

ARCHETYPES – The five constitutional types of animals

This is based on the five element theory in Traditional Veterinary Chinese Medicine (TCVM). “The five elements, also known as Wu Xing, the five activities, or the five principles in action, refer to the five categories in the natural world: Metal, Water, Wood, Fire, and Earth. These are the indispensable and fundamental elements that constitute the universe. Enhancing, inhibiting and restraining relationships exist between them. Also, these elements are in constant motion and change. In TCVM, the properties and the mutual relationships of the Five Elements are used to explore and illustrate the basis of medical problems. The principles of the Five Element Theory can be applied to the personal characteristics of individuals. This is a way of categorizing the personality and disease tendencies of an animal. By comparing an animal to its most dominant elemental personality type, a TCVM practitioner can understand the patient as a whole and can better address the imbalances associated with that constitutional type.”

Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine, Volume I, Fundamental Principles
Huisheng Xie & Vanessa Preast

Identifying Constitution Types of Horses in the Barn:

Metal	Water	Wood	Fire	Earth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clean hair coat • quiet • organized • prepared for what happens next • confident • disciplined • follows the rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hides or runs away • kicks when afraid • not confident • watches the veterinarian • nervous when being examined • may present rump and threaten to kick when examined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confident • irritable, “crabby” • active, energetic, athletic • ears back • aggressive, angry • kicks, stomps or strikes • impatient • bites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • friendly • noisy, vociferous • loves to be touched or petted • excited, hyper-excitable • difficult to keep still • very sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • friendly • enjoys relaxing • easy going, mellow • eager to please • moves slow or walks

Disease predispositions:

Metal	Water	Wood	Fire	Earth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respiratory problems, cough, asthma, nasal congestion • diabetes • constipation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infertility • back pain • urinary infections • depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hypertension • allergy • depression • hysteria • neurosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cardiovascular disease • separation anxiety • restlessness • sudden death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronic gastrointestinal problems, diarrhea, colic • obesity