

HEALTH

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TCM: meridian system

What is the meridian system and how does it affect health?

In traditional Chinese medicine, it is believed the body consists of a giant web called the meridian system that links different parts. To be knowledgeable about the meridian system is as important as understanding anatomy in Western medicine.

There are 12 main meridians that form the backbone of the system. They are sequential to each other in the circulation of *chi* (vital energy) and are paired with corresponding organs.

Disorders of the meridians may affect the corresponding organs and disorders of the organs may be reflected along the corresponding meridians.

Here are the important health

aspects of each meridian. The lung meridian is dominant between 3am and 5am and is associated with throat and chest ailments, pain in the shoulder, back and inner arm.

The large intestine meridian is dominant between 5am and 7am and is associated with toothache, sore throat, nasal bleeding, pain in the front of the shoulder and weakness of the thumb and index finger.

The stomach meridian is dominant between 7am and 9am and is associated with head and facial ailments, mental disorders, high fever, frequent hunger, fullness, pain in the nipples, the lateral side of the lower limb and back of the feet, and weakness of the middle toe.

The spleen meridian is dominant between 9am and 11am and is associated

with vomiting, stomach ache, bloating, fatigue, diarrhoea, swelling and coldness on the inner side of the thigh.

The heart meridian is dominant between 11am and 1pm and is associated with chest tightness or pain, irritability, thirst, warm palms and pain on the inner side of the upper arm.

The small intestine meridian is dominant between 1pm and 3pm and is associated with loss of hearing, sore throat, oral ulcers, migraines, pain in the shoulder and on the back of the arm.

The bladder meridian is dominant between 3pm and 5pm and is associated with headache, runny nose, sore neck, sore eyes, piles and pain in the lumbar, back of the knee and heels.

The kidney meridian is dominant between 5pm and 7pm and is associated

with dizziness, shortness of breath, irritability, lumbar soreness, weakness and coldness in the lower limbs.

The pericardium meridian is dominant between 7pm and 9pm and is associated with warm palms, upper arm spasms, a flushed face, irritability, absentmindedness and palpitations.

The triple-burner meridian is dominant between 9pm and 11pm and is associated with sweating, chest tightness, pain in the eye, behind the ear, shoulder and upper arms and weakness of the ring finger and little finger.

The gall bladder meridian is dominant between 11pm and 1am, and is associated with a bitter taste in the mouth, migraine, pain in the lower chest, the outer side of the lower limbs and weakness of the fourth toe.

The liver meridian is dominant between 1am and 3am and is associated with lumbar pain, a dull complexion, chest fullness, diarrhoea, vomiting, incontinence or urinary difficulty, hernia and menstrual pain.

TCM physicians can determine which meridian is affected by examining the location, specific time and symptoms. Clinical applications of acupuncture, qigong and massage are usually based on the findings.

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