

# TCM311

## TCM NUTRITION

*Shanwen Gao*

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Guidelines for a Balanced Diet.....	2
Eight Simple Guidelines for eating well .....	4
The Five Tastes of Foods .....	4
Balancing the five flavours.....	5
The Five Energies of Foods.....	6
Porridge Recipes .....	7
Tea Recipes .....	8
Vegetables.....	9
Grains .....	15
Seeds, Nuts and Legumes .....	17
Fruits .....	20
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Animal Products .....	24
Grains .....	26
Seeds, Nuts and Legumes .....	28
Miscellaneous Foods and Beverages .....	31
COMMON COLD .....	35
Wind Cold Type .....	35
Wind Heat Type .....	35
HEADACHE .....	35
ALLERGY AND INTOLERANCE .....	36
CHRONIC SINUSITIS.....	36
ACNE .....	37
INDIGESTION .....	37
CANCER .....	38
CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME .....	38
CONSTIPATION .....	39
PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (P.M.S.) .....	40
MENOPAUSE .....	40
CHRONIC BLADDER INFECTION.....	41
CANDIDA YEAST INFECTION.....	41

DIABETES .....	41
HYPERTENSION .....	42
HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL .....	42
ASTHMA .....	43
CHRONIC BRONCHITIS .....	44
SLEEP PROBLEMS .....	44
TINNITUS .....	45
MORNING SICKNESS .....	46
IMPOTENCE .....	46
Male Infertility .....	47
Women, fertility... and TCM .....	48

Appendix:

McCracken, Graeme. "Chinese Dietary Therapy in Clinical Practice." Journal of Chinese Medicine, vol. 99, June 2012, pp. 54–61 .....	49
---	----

## Introduction

The knowledge of nutrition in China has roots that go back at least 5,000 years and is based on the principles of balance and harmony, as well as direct knowledge of the nature of individual foods. This knowledge was first gathered by spiritually achieved men and women who, by their own experiences, learned not only what properties specific foods contained, but also how to utilize them for the purposes of nutrition and longevity. As a Chinese doctor and an acupuncturist learns and uses this ancient, time-tested knowledge will find their health and longevity greatly enhanced and teach patients how to choose good food and eat right and healthy.

Fu Shi, one of the great sages of ancient China, discovered eight categories of universal energy, which later came to be known as the Ba Gua or Eight Trigrams. This is a further division of the two main categories of natural energy known as Yin and Yang. The universe itself is an integration of these two interacting, mutually assisting and also somewhat opposing forces which are often expressed by Tai Chi symbol illustrated.

The deepest reality of universal life is the inner meaning of Yin and Yang, and like Yin and Yang, the nature of the universe also tends to be both harmonious and balanced. Even events which could be conceptually classified as negative or conflicting, are only stages in the accomplishment of further harmonization. This is the truth expressed in the Tai Chi diagram.

Harmony and balance, therefore, the principles of universal existence, became the foundation of cultural development in ancient China and were widely applied in public and private life as well as in spiritual practice. Many generations later, whatever expressed these natural universal qualities of balance, harmony and symmetry came to be known as Taoism: Tao being the way or path of universal harmony through integration.

Shen Nung, another wise leader who lived some time after Fu Shi, used these principles to develop herbal medicine and essential nutrition. After him came the Yellow Emperor, one of the greatest leaders in human history, who has come to be considered the founder of Taoism. He further developed the contributions of the early sages, utilizing them in political as well as general life, especially in the realms of medicine and nutrition, and benefiting his hundred-year reign greatly by the guidance of this special knowledge.

Fu Shi, Shen Nung and the Yellow Emperor are great symbols of nature. As the spiritual descendants of these men of spiritual development and dedication to human development, we can still benefit today from their great achievements and contributions, as many have done before us. Through the traditional Chinese healing arts and herbal medicine and science of Chinese Nutrition people can master their own body and maintain health, vitality and longevity.

## Guidelines for a Balanced Diet

As every body is unique, there will always be variations according to individual needs, A few basic guidelines, however, are appropriate as we seek a way of eating that creates balance and harmony, Frame of mind is of utmost importance at mealtime; relax and slowly chew the food for optimal digestion and assimilation, The dinner table is not the place to discuss the day's problems. Chewing is major part of digestion. Remember, your stomach does not have teeth. Digestion, particularly of the starches, begins in the mouth. Foods that are difficult to thoroughly masticate, such as sesame seed, should be ground before eating. Fruits digest quickly, while meats and proteins will take more time to digest.

The best ways of preparing food are steaming, stir frying in water, stewing (boiling, as in soups), or baking. Steaming leaves the food in its most natural state, while baking creates more heat and would be the best method for cold conditions. Even the best quality oils become hard to digest when heated. So, if oil is desired, put it on after the food is cooked.

Foods should be eaten in their wholeness, when possible. Only peel fruits or vegetables if the peel is hard to digest or contaminated with chemical sprays. Search out organically grown foods to avoid the toxic chemical residues of commercial growing processes. To clean foods thoroughly one may wash them in salt water. Also avoid irradiated foods and microwave ovens, if possible. The best utensils for cooking in are glass, earthenware, or stainless steel. One should avoid cooking in aluminum or copper; these metals can easily leach into the food.

One's diet should follow the seasons, eating what grows locally. Nature has the perfect plan in providing the appropriate foods for the given season. The fruits and vegetables that ripen in the summertime tend to be on the cooling side. In wintertime we still tend toward a more warming diet. Also, one should eat a wide variety of foods for good balance.

Most vegetables should be at least lightly cooked as raw vegetables tend to be difficult to digest. Foods should never be eaten cold because cold foods put out the digestive fire, so to say. This is particularly upsetting to the female menstrual cycle as the stomach sits right beside the liver which is responsible for storing blood. Cooling off the stomach can lead to a stagnant blood condition and a difficult menstrual period. Frozen foods, such as ice cream, are a very unhealthy item, as well as iced drinks. Neither should we consume foods that are so hot that they burn the mouth, esophagus and stomach.

It is best to stop eating before the full point. Also, eating just before retiring is not a good idea. One should take the last meal 3 hours before going to bed. This will not only result in better digestion, but also a more restful sleep. Late eating tends to easily be stored as unwanted pounds. One should wake up with a good appetite for breakfast. This is the meal that provides us with the fuel or energy for much of the day, so make this a very nutritious meal.

Nuts and seeds contain a large proportion of oil and should be eaten as fresh as possible and kept refrigerated. Because most people do not chew nuts well, grinding them into powder makes them easier to digest.

Beans should be soaked prior to cooking for at least a few hours; always discard the soak water and cook them in fresh water. The small beans like lentils and peas tend to be easier to digest than the large beans like limas or kidney beans. For a person with particularly weak digestion it is best to cook grains soupy, with additional water and cooking time. You may use up to 10 parts water per 1 part of grain.

Always avoid highly processed foods and keep meals as simple as possible, A balanced diet would consist of the following on a regular basis:

1. Whole Grains including rice, millet, barley, wheat, oats, corn, rye, quinoa, amaranth, etc. This group of foods will account for about 40% of the diet
2. Freshly Prepared Vegetables including dark leafy greens, cabbage, broccoli, celery, root vegetables, etc. This group of foods will account for about 40% of the diet. Fresh fruits will be consumed when in season, and generally no more than 10% of the diet. Fruits can be a great snack or sweet treat.
3. Legumes/Seeds/Nuts including peas, beans, Tofu, peanuts, lentils, sunflower seeds, almonds, walnuts, etc. This will account for 10-20% of the vegetarian diet and a lesser portion of the meat inclusive diet.
4. Animal Products including dairy foods, meat, fish, poultry, and eggs. Of one chooses to include these foods in the diet, they should occupy no more than 10% of the diet. Attempt to locate growers that do not use drugs or inhumane practices on the animals.
5. Seaweeds including nor, wakame, dulse, kombu, hiziki and arame. This is a valuable mineral source, consumed in small amounts ( a small handful dry ), and of particular value to those vegetarians who refrain from eating dairy foods.
6. Avoids as strictly as possible the following: chemical preservatives, additives, colorings and flavorings, MSG, fried or greasy foods, coffee, ice cream and excessive sugar consumption.

The USDA recently adopted a Food Pyramid as an alternative to the out-dated Basic Four Food Groups. It is very similar to the food group proportions used in Chinese Nutrition.

Grains, beans, vegetables and fruits constitute the base of the pyramid and majority of the diet, while meat and dairy foods, eaten in small proportions, are at the top. Perhaps this change shows the realization of more Americans that we need to make changes in our dietary habits and ways of looking at food.

## **Eight Simple Guidelines for eating well**

1. Eat a variety of foods
2. Balance the food with physical activity to maintain or improve your weight
3. Choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables and fruits
4. Choose a diet in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
5. Choose a diet moderate in sugars
6. Choose a moderate in salt and sodium
7. If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so only in moderation
8. Eat fresh fruits and vegetable against cancer

## **The Five Tastes of Foods**

The physical sensation of taste has its significance in Chinese Medicine. In Chinese Medicine, it is classified into five flavors. They are sour, sweet, bitter, pungent and salty.

When a substance such as a food or an herb goes into the gastrointestinal tract to be digested, the sour taste is said to be absorbed by the Liver and Gall Bladder, the bitter taste by the Heart and Small intestines, the sweet taste by the spleen and Stomach, the pungent taste by the Lungs and Large Intestines, and the salty taste by the Kidney and Bladder. Therefore, foods and herbs with different energies and tastes are assimilated into the body to nourish different organs.

Sour taste has absorbing, consolidating, and astringent functions. It functions in stopping abnormal discharge of body fluids and substances as in condition of excessive perspiration, diarrhea, seminal emission, spermatorrhea, enuresis and so on.

Bitter tasting substances have the action of drying dampness and dispersing. Often, bitter also clears heat. So bitter aids conditions like dampness and edema. Its function of dispersing obstruction can be utilized in cough due to Qi stagnation and so forth.

Sweet taste has the action of tonifying, harmonizing and decelerating. In cases of fatigue or deficiency, sweet substances have a reinforcing and strengthening action. Deficiencies may occur in different aspects of the body, such as insufficiency of Qi, blood, Yin or Yang. Specific organs may suffer from weakness also. This is why one is drawn to sweet when he or she is experiencing low energy. Sweet

taste is also used to decelerate, which means to relax. It is used in conditions of acute pain to help relax and hence, ease the pain. Sweet foods and herbs can harmonize as an antidote or counter balance undesirable effects from some herbs.

Pungent is a taste that has functions of dispersing, invigorating, and promoting circulation. Its function of dispersing is mainly used to disperse pathogens from the exterior of the body, such as we see in common colds and flu. Its function of invigorating is to promote circulation of Qi, blood and body fluid. In Chinese Medicine, disease is the result of stagnation, therefore, foods that have this pungent taste will promote and invigorate circulation of the Qi, blood and body fluids. Pathological condition of stagnation can be seen as local pain, irregular menstruation, painful menstruation, edema, tumors and so on. The pungent taste, because of its dispersing quality also acts to open the pores and promote sweating. This is a way to expel the pathogen from the body.

Salty taste has the function of softening and dissolving hardenings. It also moistens and lubricates the intestines. Body symptoms such as lumps, nodes, masses, cysts and so on can be softened and dissolved by salty substances. Example can be seen in goiter which is treated by seaweed, a representative of salty food. Also, in cases of constipation, one can drink salt water to lubricate the intestines and promote evacuation.

## Balancing the five flavours

### 1) The five cereal:

- A. Rice
- B. Sesame
- C. SoyBeans
- D. Wheat
- E. Broomcorn Millet

### 3) The meat of the five animals

- A. Beef
- B. Dogmeat
- C. Pork
- D. Mutton
- E. Chicken

### 2) The five fruits

- A. Date
- B. Plum
- C. Chestnut
- D. Apricot
- E. Peach

### 4) The five vegetables

- A. Cluster mallow
- B. Chives
- C. Leaves of pulse plant
- D. Macrostem onion
- E. Scallion



## The Five Energies of Foods

The energies of foods refer to their capacity to generate sensations-either hot or cold in the human body. As an example, eating foods with a hot energy will make us experience hot sensations in the body and foods with a cold energy, cold sensations. In daily life each of us knows that eating ice makes us feel cold and drinking hot water makes us feel warm. This is because ice has a cold energy and hot water, a hot energy. But ice or hot water produces only temporary effects. To produce long-lasting effects, herbs are used as substitutes for foods that provide only temporary relief. In other words, to produce cold or hot sensations, herbs are more effective than foods and foods are more effective than ice or hot water.

The five energies of foods are cold, hot, warm, cool and neutral.

**Hot-warm type of foods:** beef, dog meat, chicken, pigeon, sheep milk, cow milk, goose eggs, cuttlefish, brown sugar, peanut, sesame, soybean, date, tangerine, apple, green onion, garlic, Chinese chives, ginger, pepper and so on.

**Cold-cool type of foods:** duck, duck eggs, honey, seaweed, kelp, mung bean, water melon, cucumber, lettuce, bamboo shoots, black fungus, banana, pear, bean curd and so on.

**Neutral type of foods:** Pork, pork liver, chicken egg, jelly fish skin, red bean, water chestnut, pea, radish, lotus seed, lotus root, Chinese yam, spinach, carrot, tomato, Chinese cabbage and so on.

## Porridge Recipes

1. Rice Porridge
2. Corn porridge
3. Sticky rice porridge
4. Wheat porridge
5. Mung bean porridge
6. Lotus seed porridge
7. Red bean porridge
8. Spinach porridge
9. Celery porridge
10. Black fungus porridge
11. Green onion porridge
12. Chinese chives porridge
13. Carrot porridge
14. Rose flower porridge
15. chestnut porridge
16. Lichi fruit porridge
17. Egg drop porridge
18. Sweet potato Porridge

## Tea Recipes

1. Ba Xian Tea
2. Milk Black Tea
3. Black Sesame Tea
4. Shen Mai Tea
5. Jun Hua Tea
6. Double Flower Tea
7. Almond Tea
8. Three Flower Weight Lost Tea
9. Eight Treasure Tea

## Vegetables

### 1. Alfalfa Sprout

**Nature/Taste:** Cool and slightly bitter

**Actions:** Benefits spleen and stomach, dispels dampness, lubricates intestines

**Conditions:** swelling, constipation, skin lesions

### 2. Asparagus

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet and bitter

**Actions:** clears heat, detoxifies, promotes blood circulation, clears lungs

**Conditions:** constipation, cancer, hypertension, high blood cholesterol, arteriosclerosis, bronchitis

### 3. Bamboo shoot

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** Strengthens the stomach, relieves food retention, resolves mucus, promotes diuresis, cuts or emulsifies fats, relieves alcohol intoxication, promotes measles

**Conditions:** Diabetes, indigestion, stomach distention and fullness due to greasy food, diarrhea, dysentery, rectal prolapse, edema

**Contraindications:** not to be used after giving birth as they may trigger the cleansing of an old illness, manifesting in skin lesions,

### 4. Beet

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** nourished blood, tonifies, the heart, calms the spirit, lubricates the intestines, cleanses the liver

**Conditions:** anemia, heart weakness, irritability, restlessness, habitual constipation, herpes, constipation, liver intoxication from drugs or alcohol

**Contraindications:** Not for someone with a history of kidney stones because of the oxalic acid content.

### 5. Bell Pepper

**Nature/Taste:** slightly warm, pungent and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens stomach, improves appetite, promotes blood circulation, removes stagnant food, reduces swelling, frostbite, food retention.

**Conditions:** Indigestion, decreased appetite, swelling, frostbite, food retention

### 6. BokChoy

**Nature/Taste:** cool, pungent and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, lubricate the intestines, removes stagnant food, quenches thirst, promotes digestion

**Conditions:** food retention, constipation, indigestion, diabetes

**7. Broccoli**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, promotes diuresis, brightens eyes, clears summer heat problems.

This vegetable is weak in action.

**Conditions:** conjunctivitis, nearsightedness, difficult urination, irritability

**8. Cabbage (red or green)**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, lubricates intestines, stops cough

**Conditions:** constipation, whooping cough, hot flashes, common colds, frostbite

**9. Carrot**

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet and pungent

**Actions:** Clears heat, detoxifies, strengthens all internal organs, benefits the eyes, relieves measles, lubricates the intestines, promoted digestion

**10. Cauliflower**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** lubricates the intestines, strengthens spleen. This vegetable is weak in action.

**Conditions:** constipation, weak digestion

**11. Celery**

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet and slightly bitter

**Actions:** tonifies kidney, stop bleeding, strengthens spleen and stomach, clears heat, lowers blood pressure, promotes diuresis, benefits blood

**12. Chinese Cabbage (napa cabbage)**

**Nature/Taste:** cold and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, lubricates intestines, promotes urination, diaphoretic conditions: Irritability, restlessness, constipation, difficulty urinating

**13. Chinese Chive**

**Nature/Taste:** warm and pungent

**Actions:** tonifies kidney and sexual functions, removes dampness, warms up coldness

**Conditions:** cold stomachache, leukorrhea, diarrhea, bedwetting, wet dreams, absences of menstrual period.

**14. Cilantro Leaf (Chinese Parsley)**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly cool and pungent

**Actions:** Promotes sweating, strengthens digestion, promotes Qi flow

**Conditions:** measles, common cold, indigestion, lack of appetite, chest and stomach fullness

**15. Corn**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** stops bleeding, promotes diuresis, benefits gall bladder, lowers blood pressure, clears heat, detoxifies

**Conditions:** difficult urination, gallstones, hepatitis, jaundice, hypertension, heart disease

**16. Cucumber**

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet and bland (peels are bitter)

**Actions:** clears heat, quenches thirst, relieves irritability, promotes diuresis

**Conditions:** swelling of the extremities, jaundice, diarrhea, epilepsy, sore throat, conjunctivitis

**Contraindications:** Eating cucumbers to excess will cause dampness. Cucumber seeds are difficult to digest.

**17. Daikon Radish (white carrot)**

**Nature/Taste:** cool, pungent and sweet

**Actions:** removes stagnant food, moistens lungs, resolves mucus, quenches thirst, relieves alcohol intoxication

**Conditions:** bronchitis, sore throat, dry cough, coughing of blood, painful urination, excess of mucus, alcohol intoxication, food retention

**18. Eggplant**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** relieves pain, promotes diuresis, reduces swelling, removes blood stagnation

**Conditions:** abdominal pain, dysentery, hot diarrhea, painful urination, frostbite, canker sores, snake and scorpion bite, anal bleeding, hepatitis, jaundice

**19. Garlic**

**Nature/Taste:** hot and pungent

**Actions:** anti-viral, anti-fungal, detoxifies meat and seafood, kills worms, removes stagnant food and stagnant blood, reduces abscess

**Conditions:** cancer, high blood cholesterol, infections, diarrhea, dysentery, vomiting and coughing of blood

**Contraindications:** Not to be used with hot or dry eye disorders, mouth sores or tongue ulcers.

**20. Green Bean**

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** warms spleen and stomach, descends Qi, tonifies kidneys, benefits Qi

**Conditions:** burping, chest fullness and discomfort, whooping cough, hernia in children, chronic diarrhea, back pains due to kidney weakness

**21. Lettuce**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and bland

**Actions:** invigorates Qi, removes stagnation, reduces swelling, softens hardening. This vegetable is mild in action.

**Conditions:** skin lesions, abdominal pain, breast abscess, postpartum abdominal pain due to blood stagnation

**22. Lotus Root**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** very healing, clears heat, quenches thirst, relieves irritability, stops bleeding, strengthens the stomach, promotes diuresis, cools the blood

**Conditions:** difficult urination, vomiting blood, nosebleed, blood in stool or urine, hypertension, gastritis, colitis

**23. Mushroom (Button)**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly cool and sweet

**Actions:** induces measles eruptions, detoxifies, improves appetite, stops diarrhea, resolves phlegm, anti-tumor

**Conditions:** infectious hepatitis, measles, diarrhea, cough with copious mucus, low appetite

**24. Mushroom (Ganoderma, Ling Zhi)**

**Nature/Taste:** warm and bland

**Actions:** nourish the heart, calm the spirit, fortify the Qi and blood

**Conditions:** Heart Qi deficiency, blood deficiency leading to insomnia, excessive dreaming, anxiety, restlessness, fatigue, coughs, asthma, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, chronic hepatitis, low white blood cell production .

**25. Onion (Leek)**

**Nature/Taste:** warm and pungent

**Actions:** promotes sweating, resolves phlegm, diuretic

**Conditions:** common cold, acute or chronic sinus infection, upper respiratory infection, allergies, difficulty urinating, intestinal worms, certain types of boils and lesion.

**25. Potato**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** relieves ulcer pain, strengthens spleen, harmonizes stomach, tonifies Qi, lubricates intestines, promotes diuresis, heals inflammations

**Conditions:** stomach and duodenal ulcers, constipation, eczema, skin lesions, swelling, small physical stature.

**Contraindications:** Do not eat sprouted or green potatoes because they are poisonous.

**26. Pumpkin (Winter squash)** Winter squashes are the hard skin varieties like acorn, butternut, buttercup, spaghetti, and kobocho.

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** dispels dampness, reduces fever, relieves pain, stabilizes hyperactive fetus, stops dysentery, benefits diabetes, the seeds kill worms and parasites.

**Conditions:** dysentery, diabetes, ulcerations of the lower extremities, eczema, stomachache, the feeling of steaming bones, antidote for opium.

**27. Scallion (Green onion)**

**Nature/Taste:** hot and pungent

**Actions:** expels external pathogens, dispels wind and cold, induces sweating, anti-viral, and anti-bacterial

**Conditions:** Common cold, nasal congestion, measles, abscesses, arthritis of the cold type

**Contraindications:** Not to be used for the heat type arthritis. Not to be used for heat stages of common cold, characterized by fever, extreme thirst and yellow sputum.

**28. Seaweed**

**Nature/Taste:** cold and salty

**Actions:** softens hardenings, clears heat, detoxifies, benefits the thyroid gland, neutralizes radioactive material, benefits the lymphatic system, promotes diuresis, provides many minerals.

**Conditions:** swollen lymph glands, goiters, cough, lung abscess with thick, yellow, odoriferous mucus, edema, beriberi, fibroid tumors, cystic breasts, nodules, lumps, cancer, low thyroid

**29. Snow pea**

**Nature/Taste:** cold and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens middle Jiao, detoxifies, relieves vomiting, promotes diuresis, relieves belching, stops dysentery, aids lactation, quenches thirst.

**Conditions:** chronic diarrhea, dysentery, difficulty urinating, lower abdominal distention and fullness, diabetes, lactostasis, vomiting

**30. Soybean Sprout**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** promotes diuresis, clears heat

**Conditions:** food retention, stomach heat, swelling, arthritis, spasms

**31. Spinach**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens all organs, lubricates intestines, promotes urination, ventilates the chest, quenches thirst

**Conditions:** constipation, thirst, tightness in chest, inability to urinate, night blindness, alcohol intoxication, diabetes



**Contraindications:** Not to be used with diarrhea, or a history of kidney stones, also spinach does not mix well with tofu or dairy products due to the unhealthy combination that results from the oxalic acid in the spinach and the high calcium foods. This can lead to crystallized stones in the kidneys, if one's so predisposed.

**32. Squash (Summer squash, Zucchini)** Summer squash includes all the soft skin varieties. See Pumpkin for properties of Winter squash

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, detoxifies, promotes diuresis, quenches thirst, relieves restlessness

**Conditions:** skin lesions, difficulty urinating, edema, summer heat, irritability, thirst

**Contraindications:** not to be used in beriberi or scabies

**33. Sweet Potato (Yam)**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens spleen and stomach function, tonifies Qi, clears heat, detoxifies, increases the production of milk

**Conditions:** Bloody stools, diarrhea, constipation, jaundice, edema, ascites, night blindness, diabetes, breast abscess, boils, skin lesions

**Contraindications:** overeating sweet potatoes will cause gas, heartburn, indigestion, abdominal distention and acid regurgitation.

**34. Turnip**

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet, bitter and pungent

**Actions:** clears heat, removes dampness, removes stagnant food, detoxifies, stops cough

**Conditions:** boils, breast abscesses, diabetes, tinea (ringworm), baldness in children

**35. Water Chestnut**

**Nature/Taste:** cold and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat and stops bleeding

**Conditions:** dry cough due to heat in the lung with thick, tenacious mucus, jaundice, bloody stool, excessive uterine bleeding, antidote for lead and copper poisoning

**36. Winter Melon**

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet and bland

**Actions:** clears heat, detoxifies, promotes urination, quenches thirst, relieves irritability, dispels dampness, antidote for seafood poisoning

**Conditions:** boils, skin lesions, ascites (edema in the abdomen), difficult urination, heatstroke

## Grains

### 1. Buckwheat

**Nature/Taste:** Neutral and sweet

**Actions:** Descends Qi, strengthens stomach, stops dysentery, lowers blood pressure, strengthens blood vessels

**Conditions:** Chronic diarrhea, dysentery, spontaneous sweating, hypertension, skin lesions

### 2. Corn Meal

**Nature/Taste:** Neutral and sweet

**Actions:** Tonify Qi, strengthen the stomach and spleen, benefit the heart, diuretic, stimulate the flow of bile

**Conditions:** weak digestion, heart disease, high blood pressure, edema, gallstones

### 3. Millet

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** stops vomiting, relieves diarrhea, consolidates or astringes the stomach and intestines, clears heat, promotes urination, soothes morning sickness

### 4. Oats

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, tonifies Qi, harmonizes stomach, regulates Chi, carminative, stops lactation (sprouted form only)

### 5. Pearl Barley

**Nature/Taste:** cool and bland

**Actions:** promotes diuresis, strengthens spleen, benefits gall bladder, clears heat, detoxifies

**Conditions:** swelling, indigestion, diarrhea, jaundice, tumors, dysuria

### 6. Brown Rice

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, nourishes stomach, quenches thirst, relieves irritability, astringes intestines, stops diarrhea

**Conditions:** indigestion, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, summer heat irritability

### 7. Sweet Rice

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** warms spleen and stomach, tonifies Qi, astringes urine

**Conditions:** stomach pains due to cold, diabetes, frequent urination, obesity, anemia

**Contraindications:** Eating too much will cause indigestion

**8. White Rice**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly cool and sweet

**Actions:** moistens Yin, clears heat, diuretic, reduces swelling

**Conditions:** febrile disease, swelling, vomiting of blood, nosebleeds, nausea

**9. Wheat**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, quenches thirst, relieves restlessness, promotes diuresis, calms spirit, stops sweating

**Conditions:** dry mouth and throat, swelling, difficult urination, insomnia, irritability, restlessness, menopause, spontaneous sweating, night sweats, diarrhea, burns

**Contraindications:** Always use organically grown wheat. Wheat absorbs 10 times more nitrates (like from chemical fertilizers) than any other grain. This could explain the high incidence of allergies to modern day wheat.

## Seeds, Nuts and Legumes

### 1. Almond

**Nature/Taste:** Neutral and sweet

**Actions:** ventilates lungs, relieves cough and asthma, transform phlegm, lubricates intestines

**Conditions:** Lung conditions, asthma, constipation, cough

### 2. Azuki Bean (Aduki, red)

**Nature/Taste:** neutral sweet and sour

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, benefits diabetes, counteracts toxins, reduces dampness, benefits kidneys

**Conditions:** mumps, diabetes, leukorrhea, excessive thirst, hunger, or excretion of fluids, edema

### 3. Black Bean

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** tonifies kidneys, nourishes the Yin, strengthens and nourishes blood, brighten eyes, promotes diuresis, and strengthens kidneys

**Conditions:** Lower back pain, knee pain, infertility, seminal emissions, blurry vision, ear problems, difficult urination

### 4. Chestnut

**Nature/Taste:** Warm, sweet and salty

**Actions:** tonifies the kidneys, strengthens digestion, fortifies the Qi, arrests cough

**Conditions:** weak kidney Qi, back pain, weak lower extremities, frequent urination, nausea, burping, hiccups, chronic bronchitis, cough, asthma, diarrhea

### 5. Kidney Bean

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens digestion, promotes elimination, diuretic

**Conditions:** swelling, difficulty urinating, diarrhea

### 6. Lotus Seed

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** Strengthens kidneys, astringent, nutritive tonic

**Conditions:** kidney weakness, frequent urination, seminal emission, diarrhea

### 7. Mung Bean

**Nature/Taste:** very cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, detoxifies, quenches thirst, promotes urination, reduces swelling, aids edema in the lower limbs, counteracts toxins

**Conditions:** edema, conjunctivitis, diabetes, dysentery, summer heat problems, heatstroke, dehydration, food poisoning from spoiled food, carbuncles

**Contraindications:** Not for cold conditions. Females should avoid mung beans if trying to get pregnant

**8. Peanut**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** improves appetite, strengthens spleen, regulates blood, lubricates lungs, promotes diuresis, aids in lactation

**Conditions:** edema, lactostasis, blood in urine, insomnia, lack of appetite

**9. Pea**

**Nature/Taste:** Neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens digestion, strengthens spleen and stomach, promotes diuresis, lubricates intestines

**Conditions:** indigestion, edema, constipation

**10. Pumpkin Seed**

**Nature/Taste:** cold and sweet

**Actions:** anti-parasitic, diuretic

**Conditions:** intestinal worms and parasites, swelling, diabetes, prostate problems

**11. Sesame Seed (Brown)**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly warm and sweet

**Actions:** nourishes liver and kidneys, lubricates intestines, blackens gray hair, tonifies the body overall, benefits skin

**Conditions:** backache, weakness, premature graying, ringing in the ears, blurry vision, dizziness, constipation, dry cough, blood in the urine, tonic for older people, weak knees

**Contraindications:** Always grind sesame seeds because the tough cell wall makes them indigestible whole

**12. Sesame Seed (Black)**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** tonify liver and kidney, harmonize the blood, lubricate the intestines, restore hair color, nourish Yin, promotes lactation

**Conditions:** chronic constipation, premature balding or graying, chronic arthritis, joints inflammation, cough

**13. Sunflower Seed**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** subdues liver, lower blood pressure, relieves dysentery, resolves pus, moisten intestines

**Conditions:** headache, dizziness, liver fire rising, bloody dysentery, intestinal worms

**14. Soy Bean**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, detoxifies, eases urination, lubricates lungs and intestines, provides an excellent protein food

**Conditions:** lung and stomach heat, dry skin, ferocious appetite, stomach or mouth ulcers, swollen gums, diarrhea, constipation, general heat problems

**Contraindications:** Do not eat soy beans raw, they cannot be digested.

#### 15. Walnut

**Nature/Taste:** slightly warm and sweet

**Actions:** tonifies kidneys, strengthens back, astringes lungs, relieves asthma, lubricates intestines, aids erratic or rebellious Qi, reduces cholesterol

**Conditions:** kidney deficiency, impotence, sexual dysfunctions, infertility, frequent urination, back and leg pain, stones in the urinary tract, cough, constipation, neurasthenia

#### 16. Winter Melon Seed

**Nature/Taste:** cool and bland

**Actions:** Promotes diuresis, resolves mucus, stops cough, clears heat, detoxifies

**Conditions:** coughing of blood, constipation, intestinal abscess, edema, leukorrhea

## Fruits

### 1. Apple

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet, and slightly sour

**Actions:** strengthens heart, tonifies Qi, quenches thirst, promotes body fluids, lubricates lungs, resolves mucus

**Conditions:** dry throat, dehydration, indigestion, hypertension, constipation, and chronic diarrhea

### 2. Banana

**Nature/Taste:** cold and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, lubricates lungs, lubricates intestines, lowers blood pressure, aids alcohol intoxication

**Conditions:** constipation, thirst, cough, hemorrhoids, hypertension, alcohol intoxication

**Contraindications:** Not to be used in cold conditions

### 3. Cantaloupe

**Nature/Taste:** cold and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, quenches thirst, relieves summer heat problems, eases urination

**Conditions:** Summer heat thirst, lung abscess, irritability

**Contraindications:** Not for cold condition, history of coughing or vomiting blood, diarrhea, ulcers, heart disease, or weak stomach. Melons rot easily in the stomach and thus should be eaten alone.

### 4. Cherry

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** benefits skin and overall body, rejuvenates strengthens spleen, stimulates appetite, stops dysentery and diarrhea, quenches thirst, regenerates fluids, stops seminal emissions, prolongs life

**Conditions:** measles, burns, diarrhea, dysentery, thirst, premature ejaculation

**Contraindications:** Eaten in excess will cause nausea, vomiting, skin lesions and cause a person to feel hot. This injures the bones and tendons.

### 5. Chinese Date (Red or Black Jujube)

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, tonifies Yin, nourishes the body, tonifies blood, lubricates lungs, stops coughs, stops diarrhea, harmonizes within the body or within an herb formula (dates and licorice can reduce the harshness of a food or herb and unite the combination into action)

**Conditions:** Yin deficiency, weak digestion, cough, night sweats, weakness, anemia, blood in urine, diarrhea, bruises, nervous hysteria

**Contraindications:** Too much creates mucus, distended stomach, and is hard on the teeth.

### 6. Coconut

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens the body, reduces swelling, stops bleeding, kills worms, activates heart function

**Conditions:** weakness, nosebleeds, intestinal or skin worms

**7. Fig**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, lubricates lungs and intestines, stops diarrhea

**Conditions:** dry cough, dry throat, lung heat, constipation, indigestion, and hemorrhoids, prolapsed of the rectum

**8. Grape**

**Nature/Taste:** warm, sweet and sour

**Actions:** very tonifying (particularly the red or purple varieties), nourished blood, strengthens bones and tendons, tonifies Qi, harmonizes stomach, promotes diuresis, relieves irritability

**Conditions:** cold type arthritis, tendonitis, painful urination, hepatitis, jaundice, anemia, flu

**Contraindications:** Grape wine should not be combined with fatty foods because it can result in phlegm and heat that rises to the heart and can cause strokes and heart attacks. Also, excessive consumption of grapes leads to constipation or diarrhea.

**9. Grapefruit**

**Nature/Taste:** cold, sweet and sour

**Actions:** strengthens stomach, aids digestion, circulates Qi, detoxifies alcohol intoxication

**Conditions:** decreased appetite, weak digestion, stomach fullness, alcohol intoxication, dry cough

**10. Hawthorn Berry**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly warm, sweet and sour

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, removes stagnant food, invigorates blood, dissolves sputum, relieves stagnant Qi, and aids digestion

**Conditions:** food stagnation (especially meat), bloody stools, abdominal pain, absence of menstruation due to blood stagnation, poor appetite, hypertension, high cholesterol

**11. Lemon**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sour

**Actions:** regenerates body fluids, harmonizes stomach, regulates Qi, quenches thirst, benefits liver

**Conditions:** sore throat, dry mouth, stomach distention, cough

**12. Litchi Fruit (Lychee)**

**Nature/Taste:** warm, sweet and astringent

**Actions:** nourishes blood, calms spirit, soothes liver, regulates Qi

**Conditions:** hernia, weak and deficient conditions, irritability, restless heart

**Contraindications:** Over consumption can lead to nose bleeding, feverish sensation, thirst, and can induce the onset of smallpox or chicken pox. Not to be used in any type of heat condition.



**13. Mango**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral, sweet and sour

**Actions:** regenerates body fluids, stops cough, stops thirst, strengthens stomach

**Conditions:** cough, thirst, poor digestion, enlarged prostate, nausea

**Contraindication:** overeating can cause itching or skin eruptions

**14. Mulberry**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly cold and sweet

**Actions:** quenches thirst, detoxifies, nourishes blood, tonifies kidneys, lubricates lungs, relieves constipation, calms the spirit, promotes diuresis

**Conditions:** thirst, irritability, dry mouth, diabetes, anemia, constipation, back pain due to kidney weakness, alcohol intoxication, lymph node enlargement, blurred vision.

**15. Orange**

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet and sour

**Actions:** lubricates lungs, resolves mucus, increases appetite, strengthens spleen, quenches thirst, promotes body fluids

**Conditions:** thirst, dehydration, stagnant Qi, hernia

**16. Papaya**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral sweet and sour

**Actions:** strengthens stomach and spleen, aids digestion, clears summer heat, lubricates lungs, stops cough, aids irritability, kills worms, increases milk production

**Conditions:** cough, indigestion, stomachache, eczema, and skin lesions, intestinal worms

**17. Peach**

**Nature/Taste:** very cool, sweet and slightly sour

**Actions:** lubricates lungs, clears heat, aids diabetes, promotes body fluids, induces sweating

**Conditions:** diabetes, dry cough, intestinal worms, virginities

**Contraindications:** Not to be used with damp and cold conditions

**18. Pineapple**

**Nature/Taste:** warm, sweet and sour

**Actions:** aids digestion, stops diarrhea, dispels summer heat

**Conditions:** heat stroke, irritability, thirst, indigestion, diarrhea

**Contraindications:** Pineapples are slightly toxic; washing with salt water can neutralize this. Pineapple is also said to generate dampness, so not to be used in those situations.

**19. Plum**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly warm, sweet and sour

**Actions:** stimulates appetite, aids digestion, regulates body fluids, stops thirst, softens or soothes the liver, removes stagnation of Qi, removes the feeling of steaming bones.

**Conditions:** dehydration, thirst, Qi stagnation, erratic energy flow, poor digestion, dysentery

**Contraindications:** Too many plums are not good for the teeth

## 20. Raspberry

**Nature/Taste:** slightly warm, sweet and sour

**Actions:** tonifies liver and kidneys, astringes essence, astringes urinations, brightens the eyes

**Conditions:** kidney and liver deficiency, blurry vision, spermatorrhea, seminal emission, frequent urination

## 21. Strawberry

**Nature/Taste:** cool, sweet and sour

**Actions:** lubricates lungs, promotes body fluids, strengthens spleen, detoxifies in alcohol intoxication

**Conditions:** dry cough, sore throat, difficult urination, and food retention, lack of appetite

## 22. Tangerine

**Nature/Taste:** warm, sweet and sour

**Actions:** carminative, opens the channels, strengthens the stomach, stops cough

**Conditions:** nausea, vomiting, cough, excess white or clear mucus, chest tightness, rib pain

## 23. Tomato

**Nature/Taste:** slightly cool, sweet and sour

**Actions:** promotes body fluids, quenches thirst, strengthens stomach, aids digestion, cools blood, clears heat, detoxifies, calms the liver, removes stagnant food

**Conditions:** Liver heat rising, hypertension, bloodshot eyes, dehydration, indigestion due to low stomach acid, food retention, kidney infection.

## 24. Watermelon

**Nature/Taste:** cold and sweet

**Actions:** quenches thirst, relieves irritability, dispels summer heat problems, promotes diuresis, detoxifies

**Conditions:** sores, dry mouth, summer heat irritability, bloody dysentery, jaundice, edema, difficult urination

**Contraindications:** Not to be used in cold conditions, with weak stomach, or with polyuria

## Meat, Fish, Poultry and Animal Products

### 1. Beef

**Nature:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** tonifies Qi and blood, strengthens spleen and stomach, dispels dampness, relieves edema, strengthens bones and tendons

**Conditions:** edema, abdominal distention and fullness, weak back and knees, deficient stomach and spleen

**Contraindications:** Not to be used with any type of skin lesions, hepatitis, or any type of kidney inflammation.

### 2. Chicken

**Nature:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** tonifies Qi, nourishes blood, aids kidney deficiency, benefits spleen and stomach

**Conditions:** postpartum weakness, weakness in old people, cold-type arthritis, weakness after illness or blood loss

**Contraindications:** Don't eat chickens that are force fed chemical pellets and injected with steroids and antibiotics. These types of Chickens can cause a variety of health problems, including sterility, early female puberty, and disharmony in the menstrual cycle, male impotence. Also chicken is not to be consumed by those with heat type cancers such as leukemia, or when there are heat symptoms such as red tongue, fever, and extreme thirst.

### 3. Chicken Egg

**Nature:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** nourishes Yin, tonifies blood, stabilizes hyperactive fetus, lubricates dryness **Conditions:** dry cough, hoarse voice, dysentery, blood and Yin deficiency, and hyperactive fetus

**Contraindications:** Eating too many eggs is not healthy. In general, do not eat eggs fried or raw.

### 4. Fish

**Nature:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, tonifies Qi, removes dampness, regulates blood, aids diarrhea from spleen weakness

**Conditions:** low energy states, hemorrhoids, postpartum excessive bleeding, itching or exuding damp type skin lesions.

**Contraindications:** Do not eat fish raw, as it is often loaded with parasites. Always cook fish with garlic, ginger or onion to neutralize the potential toxins.

Note: Ocean fish would be cooler than Freshwater fish. Many of the ocean fishes are considered neutral. Clams and Crabs are cool, Oysters are neutral, and Shrimp is warm. The Shellfish can cause rashes and other allergic reactions.

## 5. Lamb

**Nature:** hot and sweet

**Actions:** tonifies weakness, dispels cold, strengthens and nourishes Qi and blood, promotes appetite, aids lactation

**Conditions:** kidney deficiency causing back pain, impotence, cold conditions, deficiency conditions, postpartum blood loss, lack of milk, leucorrhoea

**Contraindications:** Lamb is generally not consumed in summer because of its hot nature. Not to be consumed in edema, malaria, common cold, toothache or any type of heat conditions.

## 6. Pork

**Nature:** slightly cold and sweet

**Actions:** moistens and nourishes organs, tonifies Qi, strengthens the digestion

**Conditions:** internal dryness, constipation, dry cough, emaciation

**Contraindications:** Not to be taken by fat people, those with deficient spleen and stomach, hypertension, stroke victims or those with diarrhea.

## 7. Milk and Milk Products

**Nature:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens weakness, nourishes Qi and blood, lubricates dryness

**Conditions:** nutritional deficiency, weakness, malnutrition, anemia, constipation, dryness

**Contraindications:** Not to be used with damp or cold conditions, or in cases of diarrhea. In general not to be used by adults or those who are strong as dairy products can then cause mucus and other disorders. As an occasional food used moderately, it should not cause a problem; however, not to be used daily. Allergy is common with this food since many adults lose the ability to digest milk sugar after infancy. Allergic reactions usually include diarrhea and bloating.

## Grains

### 1. Buckwheat

**Nature/Taste:** Neutral and sweet

**Actions:** Descends Qi, strengthens stomach, stops dysentery, lowers blood pressure, strengthens blood vessels

**Conditions:** Chronic diarrhea, dysentery, spontaneous sweating, hypertension, skin lesions

### 2. Corn Meal

**Nature/Taste:** Neutral and sweet

**Actions:** Tonify Qi, strengthen the stomach and spleen, benefit the heart, diuretic, stimulate the flow of bile

**Conditions:** weak digestion, heart disease, high blood pressure, edema, gallstones

### 3. Millet

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** stops vomiting, relieves diarrhea, consolidates or astringes the stomach and intestines, clears heat, promotes urination, soothes morning sickness

### 4. Oats

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, tonifies Qi, harmonizes stomach, regulates Chi, carminative, stops lactation (sprouted form only)

### 5. Pearl Barley

**Nature/Taste:** cool and bland

**Actions:** promotes diuresis, strengthens spleen, benefits gall bladder, clears heat, detoxifies

**Conditions:** swelling, indigestion, diarrhea, jaundice, tumors, dysuria

### 6. Brown Rice

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, nourishes stomach, quenches thirst, relieves irritability, astringes intestines, stops diarrhea

**Conditions:** indigestion, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, summer heat irritability

### 7. Sweet Rice

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** warms spleen and stomach, tonifies Qi, astringes urine

**Conditions:** stomach pains due to cold, diabetes, frequent urination, obesity, anemia

**Contraindications:** Eating too much will cause indigestion

**8. White Rice**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly cool and sweet

**Actions:** moistens Yin, clears heat, diuretic, reduces swelling

**Conditions:** febrile disease, swelling, vomiting of blood, nosebleeds, nausea

**9. Wheat**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, quenches thirst, relieves restlessness, promotes diuresis, calms spirit, stops sweating

**Conditions:** dry mouth and throat, swelling, difficult urination, insomnia, irritability, restlessness, menopause, spontaneous sweating, night sweats, diarrhea, burns

**Contraindications:** Always use organically grown wheat. Wheat absorbs 10 times more nitrates (like from chemical fertilizers) than any other grain. This could explain the high incidence of allergies to modern day wheat.

## Seeds, Nuts and Legumes

### 1. Almond

**Nature/Taste:** Neutral and sweet

**Actions:** ventilates lungs, relieves cough and asthma, transform phlegm, lubricates intestines

**Conditions:** Lung conditions, asthma, constipation, cough

### 2. Azuki Bean (Aduki, red)

**Nature/Taste:** neutral, sweet and sour

**Actions:** strengthens spleen, benefits diabetes, counteracts toxins, reduces dampness, benefits kidneys

**Conditions:** mumps, diabetes, leukorrhea, excessive thirst, hunger, or excretion of fluids, edema

### 3. Black Bean

**Nature/Taste:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** tonifies kidneys, nourishes the Yin, strengthens and nourishes blood, brighten eyes, promotes diuresis, and strengthens kidneys

**Conditions:** Lower back pain, knee pain, infertility, seminal emissions, blurry vision, ear problems, difficult urination

### 4. Chestnut

**Nature/Taste:** Warm, sweet and salty

**Actions:** tonifies the kidneys, strengthens digestion, fortifies the Qi, arrests cough

**Conditions:** weak kidney Qi, back pain, weak lower extremities, frequent urination, nausea, burping, hiccups, chronic bronchitis, cough, asthma, diarrhea

### 5. Kidney Bean

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens digestion, promotes elimination, diuretic

**Conditions:** swelling, difficulty urinating, diarrhea

### 6. Lotus Seed

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** Strengthens kidneys, astringent, nutritive tonic

**Conditions:** kidney weakness, frequent urination, seminal emission, diarrhea

### 7. Mung Bean

**Nature/Taste:** very cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, detoxifies, quenches thirst, promotes urination, reduces swelling, aids edema in the lower limbs, counteracts toxins

**Conditions:** edema, conjunctivitis, diabetes, dysentery, summer heat problems, heatstroke, dehydration, food poisoning from spoiled food, carbuncles

**Contraindications:** Not for cold conditions. Females should avoid mung beans if trying to get pregnant

**8. Peanut**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** improves appetite, strengthens spleen, regulates blood, lubricates lungs, promotes diuresis, aids in lactation

**Conditions:** edema, lactostasis, blood in urine, insomnia, lack of appetite

**9. Pea**

**Nature/Taste:** Neutral and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens digestion, strengthens spleen and stomach, promotes diuresis, lubricates intestines

**Conditions:** indigestion, edema, constipation

**10. Pumpkin Seed**

**Nature/Taste:** cold and sweet

**Actions:** anti-parasitic, diuretic

**Conditions:** intestinal worms and parasites, swelling, diabetes, prostate problems

**11. Sesame Seed (Brown)**

**Nature/Taste:** slightly warm and sweet

**Actions:** nourishes liver and kidneys, lubricates intestines, blackens gray hair, tonifies the body overall, benefits skin

**Conditions:** backache, weakness, premature graying, ringing in the ears, blurry vision, dizziness, constipation, dry cough, blood in the urine, tonic for older people, weak knees

**Contraindications:** Always grind sesame seeds because the tough cell wall makes them indigestible whole

**12. Sesame Seed (Black)**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** tonify liver and kidney, harmonize the blood, lubricate the intestines, restore hair color, nourish Yin, promotes lactation

**Conditions:** chronic constipation, premature balding or graying, chronic arthritis, joints inflammation, cough

**13. Sunflower Seed**

**Nature/Taste:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** subdues liver, lower blood pressure, relieves dysentery, resolves pus, moisten intestines

**Conditions:** headache, dizziness, liver fire rising, bloody dysentery, intestinal worms

**14. Soy Bean**

**Nature/Taste:** cool and sweet

**Actions:** clears heat, detoxifies, eases urination lubricates lungs and intestines, provides an excellent protein food



**Conditions:** lung and stomach heat, dry skin, ferocious appetite, stomach or mouth ulcers, swollen gums, diarrhea, constipation, general heat problems

**Contraindications:** Do not eat soy beans raw, they cannot be digested.

#### 15. Walnut

**Nature/Taste:** slightly warm and sweet

**Actions:** tonifies kidneys, strengthens back, astringes lungs, relieves asthma, lubricates intestines, aids erratic or rebellious Qi, reduces cholesterol

**Conditions:** kidney deficiency, impotence, sexual dysfunctions, infertility, frequent urination, back and leg pain, stones in the urinary tract, cough, constipation, neurasthenia

#### 16. Winter Melon Seed

**Nature/Taste:** cool and bland

**Actions:** Promotes diuresis, resolves mucus, stops cough, clears heat, detoxifies

**Conditions:** coughing of blood, constipation, intestinal abscess, edema, leukorrhea

## Miscellaneous Foods and Beverages

### 1. Anise Seed

**Nature:** warm and pungent

**Actions:** strengthens stomach, regulates Qi flow, harmonizes stomach, stops vomiting

**Conditions:** hernia, beriberi, abdominal pain, distention and gas, back pain and coldness, cold stomach

**Contraindications:** Not to be used in any type of heat conditions.

### 2. Barley Malt Syrup

**Nature:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** Promotes digestion, relieves food stagnation, strengthens stomach, stops lactation

**Conditions:** food retention (due to wheat products), epigastria fullness and distention, belching, constipation, undesirable lactation

### 3. Basil

**Nature:** warm and pungent

**Actions:** induces sweating, harmonizes stomach, antidote for seafood poisoning

**Conditions:** wind-cold, vomiting, diarrhea, seafood poisoning

### 4. Black Fungus

**Nature:** neutral, slightly toxic raw, and sweet

**Actions:** nourishes stomach, calms spirit, lubricates dryness, promotes blood flow, removes stagnation

**Conditions:** blood stagnation such as tumor, especially uterine, abnormal uterine bleeding, bloody stools, hemorrhoids, constipation, hypertension

**Contraindications:** Not to be used by pregnant women.

### 5. Black Pepper

**Nature:** hot and pungent

**Actions:** warms digestion, dispels internal cold, antidote to food poisoning

**Conditions:** stomachache due to cold, diarrhea, food poisoning

### 6. Brown Sugar

**Nature:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens digestion, lubricates the lungs, stops cough, warms up the body

**Conditions:** dry cough, poor digestion, and coldness

**Contraindications:** Not to be consumed in excess. Can lead to mucus and dampness in the body.

Note: White Sugar is sweet and cold; it lubricate the lungs, treats dry cough, and promotes the healing of bed sores, ulcerations and burns when used externally. Apply sugar to the lesion and rebandage every 3-5 days. The same contraindications for brown sugar apply to white sugar.

**7. Cardamon Seed**

**Nature:** warm and pungent

**Actions:** warms the digestion, resolves dampness, invigorates the flow of Qi, stops vomiting

**Conditions:** dampness, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, stomach ulcers, abdominal distention and fullness

**8. Carob Pod**

**Nature:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** soothes and calms the spirit

**Conditions:** used as an alternative to chocolate, and for caffeine addiction

**Contraindications:** Eating carob to excess will cause agitation

**9. Cinnamon**

**Nature:** hot, pungent and sweet

**Actions:** strengthens stomach, warms any coldness in the body, stops pain

**Conditions:** common cold, abdominal pain due to cold stagnation, lack of appetite due to cold stomach, low back pain

**Contraindications:** Not to be used in pregnancy

**10. Clove**

**Nature:** warm and pungent

**Actions:** warm the middle; dispel internal cold, and reverse rebellious Qi, warms the kidneys, stops pain

**Conditions:** stomachaches due to cold, vomiting, nausea, belching, hiccupping, toothache

**11. Coffee**

**Nature:** Warm, sweet and bitter

**Actions:** stimulating, diuretic, promotes elimination

**Conditions:** mild swelling, constipation, hypersomnia, lethargy, mental cloudiness, conditions that require stimulation

**Contraindications:** This beverage is a very addictive substance. Avoid in high blood pressure, insomnia, nervousness, and stomach ulcers or acidity; coffee is easier on the stomach if taken with milk or soymilk. Always exercise moderation in its use. Avoid during pregnancy.

**12. Fennel Seed**

**Nature:** warm and pungent

**Actions:** unblocks and regulates Qi, strengthens stomach, dispels cold, stops pain, stimulates peristalsis

**Conditions:** stomachache, hernia, abdominal discomfort, coldness in the stomach, colic in babies

**13. Fresh Ginger Root**

**Nature:** warm and pungent

**Actions:** promotes sweating, anti-toxin, antidote for seafood poisoning, benefits the lungs and stomach, expels pathogen

**Conditions:** common cold, cough due to coldness (clear or white mucus), nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cold type arthritis

#### 14. Honey

**Nature:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** nourishes Yin, lubricates dryness, tonifies weakness, harmonizes, antidote to drugs, strengthens spleen

**Conditions:** diabetes (small amounts), constipation, ulcers, dry cough, hoarse voice, burns, cold sores

**Contraindications:** Not to be used in diarrhea or conditions of dampness or phlegm

#### 15. Molasses

**Nature:** warm and sweet

**Actions:** tonifies Qi, strengthens spleen, lubricates lungs, stops cough

**Conditions:** stomach and abdominal pain, Qi deficiency, cough

#### 16. Olive

**Nature:** neutral, sweet, sour and astringent

**Actions:** clears heat, detoxifies, promotes body fluids, quenches thirst, clears lungs, benefits the throat

**Conditions:** whooping cough, dysentery, sore throat, dehydration, laryngitis, thirst

#### 17. Rice Vinegar

**Nature:** warm and sour

**Actions:** detoxifies, invigorates blood circulation, inhibits bacteria, astringent, closes pores

**Conditions:** preventative for common colds, prevents invasion from external pathogens, malaria, acute arthritis, vomiting, nausea intestinal worms, hypertension, burns, fungus infestation, bones caught in the throat, gum disease, hives, hepatitis, lung tuberculosis, lung abscess, bronchitis

**Contraindications:** Not to be used at the onset of a cold as it will trap the pathogens inside of the body

#### 18. Salt

**Nature:** cold, salty and slightly sweet

**Actions:** harmonize and promote digestion, strengthens the kidney in (small amounts), fortifies bones, tendons and teeth, brightens eyes, detoxifies, used as natural preservative

**Conditions:** food poisoning, kidney weakness from lack of sodium in the diet, sore throat

#### 19. Tea

**Nature:** cool, bitter and sweet

**Actions:** clears the head, refreshes the mind, relieves thirst and restlessness, resolves phlegm, diuretic, promote digestion, detoxifies, reduces cholesterol

**Conditions:** headaches, blurry vision, thirst, restlessness, foggy head, hypersomnia, food retention, dysentery, difficulty urinating, overweight

**Contraindications:** Avoid or minimal use with insomnia. Better not to have on an empty stomach due to tannin.

**20. White Fungus**

**Nature:** neutral and sweet

**Actions:** clears lung heat, strengthens spleen and stomach, promotes body fluids, tonifies Qi, invigorates blood, lubricates intestines, relieves alcohol intoxication, nourishes Yin, especially of the lungs

**Conditions:** cough, dry lungs, bloody sputum, irregular menstruation, arteriosclerosis, hypertension, alcohol intoxication, blood stagnation, constipation

**21. Wine**

**Nature:** Warm, pungent and sweet

**Actions:** promotes circulation, enhances the effect of circulatory herbs, stops pain temporarily

**Conditions:** arthritis, traumas, bruises, painful conditions

**Contraindications:** This can be a very addictive substance. In case of allergy to alcohol, avoid completely. Not good for heat conditions, and avoid during pregnancy. Do not mix wine with fatty foods

## COMMON COLD

There are two basic types of colds. In Chinese terminology they are the wind cold type and the wind heat type. They have different symptoms and different treatments.

### Wind Cold Type

This type often occurs with a change in weather or when one is exposed to wind and cold. With a weak immune function these pathogens enter the skin. The symptoms could include chills, fever, No sweating, headache, body ache, stiff neck, and clear copious nasal discharge. This is often the first stage of a cold. When the pathogens are at this initial, superficial stage, we seek to sweat them. A hot bath or dry sauna could be benefit to start the sweating process.

**Recommendations:** ginger, garlic, mustard greens and seeds, grapefruit peel, cilantro, parsnip, scallions, cinnamon, basil, soupy rice porridge, and eating as little as possible so as not to burden the system with a lot of digestion.

**Avoid:** Shellfish, heavy proteins and fats, meats, all vinegars. Vinegar closes the pores and traps the thief in the house.

#### Remedies:

1. Fresh ginger and brown sugar soup
2. Make tea from dried grapefruit peel

### Wind Heat Type

This type of common cold is characterized by high fever, some chills, sweating, sore throat, cough, headache, body ache, and yellow nasal discharge or sputum.

**Recommendations:** mint, cabbage, chrysanthemum flowers, burdock root, cilantro, dandelion, apples, pears, bitter melon, drink plenty of fluids and get plenty of rest

**Avoid:** shellfish, meats, vinegar, drafts, and hot foods

#### Remedies:

1. Drink cilantro and mint tea
2. Drink mint, chrysanthemum and dandelion tea

## HEADACHE

There are many different types of headaches, such as migraines, ones caused by muscular tension, hypertension, common cold, mental stress, hormonal changes, and eyestrain.

Each type of headache would have a corresponding treatment.

**Recommendations:** chrysanthemum flowers, mint, green onions, ginger, oyster shells, pearl barley, carrots, prunes, buckwheat, peach kernels

**Avoid:** spicy food, lack of sleep, alcohol, smoking, excess stimulation, eyestrain, stress

**Remedies:** For headaches due to common cold or flu:

1. Make tea from ginger and green onions, boiling for 5 minutes, drink and try to sweat
2. Make rice porridge and add garlic and green onions. Eat while hot, then get under cover and sweat

**Remedies:** For headaches due to high blood pressure, menstrual cycles, emotional stress or tension, or migraines:

1. Make carrot juice.
2. Take lemon juice and ½ T. baking soda mixed in a glass of water and drink.

## ALLERGY AND INTOLERANCE

Allergy is an acquired hypersensitivity to a substance that does not normally cause a body reaction. The allergenic substance may be pollen, smog, dust, and certain chemicals in the air, chlorine, or certain food substances, which elicit a sometimes-violent body response. This condition is characterized by nasal congestion, tearing, sneezing, wheezing, coughing, itching, skin rash and eruptions, dizziness and nausea.

**Avoid:** wheat, citrus fruits, chocolate, shellfish, dairy products, eggs, potatoes, polluted meats, polluted air, and constipation

**Recommendations:** ginger, onions, garlic, bamboo shoots, cabbage, beets, beet top tea, carrots, leafy greens, yams, organic chicken gizzards

**Remedies:**

1. Drink ginger tea to induce sweating
2. Drink beet top tea as a water source

## CHRONIC SINUSITIS

This condition is due to an acute inflammation of the nasal passages over a long period of time. There is often drainage or congestion, difficulty breathing through the nose, sometimes dryness of the nostrils, headaches, and ringing in the ears.

**Recommendations:** ginger, green onions, magnolia flower, bananas, garlic, black mushrooms, chrysanthemum flowers, mulberry leaves, and apricot kernels. Get plenty of fresh air.

**Avoid:** extremes of exposure to weather elements, coffee, smoking, stress, picking the nose, polluted air and smog

**Remedies:**

1. Make tea from magnolia flower, basil, ginger, and green onion, drink 3 times daily for at least 1 week
2. Cook black mushrooms into a concentrated soup, and then slowly use a dropper to put drops into the nose.

## ACNE

This condition is characterized by skin blemishes or pimples. It can occur at any point throughout the lifetime and is often related to a hormonal imbalance. In Chinese tenninology the skin is controlled by the lungs, and acne is commonly a condition of heat in the lungs. Thus, the Chinese approach to this condition is to cool the heat, cleanse the lungs, an also externally work on the healing process.

**Recommendations:** squash, cucumbers, watermelon, winter melon, celery, carrots, cabbage, beet tops, dandelions, aloe Vera, mulberry leaf, carrot tops, lettuce, potato, cherries, papaya, pear, persimmon, raspberries, buckwheat, alfalfa sprouts, millet, brown rice, mung beans, plenty of water

**Avoid:** fried foods, fatty or oil foods, spicy foods, coffee, alcohol, sugar, smoking, stress, constipation, make-up, washing with chemicals or soap, chocolate, ice cream, soft drinks, dairy foods, emotional stress, red meat, shellfish, bamboo shoots, white mushrooms

**Remedies:**

1. Blend a cucumber, apply externally, and leave on for 20 minutes then wash off.
2. Drink lukewarm water with 2 teaspoons of honey every morning on an empty stomach. This effectively lubricates the intestines. If one does not evacuate the intestines regularly, the toxins either end up in the liver or coming out on the skin.

## INDIGESTION

This is a condition of poor digestion due to weak stomach, lack of digestive enzymes, or eating too fast. This causes a stagnation of food in the stomach, resulting in abdominal fullness or distention, bloating, and sometimes diarrhea due to insufficient digestion.

**Avoid:** rich foods, fatty foods, tension and stress while eating, reading the newspaper or watching television while eating as this takes energy away from digestion.

**Recommendations:** hawthorn berries, papayas, sweet potatoes or yams, figs, pineapples, black sesame seeds, apples, oranges. It is important to eat slowly and chew the food properly. Digestion begins in the mouth.



**Remedies:**

1. Dry and age orange peel for about 1 month. Boil tea and take after meals or simply suck on the peel for indigestion.
2. Eat sweet potato cooked with brown sugar and water. In the last 3 minutes of cooking this mush, add some rice wine. Eat regularly for 2 weeks to improve digestion.
3. Eat papaya 2 times daily, in any form.

## CANCER

According to Chinese Medicine, Cancer is an abnormal growth of tissue that results from some sort of stagnation, of Qi, blood, mucus, or body fluids. The stagnation can be caused by some external irritant such as cigarette smoke or chemical zed foods or by strong emotions. When the body is irritated over a long period of time, it reacts to the irritant by growing to protect itself. However, at a certain point the cell growth becomes abnormal and uncontrollable and cancer cells result. Strong emotions lead to Qi stagnation, which in turn can lead to stagnation of blood, mucus or body fluids.

The Western approach to cancer is to kill the cancer cells with harsh chemicals, radiation, or surgery. However, these methods also harm the healthy cells. The TCM approach to cancer is to support the body so that it can combat the cancer cells itself. The cancer is considered to be a toxin in the body, thus a detoxifying diet is also utilized.

**Recommendations:** seaweed, Shitake mushrooms, figs, beets, beet tops, papayas, mung beans, licorice, sea cucumbers, carrots, garlic, walnuts, litchi fruit, mulberries, asparagus, pumpkins, burdock, dandelion greens, white fungus, taro roots, pear barley, grains, plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables

**Avoid:** Meat (if patient cannot handle vegetarian diet a little fish could be eaten), chicken, coffee, cinnamon, anise, pepper, dairy products, spicy foods (except garlic), high fat foods, cooked oils, chemical additives, moldy foods, smoking, constipation, stress, and all irritations

**Remedies:**

1. Blend Shitake or Ling Zhi mushrooms and white fungus, boil and drink the soup 3 times daily.
2. For breast tumor, charcoal the pumpkin cap into powder; take 1 t. of powder in 1 shot of rice wine 2 times daily.

## CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

This syndrome consists of a set of variable symptoms including chronic or recurrent fatigue, sore throat, tender lymph nodes, headaches, muscle pains, and general depression. Often the patient has flu-like symptoms that extend for a long period of time. Most chronic fatigue patients -are observed to have undergone prolonged stress, repeated infections, and often become overwhelmed by life's simple

demands. Conditions like herpes, Candida and hypoglycemia compound the situation. Patient is advised to seek lifestyle corrections, like reducing stress, resting more and gentle exercise.

**Recommendations:** winter melon, pumpkin, pumpkin seed, yam, sweet potato, lima bean, black bean, soy bean, pineapple, chestnut, papaya, figs garlic, onion, scallion, pearl barley, lotus seed, white fungus, egg white, cabbage, carrot, pear, organic chicken, mung bean, buckwheat jujube date

**Avoid:** dairy products, alcohol, coffee, sugar, fatty or fried foods, overly spicy foods, cold and raw foods, tomato, eggplant, bell pepper, shellfish

**Remedies:**

1. Make chicken soup with garlic, onions, scallions, ginger and radish. Drink soup or cook rice porridge with the broth.
2. Juice and drink daily fresh water chestnut, lotus, pear, watermelon and carrots.

## CONSTIPATION

Constipation is a lack of regular, evacuation of the bowels or difficulty in defecation. The resulting symptoms may include bloating, abdominal pain, abdominal hardness, and bad breath. We should evacuate at least once daily, with the optimal times energy-wise being from 5-7 A.M. The longer the waste remains in the intestines, the drier it gets and more difficult to pass. Strained evacuation leads to hemorrhoids. Regular enemas or colonies are not a health solution to the problem. It is best to set a certain time for evacuation and train the body to respond accordingly. Rubbing the belly in a clockwise direction 100 times can stimulate the peristalsis of the intestines. Breathing with the mouth open is also beneficial in stimulating a bowel movement.

**Avoid:** Stress, tension, spicy foods, fried foods, meat

**Recommendations:** bananas, apples, walnuts, figs, spinach, peaches, pears, pine nut, sesame seeds, mulberries, grapefruit, yams, honey, azuki (red) beans, apricot kernel, milk, yogurt, alfalfa sprouts, beets, cabbage, bok choy, cauliflower, potato, Chinese cabbage, salt water

**Remedies:**

1. Eat 2 bananas on an empty stomach, followed by a glass of water
2. Drink a glass of lukewarm water with 2 teaspoons of honey on an empty stomach
3. Drink a glass of lukewarm water with 2 teaspoons of salt, on an empty stomach. This remedy should be used as a last resort when nothing else has worked and should not be used by those with edema or hypertension

## PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (P.M.S.)

P.M.S. is a condition that occurs after ovulation or before menstruation, due to hormonal fluctuations. It may be characterized by abdominal cramps, bloating, backache, headache, tension, irritability, low energy, and mood swings. A healthy woman should have little or no discomfort during this time, however, approximately 70% of American women suffer from these symptoms. This is partially due to the large consumption of cold foods and drinks in this country that in turn cause the blood to stagnate. In Chinese terminology,

P.M.S. is a condition of disharmony in the blood: either stagnant blood, not enough blood, or heat in the blood; and stagnation of Qi. Acupuncture, acupressure, herbs, diet, and Qi Gong exercises are all very beneficial for relieving the symptoms and correcting the disharmony.

**Avoid:** cold foods, raw foods, excessive consumption of fruit, vinegar, all shellfish, coffee, stimulants, sugar, dairy products, and smoking.

**Recommendations:** At least one week prior to the usual onset time of P.M.S. symptoms, consume some of the following: ginger, green onions, fennel, orange peel, spinach, walnuts, hawthorn berries, cinnamon, and black pepper, Chinese date, Dang Gui.

### Remedies:

1. Make tea from ginger, green onions, fennel, black pepper, and orange peel, boiling for 10 minutes. Drink 3 times daily, starting at least
2. Make spinach soup, boiling for 30 minutes

## MENOPAUSE

This is the time when a woman stops menstruating completely, usually occurring between 45 and 50 years of age. It may occur slowly or suddenly. Symptoms may include hot flashes, weakness, depression, emotional instability, anxiety, lack of concentration, irritability, headaches, insomnia, night sweats, and dryness.

**Avoid:** stress, tension, and stimulants

**Recommendations:** black beans, sesame seeds, soybeans, walnuts, lychee berries, mulberries, yams, licorice, Chinese black dates, and lotus seeds, chrysanthemum flowers. Try to remain calm

### Remedies:

1. Cook black beans with rice into porridge, eat 2 times daily
2. Roast sesame seeds and add to rice porridge for breakfast
3. Make tea from chrysanthemum and cassia seeds and take 3 times daily

## CHRONIC BLADDER INFECTION

This is a common condition in women, characterized by painful or burning urination, the feeling that there is still urine left in the bladder after urination; fever, low back ache. If this condition occurs in a man it is a warning sign of something more serious such as venereal disease or cancer. Women are prone to chronic bladder infections because of the short length of their urethras. In Chinese terminology it is a condition of damp heat.

**Avoid:** heavy proteins, meat, dairy products, onions, scallions, ginger, black pepper, alcohol

**Recommendations:** watermelon, pears, carrots, celery, corn, mung beans, corn silk, squash, wheat, water chestnuts, barley, lotus roots, loquats, plenty of water, and in general cooling and diuretic foods

**Remedies:**

1. Drink watermelon and pear juice 3 times daily
2. Drink corn silk tea freely
3. Drink blended mung bean juice

## CANDIDA YEAST INFECTION

This condition is becoming fairly common in modern society, primarily due to the widespread, long-term use of antibiotics, which severely weaken the immune system. Everyone has the candida yeast living in their bodies; however, only when disharmony and weakness occur do we have systemic yeast infections develop. The symptoms can include chronic fatigue, chronic infections, primarily in the skin, bowels, bladder, vagina, and throat; diarrhea or constipation, headaches, bloating, and poor digestion. When the immune system is weakened through overwork, too much sex, or stress, the candida flares up and the body can no longer control it. In the case of A.I.D.S., candida infection can become life threatening.

**Avoid:** Sugar, excessive fruits, yeast containing foods, processed foods, cheese, fermented foods, soy sauce, smoking, alcohol, caffeine, and constipation

**Recommendations:** dandelions, beet tops, carrot tops, barley, garlic, rice vinegar, mung beans, citrus fruits

## DIABETES

Diabetes is characterized by a high level of sugar in the blood and urine. Symptoms include excessive thirst, hunger, and urination. The Chinese refer to this condition as exhaustion syndrome. Proper exercise is of utmost importance in stimulating normal glandular functions; exercises such as Tai Ji Quan or Qi Gong are particularly valuable.

**Avoid:** sweet, sugar, honey, molasses, smoking, alcohol, caffeine, spicy foods, and most raw fruits

**Recommendations:** pumpkin, wheat, mung beans, winter melon, celery, pears, spinach, yams, peas, sweet rice, soybeans, tofu, mulberries, squash, daikon radish, cabbage, organic pork or chicken pancreas, peach, millet

**Remedies:**

1. Eat a slice of pumpkin with each meal
2. Make pumpkin and yam pie with no sweeteners
3. Steam tofu, cool to room temperature, add sesame oil and slices of raw squash

## HYPERTENSION

Hypertension is characterized by a wiry and rapid pulse, headache, dizziness, tinnitus, blurry vision, palpitations, chest tightness or fullness, fatigue, insomnia, vertigo, and numbness of the extremities. It is commonly caused by hardening of the arteries, kidney dysfunction, or liver dysfunction. The normal range of blood pressure is 120/90.

**Avoid:** smoking, alcohol, spicy foods, coffee, caffeine, all stimulants, fatty or fried foods, salty foods, stress, constipation, potatoes, strong emotions, pork, overeating, and low levels of calcium in the body.

For low calcium levels make tea from shells (oyster, abalone, mother of pearl) or fossils - (dragon bones and teeth); train and drink.

**Recommendations:** celery, spinach, garlic, bananas, sunflowers seeds, honey, tofu, mung beans, bamboo shoots, seaweed, vinegar, tomatoes, water chestnuts, corns, apples, persimmons, peas, buckwheat, jellyfish, watermelon, hawthorn berries, eggplant, plums, mushrooms, lemons, lotus root, chrysanthemum, cassia seeds

**Remedies:**

1. Drink warm celery juice 3 times daily
2. Eat 2 raw tomatoes on an empty stomach every day for a month
3. Drink com silk tea
4. Make mung bean soup

## HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is a waxy substance that is produced by the human body and is also found in animal products. Cells need cholesterol to function. Unfortunately, any excess cholesterol in the blood builds up inside the arteries. Cholesterol deposits (arteriosclerosis) are major causes of heart attacks and strokes.

A high cholesterol level in your blood is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. The higher your cholesterol level, the higher the risk. However, not all cholesterol is bad.

Fat travels through your bloodstream attached to protein. Two lipoproteins are the main carriers of cholesterol: low-density lipoprotein (LDL, sometimes called bad cholesterol) and high-density lipoprotein HDL, sometimes called good cholesterol).

LDL acts like a fat delivery truck. It picks up cholesterol from the liver and delivers it to the cells. When more cholesterol is ready for delivery than the cells can take, LDL deposits the extra cholesterol on the artery walls. A lot of LDL cholesterol in your blood "increases your risk of heart disease and stroke.

## ASTHMA

Asthma is characterized by wheezing or difficulty breathing due to the bronchials (branches) of the lungs becoming clogged with waste products, or constriction due to spasms, or swelling of the bronchials. Asthma may be triggered by an allergy to food, air pollution, cold air, heart weakness, previous lung damage, mental or physical fatigue, emotional disturbance, or hormonal imbalance. In the case of a weak heart, the heart is not strong enough to push the blood through the lungs to be oxygenated, and the blood back flows into the lungs. In this case there will be edema and bruising also.

Chinese medicine divides asthma into 2 types:

1. Hot type- characterized by rapid, coarse breathing, yellow, sticky mucus, fever, and red face.
2. Cold type- characterized by white, clear, or foamy mucus, cold extremities, and pale face.

The remedies listed would be useful to either type. During times of remission from asthma attack, one would seek to nourish the lungs and kidneys.

**Avoid:** Mucus producing foods, cold foods, fruits, salads, all shellfish, dairy products, watermelon, bananas, mung beans, salty foods, cold weather, and especially ice cream.

**Recommendations:** apricot kernels, almonds, walnuts, basil. Carrots, pumpkins, winter melon, sunflower seeds, loofa squash, figs, daikon, litchi fruit, tangerines, loquats honey, molasses, mustard greens, sesame seeds, placenta

### Remedies:

1. Drink fresh fig juice 3 times daily
2. Drink apricot kernel tea
3. Take an unpeeled orange, stick a chopstick through it, roast until the peel blackens. Remove the peel and eat the insides; one orange daily for 7 days.

## CHRONIC BRONCHITIS

This is a common condition in older people, commonly due to a lowered immunity. It often occurs during winter and spring. Main symptoms include cough, mucus, shortness of breath, and fullness in the chest.

**Avoid:** overworking, getting chilled, stimulating foods, spicy foods, smoking, alcohol, caffeine, cold drinks

**Recommendations:** carrots, apricot kernels, persimmons, white fungus, pears, honey, jellyfish, ginger, water chestnuts, yams, sweet potatoes, honey, Chinese red or black dates, daikon radish, walnuts, papaya, peach kernels, lotus roots, seaweed, betel nut, white pepper, loquat leaves, lily bulbs, pine nuts, mulberry leaves, chrysanthemum, ginkgo nuts, basil seeds, pumpkins, taro, winter melon seeds. Always try to keep warm.

### Remedies:

1. Take white fungus and rock sugar, steam and eat 2-3 times daily for 1 month.
2. Take 2-3 pears, remove core and fill with honey and eat before bed every day for 1 month.
3. Take carrots, white pepper, ginger, and dried orange peels and make tea. Drink 2 cups daily.

## SLEEP PROBLEMS

The term insomnia can mean:

1. Trouble getting to sleep
2. Frequent awakenings with inability to fall back to sleep
3. Early morning awakening

However, none of these are problems unless they make you feel chronically tired. If you are less sleepy at night or wake up early but still feel rested and alert, there is little need to worry.

Short-term insomnia, lasting from a few nights to a few weeks, is usually caused by worry over a stressful situation. Long-term insomnia, which can last months or even years, is often caused by general anxiety, medications, chronic pain, depression, or other physical disorders.

### Prevention:

1. Get regular exercise but avoid strenuous exercise within two hours before bedtime.
2. Avoid alcohol and smoking before bedtime. Drink caffeine in moderation and not after noon.
3. Drink a glass of warm milk at bedtime.
4. Avoid drinking more than a glass of fluid before bedtime.

**Recommendations:**

1. Don't take sleeping pills. They can cause daytime confusion, memory loss, and dizziness. Continued use of sleeping pills actually increases sleeplessness in many people.
2. Try the following step formula for two weeks
  - 1). Engage in relaxing activities in the evening (e.g. take a warm bath or do some light reading or stretching)
  - 2). Use your bed for sleeping. Don't eat, watch TV, or even read in it.
  - 3). Sleep only at bedtime. Don't take a nap
  - 4). Go to bed only when you feel sleepy
  - 5). If you lie awake for more than 15 minutes, get up and leave the bedroom
  - 6). Repeat steps 4 and 5 until it is time to get up
  - 7). Get up at the same time each day, no matter how sleepy you are

## TINNITUS

This is a common problem that has two major causes. The first is a local problem in which there may be a local obstruction or infection, never damage, or drug interference. The second stems more from a systemic condition such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, or kidney weakness. Along with ringing in the ears, one may also complain of headaches, irritability, restlessness, dizziness, red face, sore back, vomiting, or nausea.

**Avoid:** loud noise, stress; tension, stimulating foods, spicy foods, smoking, alcohol, coffee

**Recommendations:** black sesame seeds, black beans, walnuts, grapes, celery, oyster shell, pearl barley, azuki beans, Chinese black dates, yams, lotus seeds, chestnuts, chrysanthemum. Get plenty of sleep, massage the neck and head area, and try to live in a quiet, peaceful place, if possible.

**Remedies:**

1. Make tea from lotus seeds and chrysanthemums
2. Boil Chinese black dates, walnuts, and lotus seeds with rice porridge and eat once daily.
3. Make juice from celery and grapes, drink 1 cup 2-3 times daily



## MORNING SICKNESS

This is characterized by nausea and vomiting and affects some women during the first few months of pregnancy, usually clearing up after the third month. It occurs particularly in the morning, although in serious cases, it may last all day. Accompanying symptoms may include headache, dizziness, and exhaustion. One should seek treatment right away, as it will affect nourishment to the fetus.

**Avoid:** Overeating, heavy meats

**Recommendations:** lentils, grapefruit peel, carp, ginger, orange peel, bamboo shavings, millet

**Remedies:**

1. Grind lentils into powder then take 2 T. with rice porridge, 3 times daily.
2. Make tea from ginger, orange peels, and a little bit of brown sugar.
3. Make fresh scallion juice and fresh ginger Juice and add a little bit of sweetener. Take 2-3 t. 3 times daily.
4. Dry Plum – 3 times daily.

## IMPOTENCE

This is a weak condition, most likely due to a nervous weakness, excessive stress, worry, tension, physical fatigue, frequent masturbation, or excessive indulgence in sex.

Impotence is characterized by not being able to have an erection when there is a desire to have intercourse, and there may be premature ejaculation. Other symptoms may include dizziness, insomnia, excessive dreams, low appetite, back pain, lower extremities weakness, knee pain and fatigue.

**Recommendations:** scallions, scallion seeds, lamb, sea cucumber, shrimps, rooster, bitter melon seeds, ginseng, calm composure. Tonify foods are needed, thus, many of the remedies include meat, however, it does not have to be treated with meat.

**Avoid:** obscene visual stimulation, dairy products, sweets, masturbation, overwork, too much sex

**Remedies:**

1. Make lamb stew with daikon radish and Chinese black dates. Drink the broth and eat the lamb.
2. Steam a rooster with ginger.
3. Take dried shrimps, sea cucumber, and fennel, and dry roast and grind into a powder and take 1 t. 3 times daily with rice wine.

## Male Infertility

In many cultures, women are unfairly blamed for the inability of sexually active couples to conceive. In reality, men suffer from infertility issues just as frequently as women. According to statistics from the National Infertility Association, between 35 percent and 40 percent of infertility problems among couples are actually caused by male conditions.

Several factors may be responsible for male infertility, including:

1. Low Sperm count,
2. Abnormal sperm shape and size
3. Reduced motility

Causes might be:

1. Life styles
2. Genetics
3. Physiological changes can significantly affect a man's ability to produce offspring.

Previous research has shown that acupuncture can improve fertility levels in women. Fewer studies on male infertility have been conducted, although evidence suggests that acupuncture can have an effect on sperm production and quality, without causing any changes in behavior or sexual desire. A recent trial published in *Fertility and Sterility* has shown just how effective acupuncture can be in the treatment of this condition, leading to significant increases in the number of normal sperm and equally significant reductions in structural defects.

In the study, 28 men who were diagnosed with idiopathic infertility received acupuncture twice a week over a period 5 weeks. Needles were inserted to a depth of between 15 and 25 millimeters, depending on the region of the body being treated. Needles showed a statistically significant improvement to 40 %.

Similarly, the percentage of sperm with a normal axoneme pattern increased significantly among men receiving acupuncture. The axoneme is a microscopic structure that contains a series of tubules arranged in a distinct pattern, and is believed to aid in sperm motility. Prior to the start of the study, the correct axoneme pattern was present in 52% of sperm in the control group, but only 46% in the acupuncture group. After 5 weeks of therapy, the median percentage increase to 52.2% in acupuncture patients, but actually decreased to 38.2% in the control group.

While acupuncture appeared able to improve the overall quality and structural integrity of sperm, it was ineffective against some common sperm pathologies.

1. Apoptosis levels (programmed cell death) in sperm samples were reduced slightly, but not to a statistically significant degree.
2. Median percentages of necrosis (unprogrammed cell death)
3. Sperm immaturity decreased slightly in the acupuncture group, improve overall sperm quality.

## Women, fertility... and TCM

TCM has been treating problems of infertility for thousands of years. It understands two aspects of this condition: one has to do with health, the other has to do with stress.

Treating infertility is complicated. After all, it involves trying to create the healthiest body possible so that a new life will take root and grow. Without a balanced body whose organs work in harmony, it is easy to miscarry. The TCM doctor's first order of fertility is to determine how and where a woman's body is out of balance. These physical problems must be adjusted.

Generally speaking, infertility is related to the function of two major organs: Liver and Kidney. This condition, however, also involves the whole body's health and other organs can be involved, including the Stomach, Lung, Heart, and so on. One of the first priorities is to help a woman rebalance Kidney and Liver functions and then help these critical organs work in harmony. This provides a stronger likelihood of a smooth pregnancy and healthy baby.

In TCM, the Liver is the most important organ for women's health. So its role in fertility is critical. The Liver is very reactive to stress as well as the emotions of anger and frustration. A harried lifestyle, excessive stress, and over worry or over thinking can actually unbalance the function of the very organs necessary to create a hospitable environment for conception. While struggling with infertility, some women become so nervous or so anxious about getting pregnant, that their bodies refused to cooperate.

Distress can hamper fertility and relieving distress can help improve the chances of conceiving. But no one has proved that feelings of distress actually cause infertility<sup>1</sup> but there are good reasons to think so. Women with a history of depression are twice as likely to suffer from the problem and research has shown that distressed women are less responsive to treatment. There are many stories of women simply giving up on having a baby, but once they adopted a child and their own kid arrived happy months later.

One of the first clues to infertility that a TCM doctor considers is the menstrual cycles. If a woman has menstrual difficulties, suffers from monthly headaches, nausea, indigestion, PMS, obesity, smoking, and alcohol drinker, etc., these conditions must be treated first.

The goal is to rebalance her cycle so that it comes on time every month, other symptoms are eliminated and emotional issues are alleviated. If she has more serious problems like diabetes or high blood pressure, these health problems must be addressed before considering pregnancy. If not, it is very difficult to deliver the healthiest baby possible. These physical problems can become genetic problems that hide within the newborn.

Like a bad seed, they can appear later if the child's life becomes unbalanced. On the other hand, if these health conditions can be fixed by complementary medicine, then it is possible the mother's body can pass along a healing gift to her unborn child.

# Chinese Dietary Therapy in Clinical Practice

## Abstract

By: Graeme  
McCracken

Chinese dietary therapy (CDT), although fundamental to the practice of Chinese medicine, is frequently inadequately addressed in Western schools of Chinese medicine and tends to remain marginal to the clinical practice of acupuncture, tuina, qigong and even herbal medicine. Most practitioners lack sufficient knowledge and confidence when giving dietary guidance and cautiously offer only general and oversimplified advice. Without the necessary theoretical foundation and understanding it can be difficult to transfer CDT's simple yet effective therapeutic model into clinical practice. In this article the author outlines one such clinical approach to CDT, illustrated with a case example from his own clinic.

## Introduction

Chinese dietary therapy (CDT) sits between the traditions of folk medicine and formalised professional Chinese medicine. Its basic theories are used instinctively in millions of kitchens across Asia in traditional dishes and recipes.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the theory that underlies such traditional cooking is used to give dietary guidance in hospitals and clinics, where it often comes under the category of lifestyle advice or yangsheng (養生).<sup>2</sup> In a similar way to qigong - which nourishes and moves qi primarily through the medium of the Lungs - CDT nourishes and moves the qi, xue (blood) and jinye (body fluids) through the medium of the Stomach and Spleen. It is the ability of the Stomach and Spleen to transform food into the precious substances of the body that underlies the vigour of the qi and blood and the dynamic balance of yin and yang.<sup>3</sup> In CDT the Stomach and Spleen are seen to be of the upmost importance and their vitality is prioritised in order to ensure proper assimilation and absorption.<sup>4</sup> A strong middle jiao facilitates good transformation and transportation and allows CDT to address the presenting condition more effectively than if the digestion is weak.

CDT has many similarities with Chinese herbal medicine in terms of the classifications, theory and clinical diagnosis used; and of course, many substances in the Chinese materia medica are also foods. One of the main differences between the two disciplines - apart from the obvious palatability of food compared to herbs - has to do with the daily relationship we all have with food. Food plays a major part in all our lives, and from the moment we are born to the time of our death we maintain an ongoing regular relationship

of appreciation of the therapeutic benefits of food, and an unwillingness to give nutrition the time it needs to bring about effective healing.<sup>5,6</sup> If we have little belief in the therapeutic effects of food and see it purely as 'fuel', it can be difficult to break the inappropriate eating patterns that may have led to poor health. On the other hand, if a patient has found specific foods to be beneficial or otherwise for their condition, the practitioner can expand upon this by encouraging the patient to discover for themselves what else they need to get better. Poor eating habits can be hard to break, such as the attachment in our culture to specific breakfast foods such as cereal with cold milk or toast and jam. It may be essential to change such habits if, for example, it is necessary to resolve damp and strengthen the Spleen and Stomach. It is part of the job of the practitioner to identify such habits and the beliefs that inform them, and then support patients in implementing the changes required.

## Healthy and unhealthy foods

One of the most prevalent social beliefs is that specific foods<sup>7</sup> are inherently healthy or unhealthy. Some foods - such as eggs - seem to shift regularly from one category to another in the public consciousness: one moment they are good for you and the next they are bad. Coffee is also seen as unhealthy by many patients: 'I know coffee is bad, but I just can't give it up' is a common refrain in the clinic. Coffee is, however, an excellent qi regulator and digestive, as it moves qi both up and down and thus regulates the middle jiao. From a CDT point of view the concept of good and bad foods is wrong thinking. Instead we are interested in how the body responds to different foods - its metabolic reaction. Does a food warm or cool? Does it moisten or

inward or outward? In the context of Chinese medicine a food cannot be considered inherently good or bad; it merely depends on who is eating it. How we respond to a food depends on our internal energetic physiology, which reacts according to the strength, quality and flow of our own qi. Yoghurt, for example, moistens, nourishes yin, supports blood and cools the body, but has a tendency to create damp if the digestion is weak or if consumed excessively.<sup>8</sup> For patients with a strong digestion who are yin-deficient and where fire is consuming blood and jinye (a common menopausal presentation), yoghurt is a therapeutic food. It is the appropriateness of the food to the condition that is the key, not the empirical benefit or harm of any specific food type.

### Dietary habits

Good dietary habits can support our whole system. Another essential part of CDT - just as important as the specific foods being consumed - is looking at how and where food is eaten. This includes whether food is eaten standing up, sitting down, at the desk or on the run. When dietary advice is given, the focus is often solely on what should or should not be consumed. It is a great loss to limit CDT to food choices alone, as making even small adjustments to how one eats can create big changes. For example, if one has a strong desire to consume sweet foods it is best to do so 20 to 30 minutes before rather than after meals. The sweet flavour stimulates the Stomach, and if consumed before a meal the increased digestive stimulation can aid the Spleen and Stomach in the assimilation of food. If consumed after a meal when the digestion is weak the sweet flavour tends to over-stimulate and clear the Stomach prematurely by pushing the undigested food through. How well food is chewed is of particular importance - as an old Chinese saying states, 'the Stomach has no teeth'.<sup>9</sup> If food is not chewed in the mouth then the rest of the digestive system is poorly equipped to deal with what it receives. Many people eat their meals whilst reading books, watching TV, socialising or attending business meetings; these habits consume the Spleen qi and thus impair the digestion. Whilst such activities may not be harmful if occasionally indulged in or if a person's digestion is strong, breaking such habits can be of great clinical use for patients whose qi is deficient or stagnant.

### Seasons and cycles

Like the waxing and waning of the moon over its 28-day phase, our organism follows cycles throughout our lifetime. The human body grows and blossoms, then softens, withers, dries and hardens. The life-

*In the context of Chinese medicine a food cannot be considered inherently good or bad; it merely depends on who is eating it.*

becomes increasingly weak until it can no longer maintain our physical form. Diet plays an important role in supporting the body as we progress through life, and requires adjustments in the proportions of different foodstuffs on our plate and the amount of food consumed.<sup>10</sup> In general more food and nourishment is needed in the spring and summer of our lives, and less during the autumn and winter as death draws closer (this is of course also dependent on constitution and any pathology that may be present).

Seasonal eating is still a way of life for most people across the globe and was universal before changes brought about by international transportation and refrigeration.<sup>11,12</sup> Eating seasonally constitutes an important part of CDT. The simplest way to respond to environmental demands (in a dietary sense) is to eat seasonal, local food, which helps the body stay naturally in tune with its surroundings.

As the sun and stars rise and fall through the sky, the movement of qi ebbs and flows through the organs and channels of our body. Through this observation it can be said that certain activities are suited to particular times of day whilst others are unsuitable, and may cause disease. This concept is encapsulated in the Chinese 24 Hour Clock (See Figure 1). From the diagram we can see that digestion is strongest in the morning (5-11am) and weakest in the evening (5-11pm). The implication here is that we should have a nourishing and supportive breakfast as our digestion is at its strongest at this time. In fact, studies have shown how eating breakfast regularly gives us the best chance of regulating our weight, avoiding diabetes and managing our energy levels through the day.<sup>13,14</sup> The other implication here is that the evening meal should be small, which is generally not the case in Western industrial cultures.

### Protecting the earth

CDT works through the Spleen and Stomach, as the benefit of food is received via the digestive system (in this instance the Spleen/Stomach is used to denote the entire digestive system from mouth to anus). For this reason the earth phase is central to all CDT and must be protected and preserved so that digestion can support all the functioning of the other zangfu. As can be seen in the cosmological sequence of the wuxing (five phases), the earth phase is at the centre where it receives and generates nourishment/energy and is

*The earth phase is at the centre where it receives and generates nourishment/energy and is thus the hub of our energetic physiology.*

2).<sup>15</sup> There are many ways to support the Stomach and Spleen through diet including:

- regular eating habits
- taking time out from work/mental stimulation to eat and digest (at least twenty minutes)
- chewing our food properly
- not overburdening the digestion through over-consumption and excessively large meals
- not overburdening the digestion through over-consumption of excessively damp-forming foods such as dairy or oil.
- not chilling the digestive fire through iced drinks or over-consumption of cold or raw foods
- reducing the size of the evening meal
- avoiding or restricting processed foods, especially processed sweet foods like white sugar
- regular consumption of naturally sweet foods such as root vegetables and grains to support energy levels (and reduce cravings for excessively sweet foods)

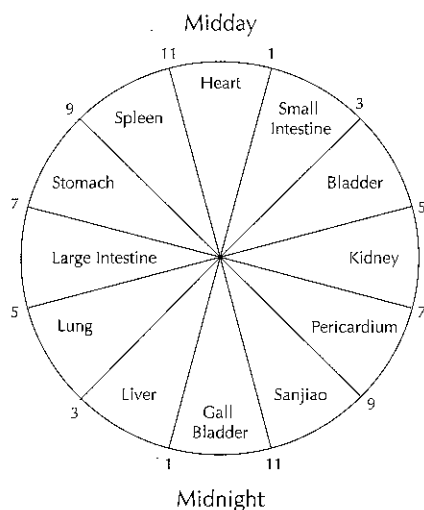


Figure 1: The Chinese 24 hour clock

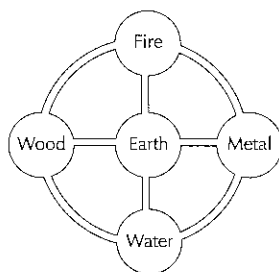


Figure 2: The cosmological sequence of the five phases

These recommendations constitute the basic dietary habits that are the basis of CDT, although they should be adjusted as necessary to the needs of each individual.<sup>16</sup>

## Cooking methods

As well as establishing which foods are appropriate or otherwise for our patients, it is necessary to consider cooking methods, as the mode of preparation influences the energetic temperature of food. The effects of the various methods are listed in Table 1.<sup>17</sup> Generally longer and slower cooking will produce more warming effects than quicker cooking, i.e. a vegetable stew will be more warming than steaming vegetables. It is possible to assess how much heat has been transferred into food simply by observing how long the cooked food takes to cool down. A roast pepper will take longer to cool than a fried pepper; therefore one may deduce that roasting is more warming than frying. This is important to know if the patient is presenting with heat or cold patterns, as some methods will be more appropriate (beneficial or aggravating) than others.

Warming methods	Cooling/neutral methods
Cooking with hot spices	Blanching
Cooking with alcohol	Steaming
Grilling	Boiling in plenty of water
Frying and roasting in oil	Salt fermentation
Baking	Preparation with fruit
Smoking	Sprouting
Roasting/wok cooking	Eating raw
Long simmering	

Table 1: The effects of various food preparation methods

## Working with CDT in clinical practice

Supporting patients to find a way of implementing dietary changes in their life is of great importance. In order to find what will or will not work for a particular patient requires the development of an effective working relationship. All advice should be congruent with the patient's internal physiological environment (i.e. diagnosis). This is the crux of CDT, for without it we are reduced to offering advice that has no basis in our patient's life or diagnosis.<sup>18</sup> This may seem like an obvious statement, but it is not uncommon for Chinese medicine practitioners to give blanket advice to all their patients along the lines of 'no dairy, sugar, fruit or raw food'.

When working with CDT in a clinical setting it is necessary to find a way to distill the vast body of available knowledge into a format where

plan with a defined clinical goal. There are many ways to do this and each practitioner will find his or her own preferred way. Below is an outline of one recommended method. This basic template is fitted to the patient, rather than the other way around. The order of recommendations may change depending on diagnosis, lifestyle, time restraints and financial restrictions. When implementing dietary changes it can be helpful to understand the transtheoretical model<sup>19</sup> in order to utilise the patient's natural stage for maximum uptake of advice.<sup>20, 21, 22</sup>

The following questions should be considered during the initial consultation, which then makes it possible to create recommendations based on the patient's diagnosis, eating habits, relationship to food, dietary preferences, time constraints and overall lifestyle:

- *Who is eating?* This includes a diagnosis of the patient's current condition, underlying constitution, strength of digestion and general vitality.
- *How are they eating?* This includes understanding how much value the patient gives to food and assessing eating habits such as the amount consumed, chewing, speed of eating and posture whilst eating.
- *When are they eating?* This includes considering the intervals between eating, the time of day food is consumed, seasonal influences and the patient's life phase.
- *What are they eating?* This includes typical meals, snacks and beverages, food addictions, foods/tastes that are favoured or avoided, the quality of food being eaten and any supplements/medications/recreational drugs being used.

When all of the above information has been obtained, collated and analysed it is necessary to assess whether CDT is actually an appropriate treatment, and whether it should be the patient's primary or secondary intervention. For example, it may be necessary to treat with herbal medicine and use food as a supporting treatment, or use acupuncture or tuina to smooth the flow of qi whilst reducing portion size to prevent further blockage in the middle jiao. Alternatively CDT may play a more central role in tonifying the qi and nourishing the blood, whilst removing aggravating factors from the diet.

After a diagnosis has been made, the type of intervention chosen, and an appropriate treatment plan formulated, it is then necessary to consider the short-term and long-term objectives of CDT. Short-term goals are the initial pieces of advice given to the patient, and should be clear and concise enough to produce achievable dietary changes that provide immediate symptomatic relief. This might include adjustments to the way of eating, or advice on which foods to include/exclude. During the first

the patient with too much advice. In order to keep a clear focus and make the goals achievable it is better to prioritise the two changes that will be of most benefit. Further changes may be slowly fed into the treatment process during later consultations, or as the patient's health condition changes. Long-term objectives involve consideration of the bigger picture, and mean setting out long-term recommendations that make gradual changes to the patient's health to address the root of the problem. This also includes cultivation of an understanding of CDT and of long-term commitment to eating for health.

The following case study illustrates how this theory is put into practice.

## Case study

Ms A, a 42-year-old company director, presented in the clinic with insomnia. She would wake between two and four o'clock in the morning feeling hot, with a 'busy mind' (but not thinking about anything in particular), and often drenched in sweat, and would remain awake for between two and six hours. She often had vivid dreams - with no particular content - that would wake her. She also occasionally experienced difficulty getting to sleep. Every week or two she would feel so tired that she would sleep for up to 12 hours at a stretch.

She suffered from cramps, normally in the calves or feet and especially at night, and her skin was dry. She also occasionally felt anxious and overwhelmed. She rated her energy levels as fine to low. During the consultation she appeared fidgety and nervous, and she talked a lot. She was of a slight build (though she considered herself overweight) with clearly defined muscles and facial structure, and a pale complexion with a slight red flush. She experienced occasional lower abdominal distention after eating (especially wheat), and her stools could be either slightly loose or dry and small. Her shoulders were tight on palpation, although she did not suffer from headaches. She rated her libido as high, and had scanty white vaginal discharge. Her menstrual cycle was 28 to 34 days long, with a light bleed and occasional pain before the bleed. She experienced PMS for four days before her period, manifesting as breast tenderness, water retention and irritability. Her pulse was choppy, thin and superficial on the proximal left position, and slightly tight at the Liver position. Her tongue was pale, especially at the sides, short and flabby with some transverse cracks from the middle to the rear, and had a red tip.

She was not taking any prescription medication, but took a daily multivitamin tablet, a proprietary herbal formula called Colon Cleanse,<sup>23</sup> Magnesium, Oregano extract (she had been diagnosed with candida overgrowth six months previously), E3 ABA<sup>24</sup> and

and enjoyed a 'healthy' diet with little fried or fatty foods. Although she sometimes craved sweet foods such as cakes, she generally tried to avoid carbohydrates as she was watching her weight. She reported that she loved chilli and that she put it on everything, and that she also ate lots of garlic and onions. She sometimes craved salt and liked a wide range of foods, including bitter foods such as rocket and chicory. She would generally eat her breakfast and lunch quickly at her desk, did not take any time out after eating and did not chew her food well. She would generally eat small amounts at meals and would often feel hungry. Her typical meals were as follows:

- *Breakfast (8:30 to 9am)*: Cereal with fruit and soya milk.
- *Lunch (1 to 3pm)*: Salad or fruit.
- *Evening meal (8 to 10pm)*: Mainly chicken or fish with steamed vegetables or salad. Goes out to a restaurant once or twice per week.
- *Snacks*: Eats up to 10 apples per day.
- *Drinks*: Up to two glasses of red wine daily and likes a whisky before meals. Likes herbal tea, especially spiced chai, and drinks four to six double espressos per day. Drinks one or two litres of water per day (one litre at the gym and one with lunch).

In terms of lifestyle she worked 10 to 16 hours per day four to six days per week. Her work was stressful and she employed 11 people. She would go to the gym four to six times per week before work (6:15am) and rode her horses up to three times per week. Although she had tried tai chi, pilates and yoga she found them frustrating, and reported that she found it difficult to relax and would rather be 'doing'. Her social life was fairly quiet, and she lived with partner of nine years with no children.

## Diagnosis and analysis

### Who

The diagnosis was Kidney yin deficiency with empty heat, Heart and Liver blood deficiency, and Spleen qi deficiency with Liver qi stagnation invading the weakened Spleen. The abdominal distention and erratic stools indicated that her digestion required strengthening to allow full assimilation and the subsequent nourishment of blood and yin. Working 10 to 16 hours per day plus an hour in the gym was putting strain on her Kidneys. Her difficulty relaxing and the frustration she experienced when coming out of her head and into her body during tai chi, yoga or pilates practice indicated yin deficiency and qi stagnation. Her PMS was also a manifestation of qi stagnation, and the alternating diarrhoea and constipation and abdominal distention showed the Liver qi was invading the

and overthinking (due to the yi consuming qi and blood), as shown by her dry and pale skin, anxiety, pale sides to the tongue and choppy pulse.

### How

The patient was interested in and enjoyed her food, but restricting her food intake was injuring the Kidney, Spleen and Blood.<sup>25</sup> Eating quickly at her desk for breakfast and lunch, with little chewing or time out after eating was impeding her digestion. Drinking one litre of water with lunch also was also impairing digestive function.

### When

The patient had erratic eating habits with large gaps between meals; breakfast and lunch were insubstantial and the evening meal was late and comparatively large. In addition she made no seasonal adjustments to her diet. All these habits had a detrimental effect on her blood and digestive function. At age 42 she was at the beginning of her sixth seven-year cycle,<sup>26</sup> so supporting the blood and yin was important in preparation for menopause.

### What

Her preference for hot and warming foods such as chilli, garlic and onions was scattering her qi and creating heat, which was further weakening the yin.<sup>27</sup> Craving salty foods indicated weak Kidney function, and the need for sweet snacks (fructose in apples) so regularly throughout the day suggested low blood sugar and Spleen qi deficiency. Although reducing carbohydrate consumption can help maintain a low body weight, if used long-term it can be drying and heating and may have a detrimental effect on Spleen qi and blood.<sup>28,29,30</sup> Her breakfast and lunch were cold, which was depleting her digestive fire. Although eating large amounts of fruit was helping to cool and moisten her body, overconsumption (10 apples per day) was weakening her digestion and thus further lessening absorption. Red wine and whisky are both warming and drying and were exacerbating the symptoms of heat and yin deficiency. Her consumption of up to six double espressos per day was further straining adrenal function<sup>31</sup> and weakening the Heart and Kidney qi and Heart blood.

The supplements she was taking were generally appropriate: the Magnesium and E3 AFA both nourish yin, although chlorella would have been a more appropriate choice as it is more nourishing and less stimulating.<sup>32</sup> Oregano is warming and was being used as an antimicrobial to clear dampness,<sup>33</sup> although due to the absence of signs of dampness it was discontinued. The Colon Cleanse herbal formula



discontinued as her stools, although sluggish, were dry due to a lack of fluids and qi deficiency. The multivitamin was also discontinued until her health stabilised. Multivitamins can be useful to maintain health, but when treating a condition via a diagnosis it can be useful to discontinue their use and give more specific recommendations. I recommended she remain on the probiotics to strengthen the intestines and increase assimilation of nutrients. When encountering a patient who is on many different supplements I find it to be beneficial to reduce any that are not specifically in line with the treatment plan.

### Appropriateness of CDT

In this case CDT was appropriate to play a primary role in treatment alongside acupuncture. CDT was used to strengthen the earth phase and thus improve assimilation and support blood/yin and reduce the heat that was entering the body through food and drink. Acupuncture was used to clear empty heat, smooth qi, calm the shen and strengthen the Spleen's ability to transform and transport. The use of herbal medicine was considered as a secondary option depending on the response to treatment.

### Changes to dietary habits

Ms A's dietary habits were playing a significant role in her disharmony, particularly by inhibiting her Spleen. The initial CDT focus was on implementing regular meal times and having a short period away from her desk during and after meals to allow her Spleen qi to focus on digestion rather than being consumed by mental activity. It was also important to ensure that the amount of food she was taking was sufficient to sustain her activity, nourish her blood and yin and fortify her qi. This was combined with a shift in the timings of meals to support digestive function - having a larger breakfast and a smaller evening meal. She replaced her apple snacks with small meals (part of her lunch divided into three), which she found worked well, and reduced her apple consumption to one or two per day.

### Beneficial foods

It was important for this patient to maintain a varied diet that included foods with moderate temperatures and a variety of flavours so that her diet did not become too restrictive.

In order to nourish blood and yin whilst supporting and moving qi, at least half of her meal plate needed to be grains or root vegetables, one-third other vegetables and the remaining part protein or wei food.<sup>34</sup> These proportions closely follow the Mediterranean diet, which has been shown to have clear health benefits<sup>35</sup> and is best used to nourish yin, blood and qi deficiencies.<sup>36</sup>

Ms A needed to increase cooling and moistening

foods that nourish yin, whilst being careful not to cool the digestive fire. Although dairy products benefit yin, as her Spleen was weak they were not initially recommended. The following yin-strengthening foods were therefore suggested: asparagus, duck, egg, kidney bean, pork, rabbit, seaweed, sesame, spelt, spinach, string bean, sweet potato and tofu.<sup>37</sup>

To nourish her blood it was important to ensure she ate adequate protein and chlorophyll-rich foods. Meat, fish, most beans and seafood all nourish blood, and were recommended along with the following: aduki bean, beef, beetroot, bone marrow (particularly in the form of stocks), chicken egg, kale, kidney bean, leafy greens, liver, mussel, oxtail, oyster, parsley, sardine, seaweed, spinach and watercress.<sup>38</sup>

To strengthen her qi it was necessary to ensure she was eating sufficient quantities of food, particularly foods that release energy slowly into the system, which are mainly sweet and neutral or warm. Small portions of complex carbohydrates, root vegetables and meats were used to perform this function, as follows: beef, carrot, chicken, egg, ham, mackerel, millet, oats, pheasant, pigeon, potato, quinoa, rabbit, rice, sardine, sweet potato, shiitake mushroom, root vegetables, squash, tofu, trout and venison.<sup>39</sup>

### Which foods to avoid?

The following guidelines were given in terms of contraindicated foods:

- Avoid stimulating food such as coffee, alcohol and sugar.
- Avoid heating and drying spices such as chilli for at least three months reduce warming foods such as scallions and Indian chai, especially in the evening.
- Restrict consumption of raw foods, especially during the autumn and winter.

### Implementation of treatment and clinical observations:

A course of nine weekly acupuncture treatments was agreed, with a review to be conducted on the fourth and ninth sessions. Two initial dietary recommendations were given during the first consultation. The first was to stop all warming food and drink for two weeks (chili, garlic, onions, whisky etc). It was too much for her to stop drinking wine completely at this stage, so we agreed she would reduce wine intake to one glass per night. The second recommendation was to start a course of Floradix Liquid Iron Formula for three months, vitamin B complex for six weeks and vitamin B12 for four weeks. Whilst supplements are not a classical form of food energetics they can be clinically invaluable as they are easy to take and source. Floradix is a herbal syrup that nourishes blood without causing constipation.<sup>40</sup> It also

contains vitamin C to aid assimilation of iron, which is present in its botanical form. Vitamin B complex was recommended in this case as it moves the Liver qi, clears heat and nourishes blood.<sup>41,42</sup> Vitamin B12 is especially good at strengthening qi and blood<sup>43</sup> and, with this patient's busy life, was a good way to provide nourishment with minimal fuss (although the vitamin B complex contained B12 it was decided to recommend the extra dose for a short period of time, four weeks, due to its nourishing qualities).

One week after her first consultation Ms A's insomnia had markedly improved, with fewer disturbances during the night and shorter periods of sleeplessness (just one or two hours). She had managed to abstain from warming foods most of the time and whisky and chilli completely. Further dietary advice was therefore provided, in which she was asked to take time away from her desk to eat meals, and to eat small meals including small amounts of carbohydrates regularly throughout the day. She was also asked to have her last coffee of the day before five o'clock pm.<sup>44</sup>

The following week Ms A's symptoms further improved, although she presented as more irritable and frustrated. She was, however, happy with the continued improvements and agreed to abstain from the warming foods - especially chilli and whisky - for a further two weeks. She also agreed to reduce wine intake to every other day and cut back one more coffee. This time her pulse was significantly tighter on the left middle position; from this I deduced that the reduction in warming and moving foods was revealing underlying stagnation. I used acupuncture to move qi, strengthen the Spleen, nourish blood and support yin. I also recommended that we combine acupuncture with tuina for the next three treatments to enable thorough coursing of the Liver qi. I asked her to increase her consumption of green leafy vegetables such as kale, savoy cabbage and spring greens<sup>45</sup> and to make sure she maintained her regular physical exercise to support the free movement of qi.

Over the next seven weeks I continued to treat Ms A weekly, and we gradually implemented the advice outlined above. Much of this was in the form of education and discussion to help her to learn the language of her physiology and bring her awareness to what her body was telling her. Whilst the initial improvement in her sleep was marked, this plateaued from treatment four. This was to be expected, as once the aggravating foods had been removed and the heat subsided, the underlying deficiency and stagnation became more apparent. This manifested as low energy levels, postural dizziness, irritability and increased menstrual symptoms. The acupuncture and tuina were effective at coursing qi and the dietary

adjustments slowly supported the digestion and nourished blood and yin. By the ninth treatment it was decided that the acupuncture sessions could be extended to every three weeks, provided she could manage to maintain the dietary changes. Her uptake of advice was good and she was enjoying her new way of eating. After three months her sleep had greatly improved, although she would still occasionally wake to turn over up to four times per night. Her energy had also increased and she presented as less frantic. On occasions when she consumed spicy foods or larger amounts of alcohol she noticed a direct correlation with poor sleep patterns. As her yin and blood were still not fully recovered she remained sensitive to hot, upward and outward moving food and drink.

## Conclusion

Chinese dietary therapy is an effective treatment modality, both by itself or combined with other Chinese medicine disciplines. When utilised with an accurate diagnosis, clear treatment principles and a focused treatment plan it is both effective and empowering for the patient. As well as treating the presenting complaint it is also of great help in initiating good dietary habits that aid long-term health. ■

---

*Graeme McCracken* practises Chinese medicine in Devon and London (UK). He lectures in Chinese medicine physiology and food energetics, and has co-created a series of seminars and trainings in Chinese dietary therapy with Daverick Leggett. He cooks to energetic principles for the retreats of the British Taoist Association, of which he is an active member. Information on courses and seminars in Chinese dietary therapy can be found at [www.chinese-med.co.uk/nutrition\\_courses](http://www.chinese-med.co.uk/nutrition_courses). Graeme may be contacted at [info@chinese-med.co.uk](mailto:info@chinese-med.co.uk).

## References and notes

- 1 Kastner J. 2008. *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. 2nd edition. Thieme: New York, p. VI
- 2 Yang (養) means to nurture, nourish or take care of; sheng (生) refers to life and vitality. Together yangsheng translates as 'to nurture or nourish life'. Yangsheng is often used as a generic term for practices or systems that foster health and well-being by nurturing our whole human experience - both physical and mental.
- 3 When approaching healing through food it is important to realise that it requires a big commitment from our patient. This includes the proper preparation, cooking and eating (following correct practices such as chewing) of appropriate foods. Although some patients are ready and willing for such commitment, unfortunately CDT is not appropriate for everyone.
- 4 Yang, Shou-zhong. (1993). *Li Dong-yuan's Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach: A Translation of the Pi Wei Lun*. Blue Poppy Press: Boulder, Colorado
- 5 Leggett, D. (2008). *Recipes for Self Healing*. Meridian Press: Totnes, Devon. p.43-9.
- 6 Lappalainen, R., Saba, A., Holm, L., et al. (1997). "Difficulties in trying to eat healthier". *European Journal of Nutrition*. 51 Suppl 2:36-40.
- 7 Karney, J.M. & McElhone, S. (1999). "Perceived barriers in trying to eat healthier - results of a pan EU consumer attitudinal survey". *British Journal of Nutrition*. 81 Suppl 2: 133-7.
- 8 The term food refers to food in its natural state; processed or synthetically produced items are here not considered 'true' food in the energetic/nutritional sense.
- 9 Leggett, D. (2000) *Helping Ourselves: A Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press: Totnes, Devon.
- 10 Quote from Sun Si-Miao, in Flaws, B. (1994). *Imperial Secrets of Health and Longevity* Blue Poppy Press: Boulder, Colorado.
- 11 Kastner J. 2008, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. 2nd edition. Thieme: New York. p. 45-6,
- 12 Spoonley, P. (2001). "Technological and social changes into the third millennium and the impact on refrigeration. *International Journal of Refrigeration*". 24(7), 593-601
- 13 Hippocrates. *On Airs, Waters, and Places*. Available at <[http://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?hl=en&q=Hippocrates+eating+with+the+seasons&btnG=Search&as\\_sdt=0%2C5&as\\_ylo=&as\\_vis=0](http://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?hl=en&q=Hippocrates+eating+with+the+seasons&btnG=Search&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_ylo=&as_vis=0)>
- 14 Miller G, et al. (1998). "Breakfast Benefits Children in the US and Abroad". *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*. 17(1), 4-6
- 15 Hoyland, A., Dye, L., Lawton, C. (2009). "A systematic review of the effect of breakfast on the cognitive performance of children and adolescents". *Nutrition Research Reviews*. 22, 220-243
- 16 Yang, Shou-zhong, (1993). *Li Dong-yuan's Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach: A translation of the Pi Wei Lun*. Blue Poppy Press: Boulder, Colorado.
- 17 For example, although refined sugar can damage the Spleen, in small amounts it can also be medicinal, especially for conditions like shock.
- 18 Kastner J. 2008, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. 2nd edition. Thieme: New York, p.32-4
- 19 Zang, W, et al. (1990). *Chinese Medicated Diet*. Publishing House of Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine: Shanghai, p.10-12
- 20 In the Transtheoretical Model, change is defined as a process involving progress through a series of stages. These stages are: Precontemplation (not ready), Contemplation (getting ready), Preparation (ready) and Action and Termination (stability in change of habit). In addition, there is Relapse (recycling), which is not a stage in itself but rather the return from Action or Maintenance to an earlier stage. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transtheoretical\\_model#cite\\_note-Janis1977-34](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transtheoretical_model#cite_note-Janis1977-34).
- 21 Perkins-Porras, L., Capuccio, F.P., Rink, E., et al. (2005). "Does the effect of behavioral counselling on fruit and vegetable intake vary with stage of readiness to change?". *Preventative Medicine*. (40):312-320.
- 22 Lopez-Azpiazu, I. et al. (2000). "Stages of dietary change and nutritional attitudes in the Spanish population". *Public Health*. 114(3):183-9
- 23 Prochaska, J.O. & Velicer, W.F. (1997). "The transtheoretical model of health behavior change". *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 12(1):38-48.
- 24 Containing turkey rhubarb, cascara sagrada, sage, aloe, barberry, ginger, dandelion and slippery elm.
- 25 E3 AFA is a wild blue green algae called *Aphanizomenon flos-aquae*.
- 26 Roth, H. (2004). *Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-yeh) and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism*. Columbia University Press: New York
- 27 Veith, I. (1972). *The Yellow Emperors Classic of Internal Medicine*. University of California Press: Berkeley, California, pp.100-101
- 28 Yang, Shou-zhong, (1993). *Li Dong-yuan's Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach: A translation of the Pi Wei Lun*. Blue Poppy Press: Boulder, Colorado, p.62
- 29 Torrsell, P. (2010). "How to Regulate Yin and Yang through Diet". *Journal of Chinese Medicine*. 94:50-58
- 30 This is based on the author's own experience through experimenting with Palaeolithic/low or no carbohydrate diets.
- 31 Grain is the basis for gu qi (gu translates as grain). If all grain and carbohydrates are eliminated from the diet the gu qi can be damaged, which strains and weakens the Spleen.
- 32 Lev, L. (1967). "The Effect of Coffee on the Function of the Sympatho-adrenomedullary System in Man". *Acta Medica Scandinavica* 181(4), 431-438,
- 33 Pitchford, P. (1993). *Healing with Whole Foods*. North Atlantic Books: Berkeley, California, pp.193-4
- 34 Leggett, D., (2008). *Energetics of Western Herbs wall chart*. Meridian Press: Totnes, Devon.
- 35 Wei means 'taste' - wei food is said to have a dense taste and be rich and nourishing, for example meat, organs, eggs, oil, fat, fish and dairy products. In a dietary context, wei foods sit in juxtaposition to 'qi' foods: foods with more qi (e.g. vegetables, spices and tea) are thought to be less nourishing, but are lighter and help with transport and circulation in the body. Foods with more wei, on the other hand, are more nourishing and tend to build up essence. For more information see Torrsell P., (2010). "How to Regulate Yin and Yang through Diet". *Journal of Chinese Medicine*. 94:50-58
- 36 Francesco, S., Cesari, F., Abbate, R. et al. (2008). "Adherence to Mediterranean diet and health status: meta-analysis". *British Medical Journal*. 337:a1344
- 37 Torrsell, P. (2010). "How to Regulate Yin and Yang through Diet". *Journal of Chinese Medicine*. 94:50-58
- 38 Leggett, D. (2000). *Helping Ourselves A Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press: Totnes, Devon, p.23
- 39 *ibid* p.26.
- 40 *ibid* p.25.
- 41 Frykman E, Bystrom M, Jansson U, et al. (1994). "Side effects of iron supplements in blood donors: superior tolerance of heme iron". *Journal of Laboratory Clinical Medicine*. 123:561-564.
- 42 Flaws, B. (2007). *The Tao of Healthy Eating*. Blue Poppy Press Boulder, Colorado, p.61
- 43 Leggett D. (2008). *Recipes for Self Healing*. Meridian Press: Totnes, Devon, p.294
- 44 Flaws, B. (2007). *The Tao of Healthy Eating*. Blue Poppy Press Boulder, Colorado, p.62
- 45 When reducing stimulants it is best to cut out the last intake of the day first and work backwards; the last one is the most damaging to the yin as it is in direct conflict with the natural waning yang and waxing yin of the day.
- 46 Leggett, D. (2000). *Helping Ourselves A Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press: Totnes, Devon