

AETIOLOGY, PATHOLOGY AND TREATMENT OF DAMPNESS



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1. AETIOLOGY

EXTERNAL

Dampness can derive from environmental or climatic dampness: thus, it may be due to humid weather (whether hot or cold), but also to damp living conditions, such as living in damp houses.

Exterior Dampness can also be caught by wearing wet clothes, wading in water, working in damp places or sitting on damp ground.

DIET

Dampness may result from the excessive consumption of greasy foods, dairy foods, sweets, sugar, cold-raw foods. Damp-Heat may also arise from excessive alcohol drinking and of greasy-fried foods.

Dampness may also arise from overeating (in the same way as Retention of Food) or from irregular eating habits.

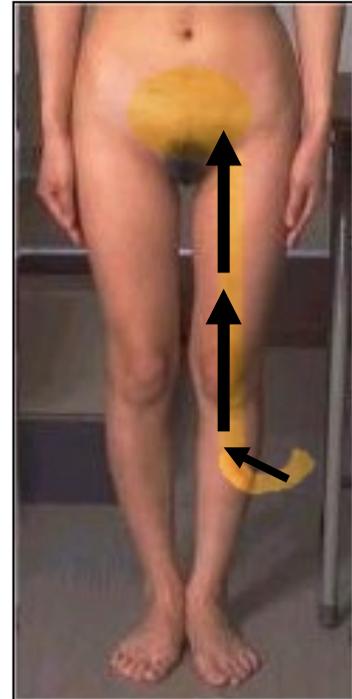
2. CHARACTERISTICS OF DAMPNESS

The characteristics of Dampness are:

- sticky causes repeated attacks
- heavy difficult to get rid of
- slows things down infuses downwards

When exterior Dampness invades the body, it tends to invade the lower part first, typically the legs. From the legs, it can flow upwards in the leg channels to settle in any of the pelvic cavity organs.

If it settles in the female genital system it causes vaginal discharges, if it settles in the Intestines it will cause loose stools and if it settles in the Bladder it will cause difficulty, frequency and burning of urination. However, Dampness is also common in the **head**.



The clinical manifestations of Dampness are extremely varied according to its location and nature (hot or cold), but the general ones are:

- a feeling of heaviness of body or head
- no appetite
- a feeling of fullness of chest or epigastrium
- sticky taste
- urinary difficulty
- sticky vaginal discharge
- sticky tongue coating
- Slippery or Soggy pulse.

According to its location, the more specific clinical manifestations of internal Dampness are:

Head: feeling of heaviness of the head



Eyes: red-swollen eyelids, eyes oozing a fluid, sties



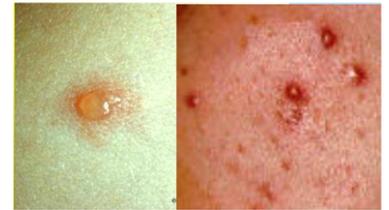
Mouth: mouth ulcers on gums, swollen-red lips



Stomach and Spleen: feeling of fullness of epigastrium, feeling of fullness after eating, sticky taste, loose stools, poor appetite, Soggy pulse.

Lower Burner: excessive vaginal discharge, painful periods, infertility, turbid urine, difficult and painful urination, scrotal sweating or eczema, genital eczema, genital itching.

Skin: papules (Damp-Heat with more Heat), pustules, vesicles (Dampness without Heat), greasy sweat, boils, any oozing skin lesion, oozing eczema, puffy skin.



Luo Channels: numbness and loss of sensation.

Joints: swollen-painful joints (Fixed Bi or also Wandering Bi syndrome if mixed with Wind).



The various clinical manifestations can be correlated to the main characteristics of Dampness:

Heaviness: this causes a feeling of heaviness, tiredness, heaviness of limbs or head, muzziness (fuzziness).

Since Dampness is heavy it causes a feeling of fullness of chest or epigastrium, and it tends to settle in the Lower Burner.

However, Dampness often affects the head too causing the above-mentioned symptoms. This happens because it prevents the clear Yang from ascending to the head to brighten the sense orifices and clear the brain.

Dirtiness, turbidity: Dampness is dirty and is reflected in dirty discharges, such as cloudy urine, vaginal discharges or skin diseases characterized by thick and dirty fluids oozing out such as in certain types of eczema.



Stickiness: Dampness is sticky and this is reflected in a sticky tongue coating, sticky taste and Slippery pulse. The sticky nature of Dampness also accounts for its being very difficult to get rid of. It often becomes chronic, manifesting in frequent, recurrent bouts.



Yin nature: Dampness is a Yin pathogen and it therefore tends to injure Yang, especially of the Spleen (except, of course, if it is Damp-Heat).

DAMPNESS IN THE MALE GENITAL SYSTEM

URINARY SYMPTOMS

- Dysuria
- Stranguria
- Turbid urine

GENITAL SYMPTOMS

- Pruritus of the genitals
- Urethral discharge
- Testicular swelling
- Impotence
- Anomalies of sperm

PROSTATE SYMPTOMS

- Hypertrophy
- Pain of the perineum
- Feeling of heaviness of the perineum

GENERAL SYMPTOMS

- Feeling of heaviness of the abdomen
- Feeling of heaviness
- Tongue with sticky coating on the root
- Slippery pulse

PATHOLOGY

- Dampness obstructs the Water passages
- Dampness is sticky, dirty, heavy



3. DIAGNOSIS

PINYIN	CHINESE	ENGLISH	PATHOLOGY	EXAMINATION
MEN	闷	Feeling of oppression	Phlegm, severe Qi stagnation	Chest and epigastrium; only subjective
MAN	满	Feeling of fullness	Dampness, Food Retention	Epigastrium, abdomen; subjective and objective (abdomen hard)
ZHANG	胀	Feeling of distension	Qi stagnation, emotional origin	Epigastrium, chest, hypochondrium abdomen; subjective and objective (abdomen distended)
PI	痞	Feeling of stuffiness	ST-Qi Xu, ST-Heat, Xu-Shi, Heat-Cold	Epigastrium. Subjective, the patient feels distended and full but abdomen soft