

CHAKRA THREE



Maṇipūra

PERSONAL POWER

Location: in the solar plexus or upper abdomen.

Governs: our production and utilization of energy especially in relation to sugar metabolism and digestion of food.

Main issue: involves our personal power or will.

Externalizes: as the pancreas.

Element: fire.

When balanced: we feel powerful.

Color: a harmonic of **YELLOW**.

Key words: sun, warmth, metabolism, energy, control, transformation and authority.

Influences: the stomach, small intestine, liver, gallbladder, spleen, pancreas and lumbar spine.

Deficiencies: manifest as an inability to set boundaries, express anger appropriately and powerlessness.

Excesses: appear as rage, domination and violence.

Imbalances: manifest physically as anorexia, bulimia, hypoglycemia, diabetes, pancreatitis, abdominal pain, hepatitis, ulcers, gastritis, digestive disturbances including indigestion, heartburn, gas and bloating, nausea and vomiting, malabsorption and diarrhea.

Through the third chakra we begin to access the astral planes which are simply more subtle frequencies of energy than are experienced through our five senses alone. This center is receptive to the impulses that inform our “gut instinct”, that way of knowing without knowing why. Through the third chakra we develop our courage determination and will. It is said that someone who is courageous and willing to take risks we say has allot of guts.

Most institutions in our society stifle the development of a strong feisty questioning will. Obedience and conformity are stressed in our schools, businesses, most religions, our government and the military.

Sadly, we're bombarded with messages that tell us our feelings, plucky emotions and instincts are dangerous, irrational and unreliable. Our response is to disconnect ourselves from them; once disconnected we're easily manipulated.

If someone asks you how you feel and you say I think I feel such and such, you're disconnected. We don't think our feelings we feel them.

Any time we try to exert control in our lives the third chakra will experience the stress *especially when unresolved anger and frustration are involved*. This energy will be experienced as the "butterflies" in our stomach especially when we are nervous *Often these situations will involve what we just can't seem to stomach*.

This is also the center through which we get "hooked" or try to "hook" others. Everyone has experienced the feeling of being drained following some interactions with certain people. These people have literally tapped into our solar plexus in an attempt to feed their own depleted reserves or to manipulate a situation. We may have also attempted to force them to follow our will. In either case exhaustion is often the end result.

Many children suffer chronic stomach aches where no organic cause can be found. Further examination will often reveal an ongoing power struggle in which the child is able to gain some degree of control over his or her environment through these symptoms.

When the third chakra is balanced we will feel confident without having to be controlling and our metabolic fire will burn brightly providing us with adequate stamina and warmth.

The endocrine gland influenced by the third chakra is the pancreas which secretes the hormones insulin and glucagon. Insulin is secreted in response to an elevated blood sugar or glucose level. It stimulates the removal from the blood stream of glucose, fats, and amino acids in order to store them within the cell. When it functions properly it helps maintain lean body mass. In excess insulin increases hunger, inflammation, mental confusion and fat formation. Glucagon is secreted in response to a low blood sugar. It mobilizes the release of glucose, fats and amino acids from storage to be used as energy. In proper amounts it decreases hunger, increases alertness and mental clarity, promotes tissue healing and reduces body fat. Together insulin and glucagon maintain a stable blood sugar.

Diabetes is diagnosed when blood sugar levels exceed specific limits. . Although type I and type II diabetes both cause high blood sugars, they are vastly different disorders. A deficiency of insulin causes type I diabetes and requires lifetime replacement of the hormone.

Type II diabetes results from having a fine tuned metabolism that can not handle foods which cause rapid and extreme elevations of ones blood sugar. Failing to properly respond to insulin, not from an insulin deficiency. This failure is called insulin resistance which the body responds to by producing ever increasing insulin in order to regulate blood sugars. Initially it is the repeated spikes in insulin, not glucose that cause the problems

Although repeated studies have shown being only moderately overweight, not just obese, is associated with an increase in numerous medical problems many insurance companies refused to cover any weight related treatments. Their reason for the denial; weight gain is not a medical problem and weight loss treatments are only for cosmetic reasons. It has only been within last year that the medical profession has formally acknowledged that even moderate weight gain increases ones risk of developing medical problems. They have named one specific cause of weight gain metabolic syndrome.

Metabolic syndrome replaces Syndrome X, reactive hypoglycemia, hyperinsulinemia and insulin resistance as the official name of this condition. Whatever it's been called progressive practitioners have been identifying metabolic syndrome, and treating it successfully, for years.

Metabolic syndrome is the forerunner of type II diabetes although many will never progress that far. Even with adequate exercise people with this condition will find it impossible to loose weight or feel good while consuming high carbohydrates, moderate protein and low fat. For these people this diet will often be a disaster. The excess of carbohydrates especially refined ones like white sugar and white flour will constantly throw them into insulin excess with its host of related problems

One clue that may indicate you might have Metabolic Syndrome is a waist to hip ratio greater than 1 for men and .8 for women. For example if your waist is 34 inches and your hips measure 30 your ratio will be 1.13. Another is an insatiable craving for carbohydrates, especially once you've started eating them.

Metabolic syndrome is diagnosed when a patient is found to have an elevated insulin level either while fasting or during a Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT). The diagnosis also requires a patient have high blood pressure, elevated fasting cholesterol and/or triglycerides and an inflammatory disorder like arthritis. Although frequently associated with obesity, metabolic syndrome can occur in individuals who aren't considered overweight.

Very recently, the acceptable upper limit for a fasting blood sugar value was lowered from 110 to 100. The upper limit, which when exceeded is considered diabetes, is still 125. Those with fasting glucose values between 100 and 125 have impaired glucose tolerance. If you or your doctor suspects you might have metabolic syndrome or diabetes you should at least have both fasting insulin and glucose levels checked. The values considered normal for a fasting insulin range from 3 to 27. In my experience, an upper limit of 27 is much too generous. If the patients personal or family

history, physical exam, prior lab work, my patient as well as my own intuitive instinct, as well as a patient which every physician uses but few admit to, with a fasting insulin level over 12 and/or a fasting glucose level over 95.

A 2-hour GTT with insulin levels is definitive for ruling out or diagnosing either metabolic syndrome or diabetes. Checking only blood sugars will fail to identify patients with metabolic syndrome until they're on the verge of diabetes. Caught early metabolic syndrome is one of the most treatable disorders that there is. It really isn't even a metabolic disorder at all, it's a dietary disorder. If you discovered your car was having problems, because you were using premium unleaded when in fact it needed diesel, would you still try to fix the car or simply change the fuel?

Adequate amounts of nutrients like chromium, vanadium, L-carnitine, vitamin E, and magnesium are essential to assist the body's metabolism of glucose.

Another important function of the pancreas along with the salivary glands, stomach, and intestinal lining is the excretion of digestive enzymes. These include protease, amylase, and lipase which break down protein, starch and fat respectively. Digestion begins in the mouth with chewing and the release of amylase. The next step takes place in the stomach where hydrochloric acid (HCL) is released. HCL catalyzes the conversion of several digestive enzymes into their active form in addition to creating a hostile environment for unwanted bacteria and other organisms. Many conditions of heartburn are caused by too little stomach acid not by too much. When too little HCL is present all the processes of digestion are hampered. This leads to food stagnating in the stomach. When this happens it can cause acid reflux which means contents of the stomach, the food and the acid enter the esophagus which has no coating like the stomachs to protect it. Caffeine, chocolate, alcohol, smoking, overeating, eating shortly before bed and drinking ice water or allot of liquids with meals will also aggravate this condition. Antacids and drugs like Tagamet, Zantac and Pepcid will help the symptoms of the burning but often they will do nothing resolve the core problem. By diminishing HCL production or function these drugs further weaken digestion setting the stage for nutrient deficiencies, worsening food allergies and bacterial fermentation of incompletely digested food.

Symptoms of low HCL include many of the digestive disturbances listed earlier plus the following, a sense of fullness after eating, nausea after taking supplements, rectal itching, iron deficiency unresponsive to supplementation, recurrent intestinal infections and brittle nails. If you suffer many of these symptoms taking HCL with additional digestive enzymes can provide amazing relief. If HCL aggravates your condition you have too much stomach acid and you will need another treatment strategy. Digestive enzymes are derived from both plant and animal sources. I believe the plant enzymes to be a better choice for long term use. With any chronic digestive problem it is always important to rule out parasitic, yeast or bacterial infections, malignancies and inflammatory disorders.

Screening for hidden blood in the stool and blood tests which can detect liver and gallbladder problems are also important.

Activities that enhance your sense of personal power will help you maintain a vital and radiant third chakra. Enroll in a martial arts class. An exercise called woodchoppers will help you safely release pent up frustration and anger. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Clasp your hands together. Raise them over your head and swing toward the ground as if chopping wood. Do this with force while letting out a yell. Repeat until you feel complete. Light a fire and meditate while gazing into the flames. Watch the Sun rise with gratitude for the light of consciousness and energy it so generously provides.

Todd Mangum, MD

Salt Lake City, Utah



Revised May 2009

Original article published in the Catalyst Magazine 1997-2004