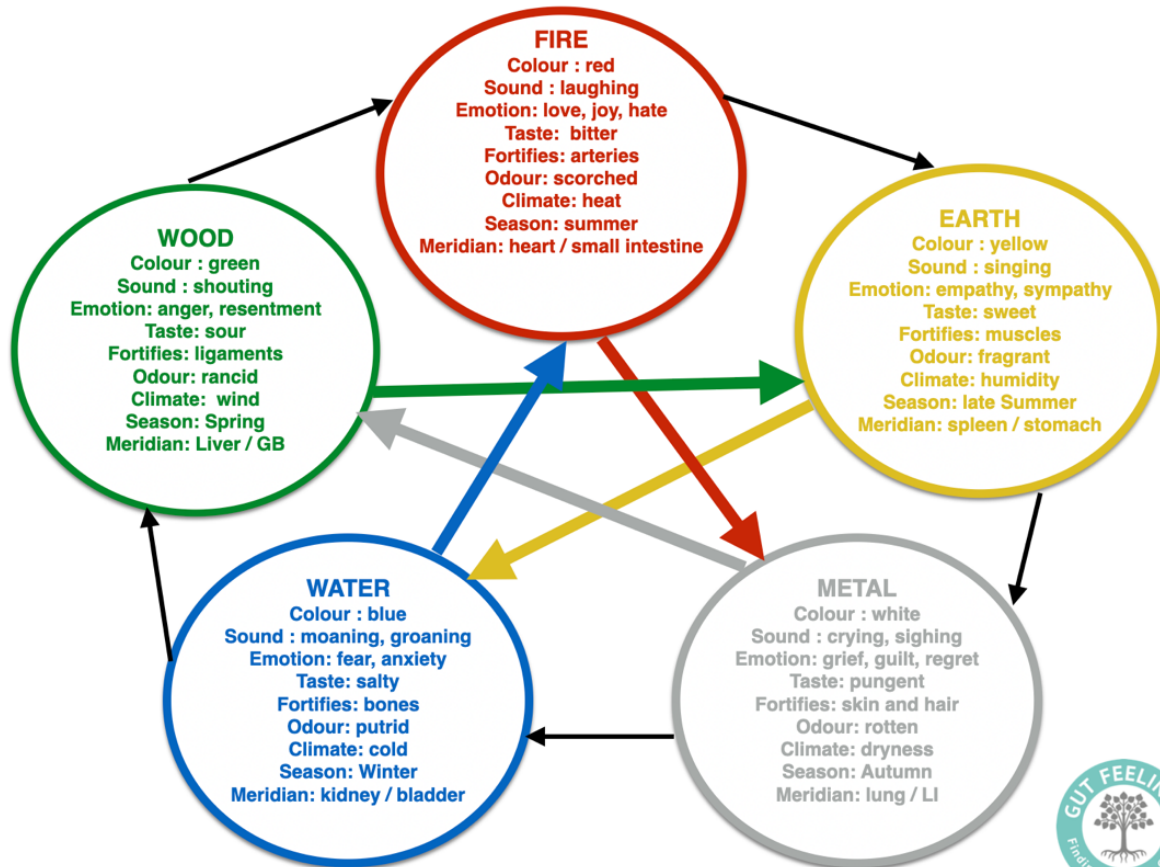
Apply firm and steady pressure. This may be tender, but shouldn't be painful.

Hold the point for about three minutes.

You can also visualise light coming out of your finger and illuminating the meridian and the associated organ.



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SPLEEN DAMPNESS

Supporting the Spleen Meridian and Spleen Dampness

“Dampness” comes from the failure transform moisture in the body. It is nearly always associated with a weak spleen meridian, often with a weak kidney meridian and sometimes with a weak lung meridian. Dampness can lodge in a specific part of the body or affect us more generally. Dampness can make us feel heavy and tired, it can make us swell up (oedema / swelling is dampness retained as water) and can obstruct the body’s functioning. Some people are more prone to dampness than others. A tendency towards dampness can be aggravated by living in damp conditions, or by a sedentary lifestyle. “Dampness” may also be caused by pathogens lodged in the body which have not been properly expelled or by the use of suppressant drugs which are considered to be “cold”. The spleen is weakened by damp foods. Increasing and optimising digestion reduces dampness.

Need to drain the dampness and support Earth Element

- Chew food well (digestion begins in the mouth), eat slowly
- Avoid eating late at night, or when stressed
- Avoid overeating, especially heavy foods, excess extreme flavours, or exotic foods
- Regular meals, healthy snacks in between to avoid blood sugar fluctuating too low
- Protein with meals and healthy fats to help stabilise insulin
- Pay attention to the diet especially in Late Summer which is naturally humid
- Increase warmer foods in the Winter
- Food should be cooked and warm – warm breakfast
- Drinks should be room temperature or warm, approximately 1.5-2 litres of water daily
- A cold, damp climate, can contribute to dampness. Wrap up warm, avoid contact with cold surfaces.
- Check the house for hidden mould or humidity
- Manage clutter in the home or office
- Avoid over the counter medications which are “cold”
- Lessen exposure to environmental toxins such as personal care products, household cleaning products, paint.
- Address any damp areas in the house, especially look at areas around windowsills, under the sink or the shower
- The spleen digests cluttered thoughts as well as food so avoid overwhelming the spleen with large amounts of food, or many thoughts / overthinking which can deplete the spleen. The emotional stress of worry and over-thinking are negative spleen states and will manifest with excess Earth in the spleen/stomach areas. Need to be careful that worry doesn’t become obsessive. Worry, pensiveness, and mental overwork often negatively affect the transporting and transforming function of the spleen¹⁸
- Practicing mindfulness and focused breathing can help prevent the mind from excess worry
- Avoid overwork or overstudy and focus on work-life balance
- Spend time with close friends and family that are supporting
- Being a part of the community
- Qui Gong, Tai Chi or Yoga
- Self-nurture, massage
- Acupuncture, Acupressure, Kinesiology, Moxibustion, Cupping

SPLEEN DAMPNESS

- Care, but do not over-nurture others at the expense of yourself
- Avoid watching the news, sad films, or programmes
- Encourage, joy, laughter, singing
- Spend time with nature and the earth, feet on the soil, walk in the woods to ground yourself
- Sweep the stomach and spleen meridians
- Hold stomach and spleen acupoints
- Keep warm, especially in the “Earth” Late Summer season associated with humidity which can increase Earth
- Avoid sitting in damp places or on damp ground / seats

Dietary factors and foods to be **limited**

Dampness is often a result of overeating and poor food combinations which weaken the spleen. Excess raw or cold food puts out the digestive fire of the spleen-pancreas. Too much dampness leads to rot and feelings of heaviness and lethargy.

Avoid or limit cold, raw, sweet, rich foods, alcohol, and excess fluid including excess raw fruits and vegetables, sprouts, and juices which contribute to a thin, watery mucus (dampness). The stomach should be the temperature of simmering soup and cold water, iced products, cold or raw food will quickly put out the digestive fire.

Gradually eliminate damp foods: sugar, including artificial sweetener / sugar substitutes, refined sugars, dairy (milk, cream, cheese), yeast, bananas, wheat products, pork and rich meats, saturated fats, roasted peanuts, concentrated juices, wheat products: flour, cakes, biscuits, pasta, pizza, fruit juices, tropical fruits. Processed foods, fatty meats. Coffee, alcohol, pastries, and bread all generate dampness and swelling of the liver, imbalance blood sugar and burden the spleen.

Avoid foods with dry dampness: raw honey, celery, lettuce (foods with more moisture content are damp), pumpkin, crisps (greasy and damp).

Sweet or mucus-forming food such as dairy (raw Goat's milk is usually tolerated), eggs, meats, butter, oils. Ice cream would be a double whammy, dairy + cold. Limit nuts and seeds and foods with concentrated sweeteners. The tolerance amount is individual and depends on the level and spread of dampness.

In a hot climate however more raw foods can be tolerated as the heat counteracts the dampness.

SPLEEN DAMPNESS

Dietary factors and foods to be increased

It is important for Earth elements to eat foods that support their blood sugar and to have balanced meals with appropriate protein, healthy fats and fibre with complex slow-release and avoid simple carbohydrates.

Herbs: chamomile, ginger, dandelion root, alfalfa, cinnamon, turmeric, caraway, cardamom, coriander, cumin, fennel, star anise, garam masala. Get into the habit of adding them to dishes.

Whole, low sugar fruits in moderation instead of high sugar topical fruits and avoid fruit juice. Warm stewed apple or pear with cinnamon instead of raw.

Foods to increase Fire (and digestive fire). Bitter foods drain dampness: Kale, dandelion, rocket, sesame seeds, bitter greens, Brussel sprouts, celery, lettuce, broccoli, endive, collard greens, quinoa, orange peel, kumquats, blackcurrants, walnut, lemon, turnip, chocolate (dark, in moderation). Cooked greens.

To tonify fire deficiency: warming foods, cooking foods for longer (baking, roasting, grilling), warm teas, hot baths. Vegetarian diets are by their very nature often raw and damp, if vegetarian, a little meat temporarily or sardines or trout if one will possibly consider it, will be warming. Warming foods speed up the metabolism, cool foods do the opposite. Colder foods can be mixed with warmer spices to heat them up.

Foods to nourish Earth - root vegetables in moderation / small quantities: yellow, orange or Earth-coloured foods: grains, rice, millet, squashes, carrots, onions, pumpkin, sweet potato. Turmeric, yellow pepper, blueberries, dates (in moderation), nuts in moderation.

Pungent foods can help counteract dampness and to move the sweet taste (as long as Qi is not too weak). Warm pungent foods include rosemary, fennel, garlic ginger. Aduki beans, mung beans and other small pulses can help dampness.

"Dry" foods: whole grains - short grain brown rice, oats, oatmeal, beans, lentils, pasture raised animal meat, roasted vegetables, nuts and seeds (in moderation), spicy foods.

Foods to suppress dampness: alfalfa, anchovy, celery, corn, daikon, garlic, green tea, horseradish, jasmine tea, kidney bean, lemon, mackerel, marjoram, mushroom (button), onion, parsley, pumpkin, radish, scallion, turnip.

Breakfast could include hot porridge oats or oatmeal, millet flakes, quinoa flakes, buckwheat flakes (available from [buywholefoodsonline](http://buywholefoodsonline.com)) with cinnamon, stewed apple and spices, mackerel with mushrooms, turmeric and parsley, salmon with sweet potato and carrot and ginger mash, hot prawns with garlic, lemon, ginger and hummous, or roasted veg with sliced chicken or turkey and beetroot hummus, quinoa pilaf with fish or prawns.

Meat: Chicken, turkey, mackerel, salmon, trout, carp, anchovy, prawns, lobster, mussels

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Plant based suggestions for strengthening the spleen, you can add in moderate amounts of good quality protein such as chicken, fish, organic meats: -

- Split pea soup, black bean soup, chickpea soup
- Vegetable curries
- Pumpkin or squash soup
- Baked sweet potato
- Well-cooked amaranth, sweet rice, or quinoa pilaf or puddings
- Anything with warming spices: nutmeg, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, allspice, anise, cinnamon
- baked apples (in moderation, if you tolerate fruit)
- Stewed prunes and figs (in moderation, if you tolerate fruit)
- Ginger root tea
- liquorice tea (use in moderation – it can raise blood pressure if used daily for more than 3-4 weeks at a time, and it can contribute to water retention)
- Fennel seed tea (boil 1/2 tsp fennel seeds with 1 cup water for 5 minutes while keeping pan covered, strain, cool slightly, and drink)
- Simple Steamed Carrots
- Carrot Mash
- Parsnip-Carrot Mash
- Swede-Carrot Mash
- Parsnip or sweet potato Fries
- Carrot & Ginger soup
- Easy Baked Winter Squash
- Apple, Turnip & Cabbage Hash
- Tarragon Roasted Turnips
- Pan-Fried Parsnips & Leeks
- Roasted Root Vegetables
- Roasted Vegetable Mash
- Roasted Vegetable Soup
- Roasted Fennel
- Turnip & Kale Soup
- Warming bean Stews
- Hummus
- Beetroot hummus

To increase stool transit: 1.5 to 2 litres of room hot water daily (or room temperature in Summer)
Moderate amount of fibre and complex carbohydrates, grains, vegetables, legumes.
Relaxation activates the parasympathetic nervous system and Vagus nerve which controls peristalsis.

You may find some useful recipes here <https://www.doctorsbeyondmedicine.com/listing/foods-that-strengthen-the-spleen>