

## HEALTH

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## TCM

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## Know your type

Traditional Chinese Medicine categorises the major types of body constitution as neutral, yin-cold, yang-hot, phlegm-damp and dry. These five constitutions form a crucial guideline in clinical applications.

Knowing your body constitution allows TCM physicians to better advise you on what to eat and how to live to maintain good health.

Yang-hot individuals are said to have more sturdy body shapes. They often feel hot, experience a dry mouth, prefer cold drinks when thirsty, have a reddish complexion, are easily annoyed and tend to suffer from insomnia. They're also more sensitive to high temperatures compared with other body types.

Foods with cooling properties

or bitter flavours such as crab (right), grapefruit, mung beans and bamboo shoots are beneficial for this body type.

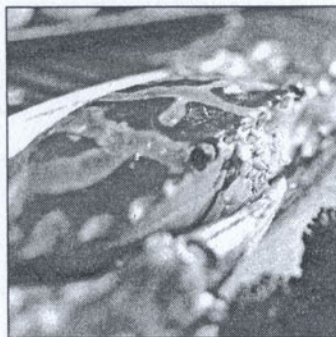
Yin-cold individuals are said to have frail bodies and cold limbs. They usually feel cold easily and prefer hot or warm food and drinks. They may tire easily, have a pale or whitish complexion, and are more prone to diarrhoea.

Beneficial foods for this constitution include chicken, beef, mutton, dates, brown sugar and pumpkin. These foods usually have warming properties and sweet or pungent flavours.

Phlegm-damp types are said to prefer sweet food. They can experience dizziness and tire easily. They look fatigued and snore easily during sleep.

Such people have a low metabolic rate and a tendency to become overweight or bloated due to water retention. Damp weather affects this body type even more adversely.

Beneficial foods include celery, coriander, onion, hyacinth bean, wax gourd,



Chinese cabbage and corn silk. These are said to have a drying effect, benefit the spleen and stomach, and help to eliminate excessive dampness in the body.

Dry type individuals are said to get thirsty easily and to experience dryness in the eyes, throat, lips and skin. When a cold or flu is prevalent, they usually have a cough without mucus.

This body type tends to be skinny and doesn't gain weight easily. Common complaints include itchy skin, nose or eyes and constipation. They're sensitive to even low levels of humidity.

Beneficial foods include animal organs, pork, fish, dairy products, honey, yellow soybean, white fungus and lily buds. These foods aid lubrication and promote body fluid production.

A neutral body type may have fewer complaints, and look healthy with skin neither pale nor red. They have a good appetite, get adequate sleep, and don't feel hot or cold easily. Their urine and stools are normal. Neutral body types may enjoy a diet that blends different properties and a varied selection is appropriate.

But despite the different set types, most people usually are a mixture. People's constitutions will also change with different stages of life, living environments and seasons.

In TCM, the goal is to shift the body to a more neutral constitution and achieve holistic health. Knowing the body type helps to find the best treatment.

*Before taking any medicine, consult your TCM or medical practitioner.*