**The 28 Classical Pulse Types**

The **28 classical pulse types (二十八脉象 *èrshí bā mài xiàng*)** in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) represent a nuanced system of **pulse diagnosis**, used to assess the **health of the Zang-Fu organs**, the **state of Qi, Blood, Yin, and Yang**, and the presence of **pathogenic factors** such as Wind, Cold, Dampness, Heat, and more. These pulse qualities are evaluated at **three depths** (superficial, middle, deep) and across **six positions** (Cun, Guan, Chi on both wrists), giving a full picture of internal health. Each pulse type reflects specific physiological or pathological states

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Pulse Name** | **Chinese (Pinyin)** | **Description** | **Clinical Significance** |
| 1 | **Floating** | 浮 (*fú*) | Easily felt with light touch; superficial | **Exterior syndrome** (Wind-Cold or Wind-Heat), or **Yin deficiency** if floating and empty |
| 2 | **Deep** | 沉 (*chén*) | Felt only on heavy pressure | **Interior disorder**, often due to Cold or internal stagnation; **Yang deficiency** |
| 3 | **Slow** | 迟 (*chí*) | Less than 60 bpm | **Cold syndrome** (excess or deficiency); **Yang deficiency** |
| 4 | **Rapid** | 数 (*shù*) | Over 90 bpm | **Heat syndrome** (excess Heat or Yin deficiency with empty Heat) |
| 5 | **Empty (Deficient)** | 虚 (*xū*) | Big, soft, and weak; disappears with pressure | **Qi and Blood deficiency**, or **Yin deficiency** |
| 6 | **Full (Excess)** | 实 (*shí*) | Forceful at all levels | **Excess syndrome**, strong pathogenic factor with strong Zheng Qi |
| 7 | **Slippery** | 滑 (*huá*) | Smooth and flowing like pearls | **Phlegm**, **Dampness**, **Food stagnation**, **Pregnancy** |
| 8 | **Choppy** | 涩 (*sè*) | Rough, uneven, knife scraping bamboo | **Blood stasis**, **Blood deficiency**, **Essence exhaustion** |
| 9 | **Wiry** | 弦 (*xián*) | Taut, like a violin string | **Liver Qi stagnation**, **Pain**, **Internal Wind** |
| 10 | **Tight** | 紧 (*jǐn*) | Twisted rope, strong and vibrating | **Cold syndrome**, **Pain**, or **Food retention** |
| 11 | **Long** | 长 (*cháng*) | Extends beyond normal pulse position | Can be **normal** in strong individuals; **Excess Heat**, **Liver Yang rising** if wiry/strong |
| 12 | **Short** | 短 (*duǎn*) | Doesn’t reach all three positions | **Qi deficiency** (weak and short), or **Qi stagnation** (tight and short) |
| 13 | **Minute** | 微 (*wēi*) | Extremely thin, barely perceptible | **Severe Qi and Blood deficiency**, **Yang collapse** |
| 14 | **Thready (Fine)** | 细 (*xì*) | Very thin but distinct | **Yin deficiency**, **Blood deficiency**, or **damp obstructing Qi** |
| 15 | **Soggy (Soft)** | 濡 (*rú*) | Floating, thin, soft, disappears with pressure | **Dampness**, combined with **Qi deficiency** |
| 16 | **Weak** | 弱 (*ruò*) | Deep, thin, soft, forceless | **Yang deficiency**, **Qi and Blood deficiency** |
| 17 | **Hollow** | 芤 (*kōng*) | Felt at superficial and deep levels, empty in the middle | **Blood loss**, **Essence damage**, **Yin collapse** |
| 18 | **Leather** | 革 (*gé*) | Floating, hard, taut, empty underneath | **Blood deficiency with Cold**, often after bleeding or miscarriage |
| 19 | **Scattered** | 散 (*sàn*) | Irregular, superficial, weak, lacks root | **Zheng Qi collapse**, **severe Qi and Blood exhaustion** |
| 20 | **Hidden** | 伏 (*fú*) | Extremely deep, hard to feel | **Cold blockage**, **severe internal stagnation** or **pain** |
| 21 | **Confined (Firm)** | 牢 (*láo*) | Deep, wiry, long, strong | **Cold accumulation**, **Interior Excess**, **Qi/Blood stagnation** |
| 22 | **Moderate** | 缓 (*huǎn*) | Relaxed, smooth, slow but regular | **Healthy** if moderate and balanced; may indicate **Spleen deficiency** if sluggish |
| 23 | **Hurried (Abrupt)** | 促 (*cù*) | Fast and irregular without missing beats | **Excess Heat**, **Qi stagnation**, **Heart Fire**, **Blood stasis** |
| 24 | **Knotted** | 结 (*jié*) | Slow and irregular with missed beats | **Cold with Qi or Blood stagnation**, **Heart Yang deficiency** |
| 25 | **Intermittent** | 代 (*dài*) | Regularly missed beats | **Serious disharmony**, **Heart Qi or Blood deficiency**, or **organ exhaustion** |
| 26 | **Moving** | 动 (*dòng*) | Round, short, slippery, forceful; feels like a bean | **Shock**, **Fear**, **Pain**, **early pregnancy** |
| 27 | **Big (Large)** | 大 (*dà*) | Wide and forceful | **Excess Heat**, **internal excess**, or **Qi overflow** |
| 28 | **Flooding (Surging)** | 洪 (*hóng*) | Strong, wide, overflows like a wave | **Yang Ming Heat**, **Exuberant Qi or Blood Heat**, possibly damaging fluids |