



- Holds a B.A. in Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine
- Holds a H.D. in Singapore College of Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Holds a M.A in Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore

## Dr Choo Chee Lin

Registered TCM Physician and Acupuncturist from Singapore Chang Le Tcm Wellness Clinic

# SLEEP DEEP, DETOX WELL: A TCM PERSPECTIVE

Sleep is vital for maintaining health, with about one-third of our lives spent in rest. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) views poor sleep as a potential indicator of a "sub-health" condition, an imbalance often signaling early signs of issues.

### The Role of Yin and Yang in Sleep

In TCM, the concept of Yin and Yang, symbolized by the Tai Ji symbol, represents the fundamental balance in the universe, including in our bodies. Daytime (Yang) corresponds to activity, while nighttime (Yin) is the realm of rest. Sleep happens as Yang energy merges with Yin, allowing the body to rest, repair, and cleanse itself, supporting overall vitality.

### Shen, Hun, and Po: The Spirit and Body Connection

Yang energy in the human body is embodied by "Shen," the spirit or soul, rooted in physical Yin elements like the body or blood. When Shen is balanced, health flourishes; when disrupted, illnesses or sleep disorders may arise. Shen also divides into "Hun" and "Po": Hun (Yang) governs emotions and intellect, while Po (Yin) relates to sensory experiences and basic instincts. During sleep, Hun and Po work in harmony, with Po aiding the body in processing experiences and maintaining restfulness.

### Sleep's Impact on the Liver

The liver's connection to sleep is significant in TCM. At night, blood returns to the liver, allowing it to cleanse and ensure proper Qi flow. A healthy liver contributes to feeling recharged upon waking. When the liver struggles, poor sleep and low energy often follow.

### The Role of Po Souls and Physical Health

The "seven Po souls" reside in the lungs, governing sensory functions and immune health, and play a crucial role in clearing harmful substances during sleep. This process aids the body in maintaining alertness and balance between rest and activity.

### TCM Tips for Improved Sleep Quality

In TCM, each organ has an optimal time to perform its functions. The ideal sleep time is 9 p.m. to 11 p.m., aligning with the Triple Warmer Meridian, which supports melatonin production and cellular health. Between 11 p.m. and 3 a.m., the liver and gallbladder handle detoxification, while the lungs and large intestine take over between 3 a.m. and 7 a.m., boosting immune health.

Sleeping on the right side supports blood flow and liver function, although those experiencing hot flashes may benefit from sleeping on the left for better cooling. Prioritizing quality sleep is key to maintaining health and balance.

