

# Patient Help Sheet

## Kidney Qi

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"A healthy outside starts from the inside." - Robert Ulrich

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## Patient Help Sheet – Boosting Kidney Qi

The kidney is considered the ocean of the human body. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, all the essences and fluids of the body's pathways pour into the kidney. Water has a tendency to drain downward and the kidneys are the lowest of the organ networks. Since the body is made up of at least 70 percent water, it makes sense the kidneys would receive, assemble and store the fluids until needed somewhere else in the body.

The kidneys store our essence, which is known as Jing in TCM. The Jing is the essential fluid of the physical body and it naturally becomes depleted over time. However, if the kidney function becomes weak, the storage capability will become inhibited and Jing will leak from the body. Like most organs, the kidneys have an energetic pathway that runs throughout the body. The energy that flows through these pathways is known as Qi (pronounced "chee"). Qi is an essential element of a strong healthy body. A person who has low or deficient kidney Qi may exhibit symptoms such as a weak libido, infertility, impotence, fatigue, insomnia, low back pain, hearing issues and knee pain or weakness. Unlike Jing, Qi can be regenerated and replaced over time through the use of specific foods, exercises and other techniques.

There are specific associations with each organ and its energetic pathway. The kidneys correspond to the season of winter, the color black, the emotion of fear, the element of water, the salty taste and the colder climate. These associations make it easy to understand what to avoid and what to indulge in so that the meridian remains balanced. TCM can offer a number of ways to boost or tonify kidney Qi.

### Foods

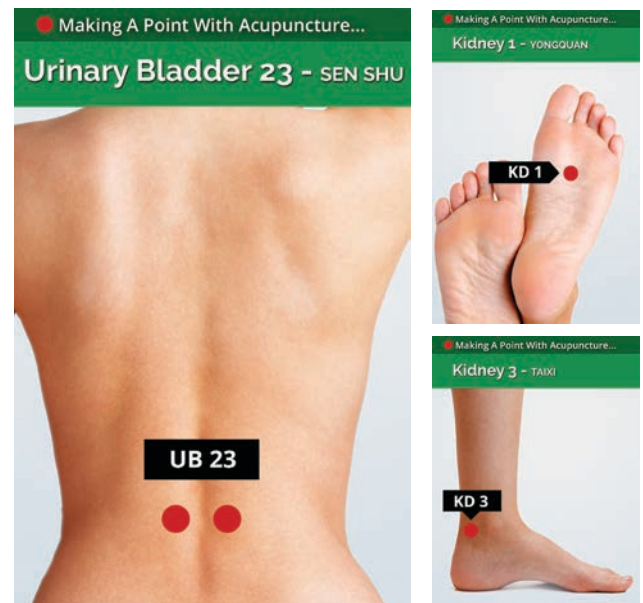
**Salty flavored foods** – Each energetic pathway has a flavor attributed to it. The water flavor that governs the kidneys is salty. Therefore foods such as miso, seaweed and seafood are all good choices for boosting kidney Qi.

**Kidney-shaped foods** – This is somewhat obvious. As the shape corresponds to the organ itself. This includes most beans. Since beans are kidney shaped, they have long been considered nourishing to the kidneys.

**Blue and black foods** – The kidneys are associated with the color black in TCM, therefore foods like blueberries, blackberries, mulberries and black beans are all beneficial.

**Nuts and seeds** – These relate to fertility and growth which is governed by the kidney meridian. This includes flax, pumpkin, sunflower, black sesame and walnuts.

**Vegetables** – Specifically those that help with water balance or have a diuretic effect, such as asparagus, cucumbers and celery.



### Acupressure Points

**Kidney 1 (KD 1)** Located on the sole of the foot, between the second and third toes and approximately 1/3 the distance between the base of the second toe and the heel. This point helps distribute water throughout the body.

**Kidney 3 (KD 3)** Located in the depression between the tip of the medial malleolus and the Achilles tendon. This point tonifies the kidneys, while strengthening the lower back and knees.

**Urinary Bladder 23 (UB 23)** Located bilaterally on the lower back, level with the second lumbar vertebra, just over the kidney location. This point strengthens the lower back, benefits the ears and tonifies the kidneys.

### Lifestyle

There is an old Taoist breathing exercise especially good for boosting kidney Qi.

Here's how it works: Lie on your back with loose fists placed under the back, just below the floating ribs. Then you should breathe into your lower back and feel the muscles pushing into your fists. Keep your fists there until you feel the muscles in your lower back expanding and contracting comfortably. Once you have control of the muscles, remove your fists and breathe into your kidneys for a few minutes.

Another technique that can help boost kidney Qi is by massaging the ears. The ears resemble the kidneys and are the external organ the kidneys open up to. By massaging the ears regularly until they become red, you are stimulating the connection and boosting the kidney Qi.

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