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How to take a picture of your tongue with your smart phone

For telemedicine, a clear well taken picture makes a big difference in getting an accurate diagnosis for your prescription. For your appointment we will need a picture of the top of the tongue and the underside.

In Chinese medicine, tongue diagnosis is one of the ways to determine what is happening inside the body - think of it as an ancient MRI or X-ray.

Please read through all of the instructions. There are four key points to getting a good tongue picture.

Examples of clear tongue pictures:



1. Most important, is use the flash on your phone. The flash is critical - as different lights are different colors - thus making the tongue look more red, blue, or orange than it actually is.

If you are having technical difficulties - for instructions on how to turn your flash on - I suggest searching youtube with the phrase “How to turn on the camera flash on iphone 11 [or your specific phone model]”

2. If possible have someone take the picture for you - the front lens is usually better quality than the selfie lens of the phone - and the flash is often only on one side of the phone. If you have to take the picture yourself, use a mirror to see the screen side of your phone. If you can see your phone in on your screen, flip it around. The phone will not be in the final picture.

3. Posing the tongue. Please **do not** take the picture right after you wake up. Please do not scrape your tongue before taking the photo. When sticking your tongue out it should be relaxed - not stretched. The mouth should be open and not closed. Do not hold your tongue out for more than 30 seconds without returning it to rest inside your mouth, leaving it out for a long time will turn it purple - and thus can distort the diagnosis. More than one picture can be useful. Don't hesitate to send multiple shots.

4. All the above applies for pictures of the underside of your tongue. This is tricky to take - what is most important is getting a clear image of the base (the lingual frenulum) and the tip. This may have to happen in two shots. Touching the tongue behind the teeth and holding the camera slightly high can help with the base. Touching the tongue to the front of the teeth can help with the tip.

