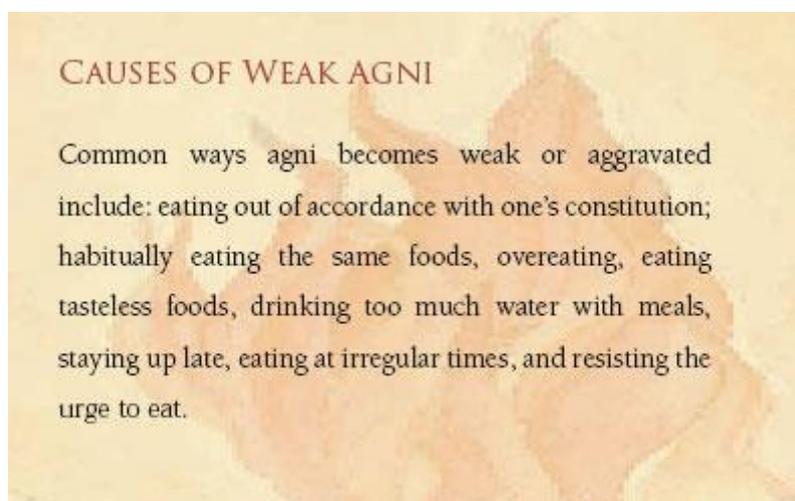


What Your Fingernails are Trying to Tell You About Your Health

Our bodies are incredible creations that are constantly speaking to us, giving us clues that allude to our internal health. According to a venerated Chinese medical text, “If something happens in the interior of the body, it must be reflected in the exterior of the body.”



In Ayurveda, it is said that the lunula (moon) of the nail represents one’s “agni,” or ‘fire’ in the body. If you look at your nails and notice there are no moons or extremely small moons, this is a sign that there is weak digestion/fire/circulation in the system.



Weak digestive fire is also an indication of poor metabolism and can lead to a potential build up of toxins in the system, called “ama.” This buildup, which often centers in the lower bowel and colon is a common root cause for many disorders and should be the first thing you look at when treating the body as a whole.

On the other hand, if you have nice large moons on your thumb to pinky, this represents a strong, healthy fire that is capable of breaking down and absorbing the nutrients from food. Chinese Medicine believes that clearly defined lunulas should take up around one-fifth of each nail for the best sign of health, although they feel that the pinky lunula is not as

important as the others and can be absent. TCM agrees with Ayurveda otherwise, teaching that people with small/absent lunulas are often bothered by “pathogenic cold” (yang deficiency) and weak immunity. It is crucial that you drink ginger tea in the mornings, especially if you have a symptoms of yang deficiency which can include menstrual cramps, aversion to cold, lack of circulation, poor appetite, fatigue, achy joints, cold hands and feet, poor digestion, depression, etc.



There are several other abnormalities that may show up in your nails, which can be found in the following chart. I'll elaborate on each individually below!



1. Absence of moons

I explained this in detail above, but in summary this can be related to low immune system, poor circulation, “cold” invading the body (lack of heat and vigor), and weak digestive fire. A great way to build your ‘yang’ energy and defenses back up would be drinking hot ginger tea every morning and all throughout the day if possible (bring a thermos to work with extra from the morning batch!) It's important to **never** drink beverages on ice – in fact, try to keep your

liquids at a warm room temperature or above! Add more soups to your diet, and use warming spices such as turmeric, garlic, ginger, and cayenne. Never eat meals while watching TV or browsing your phone.

Ayurveda's traditional solution to weak internal fire is to consume a small piece of fresh ginger with a few drops of lemon juice prior to eating a meal (similar to TCM's ginger tea prescription!) This slowly and gradually awakens the flames of agni, preparing it to digest the main course. In addition to ginger, other aromatic spices that assist digestion include black and cayenne pepper; cardamom; and licorice. They are believed to make foods more digestible by "predigesting" the food during cooking—heat combines and awakens their aromatic qualities, making the nutrients easier to digest once eaten.

These spices also stimulate the secretion of saliva and digestive enzymes in the stomach and intestines, doing some of the work for us. The less work 'agni' needs to do while digesting food, the less fatigue one will experience after eating. It's equally important to only eat when you are hungry – eating out of boredom will result in undigested food, diluted fire and toxic by-products due to poor digestion.

2. White Spots

White spots on the nails are very common, mainly due to the fact that more and more people are becoming deficient in minerals such as magnesium and zinc.

Although magnesium deficiency is indeed a huge issue, I do feel that spots on the nails are more often a sign of missing zinc. This may be due to a poor diet, stress (which depletes **both** zinc and magnesium) or could also be the result of the body not being able to absorb the zinc you're already eating. This is often because of poor digestion, low stomach acid, inflammation in the GI tract, excessive toxins in the colon, intake of allergenic foods, chronic loose stools or parasitic infection.

3. Vertical Lines/Ridges

These lines are all too common for many individuals and typically indicate malabsorption of nutrients in the body. Many websites say they are 'normal' and occur naturally with aging, however the only reason aging causes them to arise is because the efficiency of blood circulation decreases with age. This means nails get less and less nutrition and may become pale and ridged. Young or old, you want your circulation to be strong so that your blood can bring nutrients to every nook and cranny of your body. These lines indicate that something is preventing these vitamins from reaching your nails... *which can be a very complex topic and is usually different for everyone.* Thyroid issues, candida/parasites/viruses, and heavy metals can **all** create an internal environment where nutrients are not processed properly.

Other courses of action I would take with vertical ridges include cutting out gluten and other inflammatory/allergenic substances from the diet, including cheese and heavy meats. Look for the root cause of your particular malabsorption: do you have thyroid symptoms? Do you have heavy metals built up in your system (which most people do, due to industrial pollution and pesticides)? Is your gut damaged causing discomfort during digestion and undigested food in stool? Have you ever had mono or Epstein Barr Virus? Do you have the symptoms of

candida/parasites? If you have these ridges and have any other symptoms of chronic illness, I highly recommend reading the book Medical Medium.

4. Horizontal Line/Transverse Groove

According to Ayurveda, a deep line that runs horizontal to the nail is an indication of a strong illness, infection or depletion that occurred during the time that specific part of the nail was growing. It's common for this line to occur after a viral infection, heart attack, severe fever, etc. It also can mean an issue of the metabolism, showing vitiated digestion at the time of growth. If there are multiple horizontal lines on the nail, this indicates a reoccurring issue and most likely is showing a chronic condition, so you should see an integrative or naturopathic physician.

5. Pale Nails

Pale nails typically show anemia (low red blood cells/iron deficiency) in the system. This can be due to excessive blood loss (heavy menstruation or injury); an iron, folate or B12 deficiency; an ulcer, a parasitic/viral infection, certain medications (including NSAIDS), malabsorption, or chronic diseases such a cancer or autoimmune conditions



In TCM, pale nails is said to be caused by “blood deficiency,” which isn’t always identical to anemia but certainly can be.

Anemia can cause fatigue, weakness, poor circulation, frequent bruising, shortness of breath, irregular heartbeat and cognitive issues. If anemia is suspected, one can look to see if other symptoms are involved (or not); as well as the tongue and the pink under the eye (when stretched down) to see if these areas are also pale.

If anemia is suspected, by far the best treatment I’ve seen is wheatgrass juice! The molecular structure of chlorophyll, found abundantly in wheatgrass, is extremely similar to hemoglobin, the oxygen carrying compound in human blood. One theory is that the resemblance of chlorophyll to hemoglobin is the reason wheatgrass juice is so beneficial to anemic patients.

6. Nail bed inflammation/Red cuticles

If you notice a red, puffy border along the nail fold, this is typically a sign of parasites and/or viral infection in the system. Parasites are prevalent in many individuals and have multiple causes. A few common causes are traveling, low stomach acid, uncooked meats, contact with hospitals and childrens' centers, not washing hands properly after elimination, unwashed raw food, or through a transfer from our furry little friends. We parasite cleanse our pets several times a year, but somehow don't do the same for ourselves!

Parasites often come into our systems when we are already compromised with some sort of viral infection, especially mono or Epstein Barr Virus. The absolute best ways to treat chronic viral issues are through a) diet: thoroughly washed fresh raw fruits – fruit is incredibly healing and anti-viral thanks to the bitter pulp, fiber, and minerals! b) anti-viral herbs/supplements such as cat's claw, lemon balm, colloidal silver, licorice root, and zinc and c) cutting out foods that feed viruses such as processed/refined sugar, heavy animal fats, gluten, cheese, etc.

Sourced from: <https://www.organicolivia.com/2016/01/what-your-fingernails-are-trying-to-tell-you-about-your-health/>