

THE WOMB

(Collated by Michelle Wilkinson www.movingnaturally.co.uk)

The womb is located between the bladder and the rectum. It is along the axis/midline which also passes through the heart and the brain.

It is the untechnical/non-medical name for uterus.

The womb symbolises femininity, womanhood, and the ability to create.

As part of the pelvis, the womb may hold a sense of forward movement and birthing new aspects of self.

The womb is home or nest for the growing embryo and foetus.

The female reproductive organs are largely within the body including 2 ovaries, the fallopian tubes, the uterus and the vagina.

The external female genitals are collectively referred to as the vulva. They consist of thin stretches of tissue within the labia major which fold and protect the vagina, urethra and clitoris.

The perineum has 3 doorways the anus, vagina and urethra. These opening connect to the throat and mouth.

The womb can resemble the shape and size of a medium-sized pear.

The womb is very stretchy, when holding a full-term foetus, it may be the size of a watermelon. It takes around 6 weeks for it to deflate back to its original dimension in a process called involution.

The ovaries are almond-shaped glands which produce ova (eggs) and sex hormones.

1 in 4,500 women are born without a womb or vagina. This is known as Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) Syndrome.

Until about the ninth week of embryonic development the female and male external genitals are virtually identical.

The womb has the capacity to both contain and release. It can hold new life (yin) and birth it into the world (yang). Like the breath there is an inward and outward journey.

Some women can be greatly connected to their womb and womanly cycles while others are disassociated.

Each month during childbearing years the ovary sac releases an egg; this is called ovulation. In so doing the follicle bursts forming the corpus luteum a mass of cells which act as an endocrine gland releasing the hormones oestrogen and progesterone which support the potential egg implantation. The womb lining (endometrium) continues to build. It is only after 10-12 days when there is no egg plantation in the womb that the corpus luteum degenerates signalling the hormone shift that enables the womb to release its lining.

The menstrual blood is an expression of energy.

The womb can be viewed as a sacred place with deep connections to ancestry.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the womb is contained within the Girdle Vessel; the only horizontal energetic channel/meridian in the body. It encircles the whole area between the lower border of the ribcage and the pelvic floor. It originates from the space between the kidneys (Gate of Life) and spreads out to cover the whole back from the lower ribcage to the top of the legs. It links the front to the back of the body from the pubic bones to the coccyx passing through the perinium.

The Girdle Vessel connects with the inner world and is a crossroads between lower and upper body, earth and sky.

What do you wear around your pelvis; is it loose or tight?

When you touch the pelvis what emerges in your shoulder girdle?

The Girdle Vessel can hold and contain (yin) as is found in pregnancy. Equally, it can let go (yang) clearing out old habitual patterns so that new life can take place. This is seen in the menstrual blood-flow.

A miscarriage or abortion can be viewed as a form of birthing. In letting go there is opening and change. The post-birth contractions indicate the need for rest for regathering energy and refocusing. This is a similar phase in the menstrual cycle after the release of the womb lining.

The time leading up to menopause is known as perimenopause and this may start at an estimated age of 35-42. At around 50 years of age a woman may enter menopause. Following this is post-menopause which is regarded in TCM as a woman's second spring.