

Why can't I get pregnant even though all my tests and my husband's tests come back perfect? Why do I get headaches once a week? Why do I get menstruation cramps and I can't even get up the first two days of my period because I'm in so much pain? Why is my eye twitching all the time? Why am I so fatigued? These are the common questions I get from patients, so today I'm going to answer why am I sick.

According to Chinese medicine, there are only three causes of illnesses, and we're going to discuss them all today. One of the strengths of Chinese medicine is that it always looks for the root cause, and there are always at least one or two causes of illnesses according to TCM. In conventional medicine, often we are told it's unknown; we don't know why you can't conceive, it's unexplained infertility. In TCM, there is always a cause. Does that mean that there's always a cure?

No, it means that we can either manage the disorder, support the patients, or sometimes get rid of the problem. Patients feel more in control and empowered when they understand what the root cause is because they can take advantage of either changing some lifestyle habits or they can have us and their healthcare practitioner support and manage the disorders so they can live a healthy life. And then you're like, "Clara, there's only three causes of disease?"

Well, that is really weird. How is that even possible? I'm going to break each of them down into little subcategories so let's look at why so we can help our patients feel better, manage their disorders, and help support their entire health.

Welcome back to my channel. If it's your first time here, I'm Clara from Acore Academy and I create Chinese medicine and acupuncture content for students and practitioners, making it easy to grasp and fun to learn. Let's go.

Growing up, when I first got my period, it was so painful. The first two days were excruciating, so I would lay down with a hot water bottle on my low abdominal region and just cry. My mom would say, "Take an aspirin, take a painkiller," and I would always say no, I don't want to, I just want this to go away. Even back then, I was not really big on taking medication.

I don't know why, it was just natural instinct following my intuition. However, having those two days in pain in bed was not fun at all, and the medical doctor said that I was just one of those that was unlucky. When you have menstruation cramps, you're unlucky. Other girls don't have that. Well, I don't really believe in luck, maybe you do. I believe in making my own destiny, and I have believed in that since I was a little girl. So I had to

kind of look into other solutions and figure out what could help so I didn't continue to feel so out of control two days every month because I played sports and I enjoyed school, and this was so debilitating.

My story starts with some acupuncture for this amenorrhea, yes, that's what I had years ago. Now I don't remember a lot of it, I just remember going, getting some acupuncture, and eventually my period became a normal eventless period. Oh, this was fantastic. Now today, I want to talk about why we are sick, what are the root causes, because this is a strength of Chinese medicine.

As I said in the introduction, we have three causes of disease in TCM: external pathogens, internal emotions, and my favorite one, others. When I learned this in TCM school, I was like, "Others? What are others?" Well, there's a big subcategory in that basket, and we're going to look at each and every one of them.

First is external pathogens. When we talk about external pathogens, we talk about the environment, viruses, and bacteria. So viruses, bacteria, or the environment penetrate the body from the external part into the internal part. External pathogen invasion, that's what it means. Now, virus and bacteria are going to create fever, the common cold, the flu, they're going to create infection.

In external pathogen invasion, it's usually an acute problem. The other one is the environmental factor. If I fall into a frozen lake, I will get hypothermia. This is an invasion of cold and damp because it was water. If I stay too long in the sun and I get a sunburn, now I have an invasion of external pathogen heat, which creates inflammation or fever or a reaction from my body trying to fight this invader. Does that make sense? So external pathogen pathogens are always acute. They are wind, heat, or fire, cold, damp, dryness, and summer heat, which happens only in the summer. All those are going to create symptoms.

So in Chinese medicine, we don't treat the flu or the cold, we look at the symptoms. If the person is chilly, they want some soup, they're sneezing, they're having a stuffy nose, they're having a bit of a scratchy throat, we're like, "Huh, is it an invasion of wind and cold?" Now, cold, you understand because they're chilly, right? They're feeling cold, they want some soup. Wind is because wind is a pathogen that moves rapidly, and usually when we have an external pathogen like a bacteria or a virus, everything changes really quickly, right? Within 12 hours, if you have wind heat, you may wake up with a sore throat, a little bit, you're like, "Oh, I think I'm getting sick." By the end of the day, you have a fever, you have a really big sore throat, and you're like, "Oh no, I think I got the flu."

That's the wind traveling through the body and really speeding up the infection. So that would be wind heat. If there was a lot of mucus, then there would be wind heat and damp, right? There's a lot of mucus and we have fever and we have a sore throat and we're coughing a lot of phlegm, now we have wind heat and damp. Does that make sense? So each pathogen has properties to affect different areas of our body. Dampness really affects the nose, but also the digestive system.

That's why we can have diarrhea, vomiting when we have a bacteria infection, let's say like E. coli, right? And we have fever, we're reacting, this is usually an invasion of damp and heat with the wind because it moves rapidly through the body. Summer heat happens only in the summers. It's like a sunstroke that is very much a summer heat, but all the other ones can happen at any time, and usually more than one will come together. So often we say external pathogens always come with a buddy. So that's the number one. Remember, first cause of disease is acute external pathogen invasion, which are infections, bacteria, viruses, and environmental factors like a sunburn, a sunstroke, or hypothermia.

Second cause of why we can be sick is internal emotions. Now, the seven emotions according to Chinese medicine are anger, joy, sadness, fear, shock, worry, overthinking, and those emotions, of course, we want to feel them every day and we want to be able to feel them and process them. However, when those become longstanding, then they will affect us physically.

Longstanding emotions will eventually create physical issues, and that's why it's called internal because it will affect the organs. For example, if someone has a lot of worry and they're anxious and worry all the time, eventually that worry may create ulcers in the stomach or a hole, literally in the stomach, a physical hole happening from the emotion of worry for many years.

So that's what we call internal emotions. Now, each emotion affects the body in a different way. So let's look at them because in TCM we say 70% of all chronic disorders are due to long-standing emotions. If had emotional trauma as a child, absolutely it's going to affect us if we're not processing it, if we're not dealing with it, and even if we did, it's still a trauma that is within our cellular level and it changed our body at the cell level, which is unbelievable, but that means that if it did make the body sick, it can also make the body better.

So anger, which affects the liver in Chinese medicine, also includes resentment, irritability, frustration, rage, bitterness, but also repressed anger. If we don't express it, it

is going to be repressed and create havoc on our TCM liver. It's going to create liver chi stagnation with a lot of stress and tensions in the shoulder and temporal headache. At the end of the day, it's going to create blood stagnation. It's going to create liver yang rising.

We have high blood pressure, feeling angry, bursting out, insomnia, liver fire. It is going to escalate, specifically first as an excess pattern, and most symptoms are going to be like I said, red face, insomnia, high blood pressure, and temporal headaches, which are usually worse with stress and at the end of the day. So this is why it's really important to know if patients have been having anger for many years.

So if patients come in with a lot of resentment or frustration or irritability, we know we need to support their TCM liver. Joy or excessive excitement includes nervous laughter, laughing all the time for no reason, over-excitement. It's great to be happy, but sometimes it's too much, and it will create some heart fire for some people or some heart yin deficiency in the long run. Symptoms will be insomnia, specifically after too much excitement, like getting excited about going to Disneyland or anything that makes you excited too much where you can't sleep.

Also poor focus, poor concentration because we're too excited to overjoy, but also migraine, and sometimes people laugh for no reason because they're nervous and they're anxious which affects the heart in Chinese medicine as well. Worry and overthinking affects the spleen and stomach or the digestive system in TCM. It includes excessive mental work like being a student or working behind a computer all day, over-studying, and also feeling overwhelmed.

People overthink not necessarily worry, but when we worry we definitely overthink. Are you an overthinker? I sure am. So I know I have to protect my spleen, but those worry overthinking like I was saying earlier can create havoc on the digestive system like nausea, acid reflux, acid regurgitation, GERD, bloating, cravings, and fatigue. It takes a lot of energy when we worry and we overthink all the time. So this is really important when we have patients to ask them,

"Are you a worrier, an overthinker?" Because it's going to give us clues of what is affected, right? Why do they have poor appetite? Why do they have bloating or nausea or ulcers? Because it's years of worrying. Sadness and grief affect the lung in Chinese medicine, and they include crying often, depression, and of course, we want to grieve when someone passes away, but we also want to know that eventually we need to process the grief, and a few years later, we should be able to not feel like crying every

two minutes, right? Does that make sense? So when someone is really depressed or they cry and they might say, "I cry all the time for no reason. I have no reason to be sad." It's going to create lung chi deficiency and/or heart blood deficiency, and symptoms are going to be fatigue because it's exhausting to cry and shortness of breath, poor memory, and pale face.

So those are going to give us clues of how those emotions deplete the body and eventually deplete the immune system as well. The last two are fear and shock, and they affect the TCM kidneys. And fear can be anxiety, irrational fear, or rational fear for that matter. Something is really scary or someone is trying to scare you, feeling of insecurity. Shock is going to be more acute. It's like a bad news or a shock with trauma injury, let's say a car accident. Makes sense? So it's either mental shock or physical shock, but it's very sudden.

So when it comes to fear, long-standing fear may cause kidney chi deficiency and/or kidney yin deficiency, and the symptoms are going to be incontinence, specifically bladder incontinence, insomnia, fatigue, palpitation, anxiety, and sweating easily when we're anxious. When it comes to shock, it is going to create a kidney and heart chi deficiency because it really depletes essence because it's an impactful moment, either physical or emotional. So usually we have sweating, uncontrollable urination, dizziness, and maybe fainting.

So this is more of an acute one, but fear is definitely more of a chronic. As you can see, the seven emotions are really creating havoc on our physical body if longstanding. In my years of practice since 2003, so many of my patients have had physical problems that stem from longstanding emotions. So it's really important to address them.

The third cause of illnesses according to Chinese medicine is called others, and that always makes me laugh because what does that mean? Well, it's a big basket of a lot of different causes. So let's look at the first one, which is we really overwork. If you do overwork, physical or mental, it will affect your body. I had a patient years ago that used to fix commercial fridges, and he came to see me because he was on his knees eight hours of the day.

Even though he had pads under his knees, he was in so much pain because eight hours of the day he was on his knees. We couldn't remove the cause because the cause was work, and he wasn't going to stop working until he retires. So we had to manage the pain, and the acupuncture helped managing the disease because of course, we could not remove it, but it helped him. I had another patient who was a security guard, he

stood all day long and didn't move much because that's what he did. Can you imagine the pressure on his lower back and his hips? His whole back was always in pain because you stand and you don't move on the spot. There's no circulation and it puts a lot of pressure on the back and the knees. So that affects the kidney in TCM, right? I had another patient who was a hairdresser.

Now, hairdressers, there's two things that can happen. Often they stand on high heels on concrete floor, their floor is really hard, and they stand all day doing hair. So again, knee problem, low back problem, that is a kidney chi depleting. The second one is they also do the hair, which they use their hand and shoulder to blow dry their patients, and that creates a lot of upper shoulder and neck pain as well on top of it. The breathing chemicals all day, lung, when they dye people's hair, that also affects their lung and creates some allergic reaction.

A lot of my patients who are hairdressers do have environmental allergies because it affects the lung chi. See how we found the root cause? This is why it's really important to ask patients what do they do for a living because it will give us clues of where the root cause can be. The next one is exercise. Exercise is great for us. We have people that don't exercise and then we have people that over-exercise, right? The whole point is a balanced exercise routine. So when I have patients that never exercise and sit a lot at their job, there's going to be some liver chi stagnation and there's going to be maybe weight gain because they're not having a great diet.

Also maybe depression or worrying or anxiety because they're not feeding the brain great oxygen by going to exercise, specifically outside. So movement is really important, even if it's yoga, tai chi, whatever, the exercise should be part of everybody's routine. But it can give us clues of what's going on. The opposite is over exercise, right? So often I have a lot of women that may over exercise to keep their weight down, and that really affects their reproductive system and a lot of them may have amenorrhea. So no period or very scanty menstruation, and in TCM it's a blood deficiency.

I see this a lot with teenage girls who are still developing their reproductive system and are over exercising because they're competing and not eating enough, specifically if they're into ballet or places where they have to keep their weight down. This is really showing up as no period at all, which as we know is completely unhealthy even though people don't think it's unhealthy or a disorder because, "Hey, I don't have a period, this is great!"

Well, no, it's not, specifically because the body is not having its normal function. The next cause is a big one because the digestive system is at the center of our health. If you look at from the top of your head to underneath the sole of your foot, it's literally halfway or in the middle, and that's why it's called the jungi or the middle chi because it is in the middle and it means it's at the center of our health.

That's why diet is key to reach optimum health. And this is really important as practitioners to educate patients on what's best at this time, at this stage, for this person in their life in order to heal, to feel better, and to have their body reach optimum health. So when it comes to diet, we can have constant craving, and usually that is a spleen chi deficiency. We can also eat too much sugar, too much fat, and that also will create spleen chi deficiency with dampness, and it puts so much pressure on the digestive system.

So diabetes type 2, for example, can be completely reversible with a change of diet. This is why I'm saying the root cause is the diet. Can we remove it with type 2? Absolutely. With type 1? No, right? There's a difference there. So this is really truly important to look at diet. Too much cold food and raw food can create a spleen yin deficiency because the spleen does not like raw and cold food. Also too much spicy food, coffee, or alcohol can create some excess heat in the stomach and in the liver with some fire coming up like heartburn, acid reflux, because it's too acidic and it's too hot for the stomach.

So diet for us is so key to looking at how we can manage diseases. We can look at something like fatigue. Fatigue often is dehydration and low nutrients. All we have to do is look at the diet and make sure we are nourished with hydration, lubrication, and the right food.

By the way, if you're enjoying the graphics you're seeing today, they are all from my Greenbook Chinese Medicine Made Easy, which has all foundation and diagnosis with lots of pictures to help you retain and understand everything easily and with a lot of fun. You know me, I'm all about grasping things very simply and having fun while doing it. And this also comes in a PDF that can be downloaded with lots of video links to support it or it ships all over the world. You can find it on my website at acoracademy.com or I'll have the link below for you.

So far under the umbrella of others cause of diseases, we've had number one was overwork, physical or mental, exercise too much or not enough, and diet. Number four is trauma injury, a car accident, whiplash, breaking something, sprain, strain, anything that's going to be an impact on the musculoskeletal and create injury. Obviously, that is

a cause of illness. And when it starts at the acute stage, it's always a blood stagnation. So if we have a sprain or a strain or we break a bone, we're going to have blood stasis when it's swelling.

There's dampness. When there is, obviously, the inflammation is heat. However, eventually that trauma injury could create permanent pain for muscular issues. So I have a patient that had a car accident four years ago and is still in pain right now. He came to see me after four years trying everything, and he's still in pain. Now his body is constantly in that pain, specifically in the upper back, shoulder, and neck. And this now is a chronic pain. And what was the root cause? The car accident, which is trauma injury.

So now we have to manage the pain because he's been in pain for so long, and there was no treatment for so long, the body has adapted, and now it's constantly in pain. Number five is medication side effects. Now when it comes to medications, some people are in one, two, three, or 12 medications. I see a lot of patients that go through IVF because I see a lot of women doing fertility, and when they come and see me, they said, "Oh, you know, I heard that acupuncture is great to support my IVF journey." And what we do with the support is not only we bring blood flow to the uterus, we try to really help support the process of IVF by also trying to balance the side effect of the medication.

When my patients get night sweats or hot flashes due to taking certain medication like Clomid, then my job is to try to lessen the side effect so they're not so intense and they can go through the process of IVF a little bit easier. So side effects can be many things. It can be hot flashes, night sweats, dizziness, digestive system issues, and more. This is why in TCM we really try to support the body and the organs while the patients are on medication to lessen those side effects because we want them to go through the process a little bit easier. Also, if you know that one of the side effects of a certain medication is insomnia, well, we're going to work on that with the acupuncture because we don't want them to not be able to sleep at all because that's not going to be good for their health either.

Number six is poor posture. Now poor posture is a big one because a lot of us work on the computer all day, and I'm not going to lie, I'm guilty as charged as well. When I'm working, I don't realize that I'm slouched over until my husband will say, "Hey, sit up straight. You're going to hurt your back." And I'm like, "Oh yeah, you're right." But I'm so in the work and so in the moment, I don't realize that I'm actually having poor posture. Now, poor posture for so long can create muscle tension, muscle tightness, and it's

going to create a muscular pain at the end of the day. Now, when it starts, it's muscular pain, but eventually it can become joint pain and arthritis. So we really need to be aware of our posture. If we have a lot of shoulder and neck pain, there's a great chance that it is due to poor posture.

So really being mindful of our posture when we're working is so important for our health long-term. Number seven is environmental toxins. Now, this is a big one because there are so many environmental toxins around us, right? In the food, in the air, in the water, in the makeup, in the clothes, in the toys, and everything that we use every single day. So the environmental toxins are heavy metals, pesticides, chemicals, radiation, pollution, all of those are going to affect our body. And what is that going to create? Often damp and heat in the liver.

The liver is going to process all of that toxicity, and that's going to create a damp heat, which often presents itself as allergies, hay fever, asthma, skin disorders, eczema, dermatitis, hives, any red rash, and it is because the liver is processing too much toxicity. So environmental toxins are a big one, and a lot of the symptoms I've just mentioned are going to be processed in the liver, and that's going to create a lot of heat because it's processing, processing, processing. This is why in TCM we do liver detox. We support the liver and we try to cool it down because it's processing so much heat and toxicity.

And lastly, we're going to look at past injury, surgery, or illness. Now, I see a lot of patients who say, "Well, I had a car accident 20 years ago, but my neck is hurting again." And what we do in TCM, we call it the origin. So let's say 20 years ago you had a car accident and you were rear-ended, and your neck was hurting, and then over the years it got better, but now it's starting to hurt again. So in TCM we say it's like the weeds growing in the garden. If you don't pull them out by the root, they're going to come back. So in TCM, it's kind of like that.

We need to find the origin, and if it's been 20 years and the neck is hurting again, we need to go back and heal the root because we need to take the weed out by the root. If not, it's going to come back. And that's what we do with acupuncture. We're going to find the root, and we're going to try to take it out from the root so it doesn't come back. But that's why patients say, "Well, why do I need to come back? It's been 20 years since my car accident."

Because we need to take it out by the root so it doesn't come back. So past injury, surgery, and illness are very important to consider when we look at the root cause of

illnesses because they do play a role in the patient's current condition. So these are the three causes of disease in TCM: external pathogen invasion, internal emotions, and others.

The others are really the cause of 70% of all chronic illnesses. It's really important to look at the root cause of the diseases so we can help the patients feel better, manage the disorders, and support their entire health because we need to empower them to live a healthy life. That's it for today. Thank you for joining me. Don't forget to like, share, and comment below. If you haven't subscribed yet, make sure to hit the subscribe button and the notification bell so you're the first to know when I have a new video out. Thank you, and I'll see you next time.