

BEAUTY Counter *blog*

THE DOCTOR IS IN

Stick Out Your Tongue and Say *Ew*

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This column features weekly tips and advice from a revolving cast of industry leaders, on hand to discuss your beauty dilemmas, from blemishes to Botox. To submit a question, e-mail celia_ellenberg@condenast.com.

Have you ever looked at your tongue? I mean, really examined it? While in the midst of some vigorous flossing recently, I noticed that mine had taken on a strange violet hue, and it wasn't because of any recent Fun Dip consumption. Curious, I turned to Dr. Vanda Huang, an acupuncturist and expert in naturopathic medicine, for some answers. Here are Huang's top five tongue symptoms and what they reveal about your health.

Symptom: Your tongue is purplish or you can see purple in the two veins underneath it.

Cause: You have some degree of blood stagnation, which can result from circulation problems, chronic stress, or chronic pain.

Treatment: Acupuncture, cupping, or gua sha (a healing technique that involves skin palpation) to enhance circulation, detoxify, and relax tight muscles.

Symptom: Your tongue has a thick white coat.

Cause: A problem with digestion or a poor diet.

Treatment: Acupuncture, moxibustion (the process of heating an herb, usually *Artemisia*, over a specific acupuncture point to nourish and

strengthen the corresponding organ), and dietary changes like cutting back on raw food, soy, dairy, and sugar.

Symptom: Your tongue has a yellow coating.

Cause: Excessive body heat from too much alcohol, spicy food, long-term emotional stress, or chronic smoking.

Treatment: Acupuncture and cooling herbs like peppermint, nettles, cilantro, and dandelion greens, plus a variety of Chinese herbs.

Symptom: Your tongue has scalloped edges.

Cause: Fatigue that can manifest itself with malaise, poor memory, and feeling cold easily.

Treatment: Acupuncture, moxibustion, and dietary changes such as eating more naturally sweet, easy-to-digest foods like squash, sweet potatoes, and carrots, and more warming foods like garlic, ginger, onion, leek, and cinnamon.

Symptom: The tip of your tongue is bright red.

Cause: Stress, restlessness, anxiety, and difficulty sleeping.

Treatment: Acupuncture, relaxation techniques, and calming herbs like oat straw, lemon balm, lavender, and St. John's wort, plus a variety of Chinese herbs.

For more information on Dr. Vanda Huang, go to www.flowinghealth.org.

—Fiorella Valdesolo

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