

Character Builder 您好嗎? 呀

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about dieting



Pronunciation: *wei* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *wai* (Cantonese, 6th tone)
Basic meaning: stomach

胃 = 胃囊 (*wei nang* = stomach~pouch). 腸胃 (*chang wei* = intestines~stomach) = digestive system. 胃液 (*wei yi* = stomach~fluid/acid) = gastric juice. 大胃口 (*da wei kou* = big~stomach~mouth/opening) means big appetite for food/money/claims. 開胃 (*kai wei* = open~stomach) describes hungry eaters or appetizing food.

Over-eating may cause 胃痛 (*wei teng* = stomach~pains), 肚瀉 (*du xie* = belly/stomach~tumble-flush = diarrhoea). 胃藥 (*wei yao* = gastric medicines) cure 胃病 (*wei bing* = stomach~illness). Operations remove 胃潰瘍 (*wei kui yang* = stomach~rot~ulcers = stomach ulcers), 胃癌 (*wei ai* = stomach~cancers). Food-poisoning requires 洗胃 (*xi wei* = wash~stomach = gastric lavage/pumping).

Figuratively speaking, people 反胃 (*fan wei* = reverse~stomach = throw up) over repulsive words/sights.

by Diana Yue