

Symptoms and signs in pediatrics

As a rule, we can derive more information indirectly from what the accompanying adults tell us than we can from direct observation, but it is useful for example to look at the stools of babies or the mucus of children who manage to blow their noses, and also to smell their skin and listen to their breathing. With regard to the data that we usually collect from a direct examination, it is also helpful to ask the accompanying adults for further information, for example what they themselves feel the baby's tummy to be like between sessions, whether spots ever appear on the skin, or whether a pediatrician has ever found swollen lymph nodes.

Face and complexion

- Intensely red cheeks or erythematous rashes: heat or fire.
- Pallor, pale conjunctiva: qi deficiency; cold.
- Greenish tinge around the lips: food accumulation (*shi ji* 食积).
- Blackish tinge beneath or around the eyes: Kidney qi deficiency; shortage of *jing* 精.
- Yellowish tinge over all the face: accumulation of dampness.

Less commonly seen:

- Dark blue tinge on the temples or obvious veins: fright/shock; qi deficiency.
- Swollen, puffy and pale face: dampness due to yang deficiency.
- Dull, pallid complexion: blood insufficiency.
- Flushed cheeks: yin insufficiency.
- Grayish pallor, accompanied by cold limbs and spontaneous sweating: yang collapse.
- Lusterless yellow complexion with coarse white blotches on the cheeks or skin folds: thick phlegm; intestinal parasites.
- Yellow skin and sclera: damp-heat or cold-damp.
- Blue-green tinge, principally at the root of the nose: cold due to yang deficiency; fright/shock; internal wind.
- Cyanotic face and lips, accompanied by dyspnea: qi stagnation and blood stasis with obstruction of the Lung.

In addition, various areas of the face are traditionally related to different *zangfu* 脏腑 organs. These differ according to the various texts. For example, in chapter 32 of *Su Wen*, the following correspondences are indicated:

- Forehead: Heart.
- Left cheek: Liver.
- Right cheek: Lung.
- Tip of the nose: Spleen.
- Lower cheek: Kidney.

Chapter 49 of *Ling Shu* proposes a different arrangement:

- Glabella (the area between the eyebrows): Lung.
- Area between the eyes at the root of the nose: Heart.

- Central section of the nose: Liver.
- Tip of the nose: Spleen.
- Area between the nostrils: Stomach.
- Area below the eyes alongside the nose: Small Intestine.
- Area beside the wings of the nose: Large Intestine.
- Cheeks on either side of the mouth: Kidney.
- Area between the nose and mouth: Bladder.

Eyes and gaze

- Red eyes: wind-heat; fire; internal heat.
- Itchy eyes: wind.
- Yellowish discharge: damp-heat.
- Excessive lacrimation: wind-damp.
- Lacrimation on exposure to wind: wind-heat or deficiency-cold in the Liver channel.
- Dark/black periocular region: Kidney qi deficiency.
- Agitated, restless gaze: heat.
- “Wild” gaze with wide-open, staring eyes: ascending Liver yang; phlegm-fire.
- Veiled, clouded, inexpressive gaze: phlegm-cold; qi deficiency; shortage of *jing*.

Less commonly seen:

- Pale conjunctiva: blood insufficiency.
- Swollen eyelids: deficiency of Kidney or Spleen qi, with changes in the fluid metabolism.
- Watery eyes: dampness.
- Dry eyes: yin insufficiency.
- Yellow sclera: damp-heat.
- Black specks in the sclera: intestinal parasites.
- Pupillary changes: Kidney qi deficiency, shortage of *jing*.

In addition, various areas of the eyes are traditionally related to the five *yang* organs:²

- Sclera: Lung.
- Pupil and crystalline lens: Kidney.
- Iris and retina: Liver.
- Eyelid: Spleen.
- Inner and outer canthus: Heart.

Mouth, throat and ears

- Bright red or dry lips: heat/fire.
- Pale lips: qi deficiency.

² These relationships can be derived from chapter 80 of *Ling Shu*, which describes how the essence of each of the five *yang* organs converges at the eyes. Each essence is related to a particular tissue and can therefore be related back to the organ associated with that tissue.

- Red gums or aphthae and ulceration: heat, especially Stomach heat.
- Red and swollen throat/tonsils: wind-heat due to invasion of external pathogens.
- Swollen lymph nodes: phlegm.
- Swollen and painful ears with pus: damp-heat; wind-heat.
- Red ears: heat.

Less commonly seen:

- Pale lips and mucous membranes: blood insufficiency.
- Cyanotic lips: yang collapse.
- Violet lips: blood stasis.
- Dry, cracked lips: dryness; insufficiency of yin or body fluids; stagnation blocking fluids.
- Delayed appearance of teeth: Kidney qi deficiency.
- Swollen tonsils, but normal color: phlegm-damp.
- Drooling: Spleen qi deficiency; accumulation of dampness.
- Mouth constantly open, with a tendency for the tongue to protrude or the lower lip to drop: severe qi deficiency; shortage of *jing*.
- A green-blue tinge to the ears: cold; internal wind.
- Small/contracted auricles with a small attachment: shortage of *jing*.

External genitals (anterior yin) and anus (posterior yin)

- Reddening, rashes, itching: heat; damp-heat.
- Abnormal development: shortage of *jing*.
- Delayed descent of the testicles: cold in the Liver channel; qi stagnation; shortage of *jing*.

Sweating and thirst

Sweat passes out through the interstices (*cou li* 腠理), the apertures that are controlled by defensive qi (*wei qi* 卫气), and has the function of regulating body temperature, moistening the skin and eliminating the impure portion of body fluids.

- Sweating occurring in a pattern of attack by external pathogens: wind-heat.
- Sweating absent during a pattern of attack by external pathogens: wind-cold.
- Night sweating with disturbed sleep: heat.
- Spontaneous sweating on minor exertion, mainly affecting the head: *wei qi* deficiency.
- Great thirst, with a preference for cool or cold drinks: heat; food accumulation (*shi ji*).
- Little thirst, with a preference for hot drinks: cold or yang deficiency.

Less commonly seen:

- Cold sweat, with frozen limbs, dyspnea, cyanosis, and loss of consciousness: yang collapse.
- Cold skin with profuse spontaneous sweating: yang deficiency.