

# GENERAL DIETARY AND NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

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Proper nutrition is essential for good health and a rich life, and is an important part of Oriental Medicine (OM), though often overlooked. At its core, the purpose of food is to nourish the body and maintain health and vitality. It is preventative medicine. The majority of today's illnesses are chronic and entirely preventable. Roughly 75% of healthcare spending goes to treating preventable diseases and about ½ of the adult population in the United States have chronic health conditions. Proper nutrition in the form of a lifestyle diet should be key whether promoting well-being or when treating disharmonies in the body.

Nutritional therapy is often quite effective at treating common pathologies based on an OM diagnosis like qi deficiency or blood deficiency, but sometimes nutritional therapy may not be enough. This is often seen in diagnoses like qi stagnation or blood stasis. Nutritional therapy can, however, be an excellent supplemental therapy used in conjunction with other OM modalities like acupuncture or herbs. The nutritional principles discussed in this pamphlet can be applied to any type of cuisine or style of cooking.

**This guide is intended to be used to help you develop healthy eating habits and begin the journey to a healthy lifestyle. It is important to note that no one diet is good for everyone. These recommendations are *guidelines*, not rules, and are used to aid in health and wellbeing, but may need to be modified to best suit individual needs and requirements. It is best to work with your practitioner, who is able to accurately diagnose and suggest dietary advice based on the presenting OM pattern or diagnosis.**

## GENERAL EATING HABITS

- Eat in a calm and relaxed atmosphere and do not rush your meal
- Avoid intense interactions at meal time, including television and reading
- Chewing food thoroughly supports spleen qi
- Don't eat meals late at night
- Avoid overconsumption and excessive fasting

## FOODS THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED

### **Avoid:**

- Raw, cold food, and iced beverages
- Excessive dairy
- Oily, greasy, and fried foods
- Refined sugar and limit overly sweet foods like fruit
- Refined carbohydrates
- Excessive alcohol intake
- Excessive meat consumption

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>“Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.” Available From: <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/chronic.htm>, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, BW, et al., “Multiple Chronic Conditions Among US Adults: A 2012 Update,” *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 2014.

## DAILY DIETARY GUIDELINES

**Vegetables**

1-3 cups per day; limit starchy vegetables to ½ cup

Organic is best, but conventionally grown produce is better than none

Larger portion of:

*asparagus, artichoke, bamboo shoots, bean sprouts, beets, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, celery, chards, chives, collard greens, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, green onions, garlic, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mushroom, mustard greens, okra, olives, onion, parsley, peppers, pickles, pumpkin, radish, rhubarb, spinach, water chestnuts, watercress*

Moderate portion of:

*bell peppers, peas, parsnips, potatoes, squashes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, turnips, yams*

Limit raw vegetables and salads, especially in cold months and with cold symptom patterns

**Legumes**

Roughly ½ cup per day

*chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, mung beans, pinto beans, peas*

**Nuts and Seeds**

¼ cup per day

Raw, shelled nuts are best

*almonds, chia seeds, flax seeds, pinon nuts, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts*

**Grains**

½ cup per day

Large portions of:

*quinoa, sprouted grains, wild rice*

Moderate to small portions of:

*amaranth, barley, rice, corn, millet, oats, wheat*

Avoid:

*foods made with white flour such as pasta, and breads*

**Meats and Protein**

6 oz

Eat twice as many vegetables as meat. Organic, grass fed, free range, humanely raised meat, and wild-caught fish is best

**Meats and Protein (cont'd)**

*beef, chicken, cold water fish like tuna and salmon, eggs, lamb, pork*

Avoid:

*processed meats*

**Fruits**

½ cup

Large portions of:

*tomato, avocado*

Moderate portions of:

*apples, berries, cantaloupe, cherries, figs, grapes, lemons, mandarins, oranges, papaya, peaches, pears, pineapple, plum, raisins, watermelon*

Avoid:

*concentrated / refined fruit juices*

**Dairy**

*cheese, cottage cheese, milk, sour cream, yogurt*

Avoid:

*ice cream and frozen yogurt*

**Sugar**

Small amounts of:  
*raw honey, stevia, dark chocolate*

Avoid:

*white sugar, fructose,*

*high fructose corn syrup, artificial sweeteners*

**Fats and Oils**

Healthy fats can be used generously:

*high heat oils like butter, coconut oil, ghee*

*low heat oils like macadamia nut oil, olive oil, sesame oil*

Avoid:

*Trans fats like hydrogenated oils and margarine, polyunsaturated fats like vegetable oils, canola oil, corn oil, or other highly processed fats like peanut oil*

**Beverages**

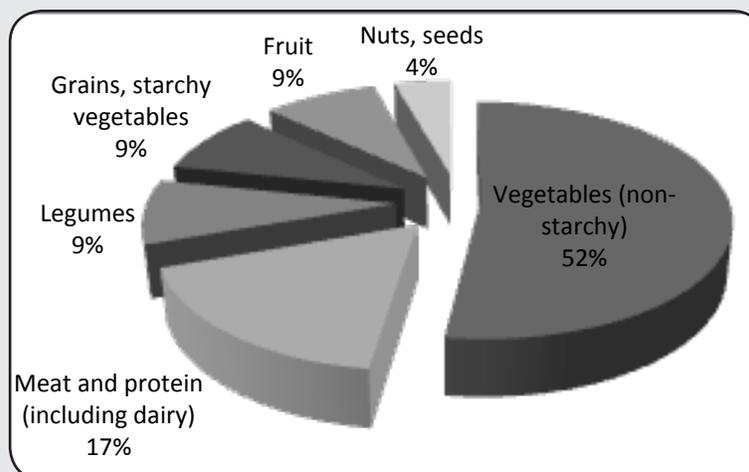
*water (room temperature), green teas, herbal teas*

Moderate portion of:

*black tea, red wine (1 glass)*

Avoid:

*iced drinks, juice, soda, alcohol*

**Books**

Leggett, Daverick, *Helping Ourselves: Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press, 1994

Kastner, Joerg, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. Thieme, 2004

Pitchford, Paul, *Eating with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition*. North Atlantic Books, 2002

# NUTRITION FOR THE KIDNEY

A good diet protects and supports the kidney and its ability to function properly. Kidney is the foundation of yin and yang. A proper diet enables the Kidney to support and influence the yin and yang of the entire body, with yin energy nurturing, supporting, and moistening the body and yang energy warming, energizing, and moving the body. Kidney yang is the root of yang, providing energy and warmth for the entire body, enabling proper function. As the kidney dislikes cold, energetically cold foods depletes kidney yang and blocks its ability to warm the whole body yang. More specific to the digestive process the kidney yang can be seen in the digestive process as digestive fire. When the digestive fire is healthy and strong food is effectively transformed into qi and blood. If the digestive fire is weak it cannot provide enough warmth and energy to the digestive process, resulting in diarrhea, bloating, poor appetite, dull abdominal pain.

The Kidney is the source of life, or original qi, and is often called the “Root of Life” as it stores and controls the *jing*, the essence of our physical body. *Jing* is composed of prenatal *jing* that is inherited from the parents and stored in the kidneys and postnatal or acquired *jing* in the form of qi and nourishment is derived from food via the spleen and stomach and from air via the lungs. This nourishing essence supports the whole body with the surplus being stored in the kidney. Prenatal *jing* cannot be replaced or replenished, however it can be conserved through proper diet and lifestyle with the postnatal *jing* nurturing and supporting the prenatal *jing*. In cases of congenital insufficiency or constitutional weakness derived from poor prenatal *jing*, it is very important for the body to be supported and supplemented as much as possible by the postnatal *jing*.

Cooking foods longer at lower temps, like stews and bone broths, can be particularly beneficial for kidney support. Avoid raw and cold foods and drinks or ice water. Minimize eating raw foods, like salads especially in the winter.

## **To SUPPORT THE KIDNEY, INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING FOODS:**

*bone broths*

*Celtic sea salt or Real salt: helps with adrenal health but use in moderation*

*lobster, smoked fish, oysters, salmon, shrimp, tuna*

*venison*

*black sesame seeds, chestnuts, walnuts*

*lentils, millet, oats, quinoa*

### **Avoid:**

*sugar, artificial sweeteners*

*coffee, alcohol*

*highly processed foods*

*excessive intake of salt, avoid table salt*

Don't overeat

Don't eat late at night

## BENEFICIAL FOODS FOR KIDNEY DISHARMONIES

### Kidney Qi and Kidney Yang Deficiency

Incorporate foods with strengthening and warming action, such as:

*cabbage, chives, fennel, leeks, onions, potato, radish, scallions, sweet potato, yam  
cherries, grapes, mulberry  
black beans, lentils  
chicken, duck, goat, lamb, pork, venison  
lobster, oysters, mussels, smoked fish, salmon,  
shrimp, trout, tuna  
walnuts, chestnuts, pistachio, lotus seeds,  
sesame seeds  
buckwheat, oats, quinoa, corn  
ginger, garlic, black pepper, cinnamon, cloves,  
chive, basil  
spiced tea, yogi tea*

Foods to avoid:

*thermally cold or cool foods, raw foods, ice water  
sugar  
alcohol  
juices like orange juice or tropical fruit juice  
sour milk products  
excess liquid consumption*

### Kidney Yin Deficiency

Incorporate foods with actions to cool, moisten, and build yin and body fluids (*jin ye*), such as:

*asparagus, cabbage, carrots, cucumber, kelp,  
seaweed  
blackberry, blueberry, canteloupe, grapes, pears,  
raspberry, strawberry, watermelon  
black sesame seeds, kidney beans, mung beans,  
string beans, sunflower seeds  
duck, eggs, pork  
abalone, carp, clam, crab, eel, octopus, oysters,  
perch, scallop, sardine  
barley  
butter, cream, goat's milk*

Foods to avoid:

*warming foods in general  
coffee, alcohol, red wine, tobacco  
excess black tea and green tea  
acidic spices  
table salt  
hot spices: cinnamon, cloves, ginger*

### Kidney Jing Deficiency

Supplementing *jing* through nutritional therapy is not effective, however the foods listed above for kidney qi, yin, yang deficiency can be beneficial in helping support persons with kidney *jing* deficiency. Additionally, incorporate these foods that specifically preserve and protect *jing*:

*abalone, bone broths, chicken, kidney, liver  
cow and goat milk  
eggs  
mussels, oysters  
sesame seeds, walnuts*

Foods to avoid:

*hot and spicy foods  
dairy  
acidic spices like garlic, pepper, chile  
alcohol, coffee*

#### BOOKS

Leggett, Daverick, *Helping Ourselves: Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press, 1994  
Kastner, Joerg, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. Thieme, 2004  
Pitchford, Paul, *Eating with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition*. North Atlantic Books, 2002

# NUTRITION FOR THE LIVER

Nutrition can have a powerful effect on the liver and its ability to function properly. Often when discussing digestion and the liver the first thing that comes to mind is liver overacting on the spleen and stomach, impeding the digestive function and inhibiting the absorption of nutrients. Often what we do not pay attention to is the digestion of food by the spleen and stomach and how that plays an important role in providing the liver enough nourishment in the form of qi that was derived from food. If the liver does not get enough nourishment or not the right type of nourishment imbalance and disharmony in the liver will occur. Likewise proper nutrition can help resolve existing imbalances.

Nutritionally it is important to find a balance between getting enough energy and not taking in anything that will over excite, as this will exhaust the liver energy as well as the energy of the spleen and stomach. It is important to avoid stimulants including nicotine and caffeine. The emotion of anger is closely related to the liver, so alcohol is best in moderation or, for some, should be avoided completely. Some spicy and pungent food can be helpful in moderation as it can help to facilitate qi movement, as stagnation of qi is quite common with liver imbalances. However, too much of this can just as easily be a hindrance. It is also important to eliminate foods that congest the liver like saturated fats, hydrogenated fats, excess amounts of nuts, and highly processed foods. Eating habits can stagnate and congest the liver as well, so don't skip meals, eat quickly, overeat, eat late, or eat when emotionally upset. Relax and enjoy the meal you prepared.

## **To SUPPORT THE LIVER, INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING FOODS:**

*leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, beets, carrots, chives  
blueberries, goji berries, grapefruit, strawberries  
eggs, liver, pork, venison (especially if there is deficiency)  
crab, crayfish, lobster, mussels, oysters, shrimp, squid, trout, whitefish  
flax, pine nuts, sesame  
cayenne, garlic, onion, vinegar, turmeric (careful with heat signs)  
olive oil  
cod liver oil, krill oil (increases anti-inflammatory omega 3 fatty acids)  
chrysanthemum tea, green tea, lemon or lime water*

## **Avoid:**

*spicy, hot foods (in excess)  
greasy, fatty, oily, fried foods  
alcohol, coffee, caffeine  
sugar  
processed, refined foods*

## BENEFICIAL FOODS FOR LIVER DISHARMONIES

**Liver Qi Stagnation**

Incorporate foods which have these actions:

Calming the Liver

*celery, chinese leek, chives, garlic, radish, seaweed  
lemon, lime, grapefruit, plums  
crayfish, prawns, shrimp  
black sesame  
vinegar*

Moving Qi

*kelp, kohlrabi, leeks, mustard greens  
onion, radish  
coriander, marjoram, turmeric  
Use in moderation: chile, garlic, ginger, pepper,  
horseradish*

Foods to avoid:

*alcohol, coffee  
food coloring, preservatives  
overly spicy foods  
sugar*

**Liver Damp-Heat**

Incorporate foods that clear heat and drain damp:

*leafy greens like romaine lettuce, spinach  
cruciferous vegetables: collards, kale  
asparagus  
adzuki beans, mung beans  
cod liver oil or krill oil  
turmeric*

Foods to avoid:

*sugar, fruits, juices  
high carbohydrate foods, especially grains,  
white potatoes, and all refined foods  
greasy, fatty, oily, fried foods  
hot and spicy foods  
dairy  
acrid spices like chile, garlic, ginger, pepper  
alcohol, coffee*

If damp-heat is complicated by candida avoid vinegar, yeast, and fermented foods as well

**Liver Fire**

Incorporate foods with cooling and downbearing actions:

*celery, cucumber, daikon, kelp, lettuce,  
mung beans, water chestnuts, radish, spinach  
bananas, plums, rhubarb, watermelon  
yogurt*

Foods to avoid:

*alcohol, coffee  
fatty, oily foods*

**Liver Yin Deficiency**

Foods to incorporate have actions to nourish yin:

*celery, cucumber, mung beans, sauerkraut,  
spinach, tomatoes  
pears, plums  
fermented dairy*

Foods to avoid:

*acrid spices like curry, cinnamon, garlic, ginger,  
pepper  
alcohol, coffee*

**Liver Yang Rising**

Incorporate foods that downbear, clear heat, and nourish yin:

*celery, cucumber, mung beans  
spinach, tomatoes  
apples, lemons, mangos, mulberry fruit, rhubarb  
chia seeds (beneficial for high cholesterol)  
yogurt  
salt  
green tea, peppermint tea*

Foods to avoid:

*alcohol, coffee  
fatty, oily foods*

**For Liver Blood Deficiency**

Incorporate foods that nourish liver blood:

*broccoli, fennel, longan, spinach, tomatoes  
red fruits and vegetables such as beets,  
blackberries, cherries, dark grapes, plums,  
strawberries, raspberries, red cabbage, yams  
beef, duck, egg yolk, poultry, liver, rabbit  
crab, eel, mussels, octopus, oysters  
sesame, sunflower seeds  
amaranth, rice*

Foods to avoid:

*bitter and acrid foods  
coffee, alcohol, black tea, cocoa  
acrid spices like curry, cinnamon, garlic, ginger,  
pepper*

**BOOKS**

Leggett, Daverick, *Helping Ourselves: Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press, 1994  
Kastner, Joerg, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. Thieme, 2004  
Pitchford, Paul, *Eating with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition*. North Atlantic Books, 2002

# NUTRITION FOR THE HEART

The heart rules the blood and blood vessels, and stores the *shen* (spirit). Nourishment of the heart brings a long healthy life. The heart governs blood and circulation. For a normal heartbeat, with a smooth and even rate and rhythm, regulating circulation, heart qi and blood must be abundant.

The heart houses the *shen*. When the *shen* is harmonious, the mind is acute and clear, the physical body is exuberant, and the spirit is calm and peaceful. When the *shen* is disturbed, restlessness, insomnia, poor memory, anxiety, and panic will be present. When the *shen* is deficient, joylessness and lusterlessness will prevail. The heart requires qi and yin to properly house and anchor the *shen*. Proper nutrition can support the blood and yin of the heart and support the *shen*. Calm the *shen* by avoiding energetically hot foods, like ginger, garlic, alcohol, and coffee. This heat can easily be aggravated by stress and anger. Damp and phlegm can also adversely impact the heart and *shen*. By removing damp forming foods, like dairy and sugar, from the diet it can help aid in proper heart function and a healthy *shen*. It is best to cook foods with high heat and a short cook time, and with light salt and spice.

There is a connection between the heart and stomach. The stomach divergent meridian goes to the heart and is why you see dreamed-disturbed sleep issues or insomnia after eating large meals or eating late at night. Take a look at the stomach as well as the heart when presented with sleep issues. The best ways to prevent these issues is to adjust eating habits; avoid overeating and eat smaller meals, don't eat late at night, use spices like anise, ginger, or mint to aid in digestion, reduce stress and relax while eating. Additionally, short 18 to 24 hours fasts can be beneficial to relieve the food stagnation.

## **BENEFICIAL FOODS THAT HELP TO CALM SHEN:**

*celery, cucumber, lettuce, mushrooms  
lemons, mulberries, schisandra berries  
chia seeds, jujube seeds  
brown rice, oats, whole wheat  
cow and goat milk, ghee  
basil, chamomile, dill*

A simple diet is best

Light fasting (18-24 hours) brings clarity and calms the mind

### **Avoid:**

*spicy, rich foods  
refined sugar, artificial sweeteners  
highly processed foods  
coffee, alcohol*

Don't overeat

Don't eat late at night

## BENEFICIAL FOODS FOR HEART DISHARMONIES

**Heart Qi and Yang Deficiency**

Incorporate strengthening and warming foods for heart qi and yang deficiency:

*scallion  
apples, cherry, longan  
beef, lamb, pheasant  
garbonzo beans, lentils  
buckwheat, oats, rice  
aniseed, chile, cinnamon*

Foods to avoid:

*cold raw foods  
ice cream, ice drinks*

**Heart Fire**

Incorporate cool, bitter foods to clear heart fire:

*salads, cabbage, celery, cucumber, dandelions,  
tomatoes, watercress, water chestnut  
apples, pears, rhubarb, watermelon*

Foods to avoid:

*warming foods  
alcohol, coffee  
acidic spices like chile, pepper and cinnamon*

**Heart Blood Deficiency**

Incorporate food with neutral and warming actions:

*cherries, longan, red grapes  
beef, chicken, eggs, pheasant, oysters  
aduki beans  
rice, oats, wheat  
milk*

Foods to avoid:

*hot foods and dehydrating food  
coffee, alcohol  
acidic spices like chile, pepper, cinnamon*

**Phlegm-Heat Misting the Heart**

Incorporate cooling foods. It is also important to support spleen qi:

*cabbage, celery, daikon, dandelion, radish, red  
seaweed, watercress  
grapefruit, lemons, tangerines  
mung beans*

Foods to avoid:

*milk and dairy  
eggs, red meats, peanuts  
sugar, refined foods, white flour  
cigarettes, coffee, alcohol*

**Heart Yin Deficiency**

Incorporate foods with neutral and cooling actions:

*peas  
apples, peach, persimmon, red grapes  
beef  
wheat (in moderation)  
milk, cheese (preferably goat)  
poppy seed, black sesame seed  
green tea, coconut milk*

Foods that support kidney yin also can be used to support heart yin

Foods to avoid:

*hot foods and drying foods  
coffee, alcohol, tobacco*

**Heart Blood Stagnation**

Incorporate foods that move stagnation:

*chives, leek, onion, radish, scallion, turnip  
hawthorn berry, peach  
crab, eggs, venison  
alcohol, chili pepper, turmeric, vinegar*

Foods to avoid:

*cold and raw foods  
greasy, fried foods*

For heart / blood stagnation, nutrition therapy is often not enough and should be combined with acupuncture and herbal therapy

**BOOKS**

Leggett, Daverick, *Helping Ourselves: Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press, 1994  
Kastner, Joerg, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. Thieme, 2004  
Pitchford, Paul, *Eating with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition*. North Atlantic Books, 2002

# NUTRITION FOR THE SPLEEN AND STOMACH

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The spleen and stomach are the most important organs to support with nutritional therapy, as they play pivotal roles in the digestive process. Disharmonies of the spleen and stomach often occur together and can generally be treated at the same time.

## Spleen

The spleen is in charge of nutrition and digestion. It is the source of acquired qi, creating energy from food and water. The spleen, along with the stomach, is responsible for the absorption, distribution, transformation, and transportation of that energy. The health of the spleen dictates how effectively nutrients are absorbed from food. When the spleen is functioning well, a person will exhibit dynamic energy, good appetite, and a healthy digestion. When there is dysfunction in the spleen, chronic fatigue and poor digestion symptoms like abdominal bloating, excess gas, diarrhea or loose stools, nausea, poor appetite, etc., will be present. People with disharmonies in this system must incorporate healthy eating habits into their life if they are to overcome their health concerns.

The spleen generally responds very well to dietary treatments. General foods that benefit the middle burner are mildly sweet foods like poultry, vegetables, and grains, however, overindulgence of sweet can be harmful to the spleen. Avoid sugar and excessive consumption of naturally sweet foods like honey and maple syrup. Cold foods contract and stagnate the middle burner and stops digestion, and are best avoided. Additionally, those without a strong middle burner often have low digestive fire and need to avoid those cold foods as they will perpetuate the condition, and alternatively eat more foods that are warming. Foods that are simple to prepare with a mild taste and mild seasoning are best. Make simple dishes prepared at a moderate temperature and cooking time. Don't overeat or overindulge. Moderation is key. Meat stock, stock made from bones with the meat still on them, can be beneficial. Soups in general are advised, as they are easy to digest. Grains were beneficial at one point, but because of modern stressors, grains for most people with spleen disharmonies need to be limited.

Another main function of the spleen is to govern body fluids. If the spleen qi becomes deficient, the transportation and transformation function become impeded, resulting in damp-phlegm accumulation. Raw foods, cold foods and drinks, fruits, salads, dairy, and sugar cause and perpetuate damp conditions. In the case of spleen deficiency with damp, keep starchy carbohydrates low. Also pay extra attention to those foods on the avoid list.

## Stomach

The stomach has a close connection with the spleen and is very important to the digestive process. Its main function is the absorption of food, separating the pure, which goes to the spleen and lung, and turbid, which goes to the small intestine.

Dryness and heat can damage the stomach. Hot acrid foods like coffee and alcohol, and spices like curry, garlic, pepper, should be avoided with stomach pathologies. Take time while eating, eat regularly, eat warm meals, and don't eat late at night.

**To SUPPORT THE SPLEEN AND STOMACH, INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING FOODS:**

*cooked and fermented vegetables, brothy soups  
cabbage, carrots, corn, onions, peas, string beans,  
sweet potato, yams  
apricots, apples, cantaloupe, dates, figs, grapes,  
papaya  
beef, chicken, duck, eggs, fish (bass, carp, herring,  
mackerel, sardine), goat, goose, lamb, spleen, veal,  
venison  
amaranth, brown rice, sweet rice  
coriander, cumin, garlic, ginger, vinegar*

Foods to avoid that weaken the spleen:  
*cold foods and drinks  
raw foods like salads, and citrus fruits  
dairy products  
sugar and refined carbohydrates*

Foods that weaken the stomach:  
*cold raw foods like salad, ice cream  
hot spices  
sugar and refined carbohydrates  
fatty, greasy, oily foods*

**BENEFICIAL FOODS FOR SPLEEN AND STOMACH DISHARMONIES**

**Spleen Qi and Yang or Stomach Qi Deficiency**

Incorporate foods that are slightly sweet and warming:  
*soups  
carrots, cabbage, pumpkins, winter squash,  
turnip, onions, sweet potatoes, peas, yams  
apples, apricots, peaches, plums, dates, figs,  
raisins, cherries, grapes  
poultry, beef, lamb, turkey, venison, liver, trout,  
salmon, tuna, mackerel, halibut, shellfish  
peanuts, hazelnuts, pistachios, sesame, walnuts  
rice, sweet rice  
cayenne, black pepper, ginger, garlic fennel,  
cinnamon, aniseed, nutmeg*

Foods to avoid:  
*raw, cold foods and drinks  
sugar and other sweet foods, limit fruit intake  
pineapples, oranges, watermelons, bananas  
cucumber, tomatoes, salads  
dairy  
fruit juice, wheat beer*

**Stomach Yin Deficiency**

Incorporate foods that are mostly neutral and cooling:  
*asparagus, cucumber, cabbage, eggplant,  
summer squash, watercress, water chestnut,  
zucchini  
apples, bananas, honeydew, pears, tangerines  
eggs, goose, poultry, pork, rabbit  
barley, millet, wheat*

Foods to avoid:  
*coffee, alcohol  
broiled, grilled and barbecued foods*

**Stomach Qi Deficiency with Cold Accumulation**

This pattern is often accompanied with spleen yang deficiency. Incorporate foods that warm and nourish:  
*use dietary recommendations under spleen yang deficiency*

Foods to avoid:  
*raw, cold foods and drinks*

**With Damp Accumulation**

Incorporate foods for spleen qi deficiency, with the addition of foods that dry dampness:  
*celery, lettuce, scallion, pumpkin, turnip  
aduki beans  
amaranth, rye*

Foods to avoid:  
*raw, cold foods and drinks  
sugar  
dairy  
wheat, grains in general, and starchy  
carbohydrates*

**Stomach Fire**

Incorporate foods that are cooling:  
*cucumber, mung beans, aduki beans, sprouts,  
tomatoes, peas, spinach, celery  
pears, banana, watermelon, honeydew melon,  
kiwi, rhubarb  
yogurt, tofu, soy*

Foods to avoid:  
*warm and hot foods  
lamb  
coffee, alcohol  
ginger, garlic, chili, curry  
smoked and fatty foods*

**BOOKS**

Leggett, Daverick, *Helping Ourselves: Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press, 1994  
Kastner, Joerg, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. Thieme, 2004  
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# NUTRITION FOR THE LUNG

Nutrition therapy can be used to prevent lung disharmonies as well as help treat existing conditions. The lungs are susceptible to deficiencies of qi and yin, and excess conditions of phlegm, dryness, wind-heat, wind-cold, and toxic-heat.

One of the most important functions of the lung is to govern qi and breathing. Supporting and strengthening the lung qi and yin through nutrition can be used to help with multiple aspects of the lung pathology.

- 1) Treating such symptoms as shortness of breath, dyspnea, weak voice, and weak breath.
- 2) Strengthening the exterior can help prevent external pathogenic invasions, like the common cold or allergies, or help resolve existing wind invasions.
- 3) Supporting proper lung function can help diffuse qi, moistening the body and preventing dryness. If the spleen is weak or over-taxed it can be the source of phlegm production. Instead of a fine mist, phlegm is sent to the lungs. If the lungs are unable to disseminate it throughout the body it ends up storing in the lung resulting in wheezing, dyspnea, shortness of breath, etc. Proper diet can help resolve chronic phlegm and prevent further accumulation.

To aid the lungs it is best to consume easy-to-digest foods that are fresh and lightly cooked, usually with less water and at lower temperatures. This helps increase the nutritional value and assimilation of food. By eating smaller meals at more frequent intervals over-taxation is prevented. Lung deficiency frequently draws on the kidney and spleen, and can deplete these organ systems as well, so foods that are beneficial to the spleen and kidney are often used to benefit lung. Conversely, in the case of lung pathology, remember to look at the spleen and kidney to see if either needs support as well.

## **To SUPPORT THE LUNG, INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING FOODS:**

*cauliflower, leeks, horseradish, onions, radish, watercress  
almonds, almond butter / milk  
chili, curry, ginger, pepper  
spiced teas like ginger tea and yogi tea*

### **Avoid:**

*raw, cold foods like salads and fruits*

Phlegm-forming foods and foods that can weaken the spleen, such as:

*dairy  
oily and fatty foods  
sugar  
cold foods and drinks*

## BENEFICIAL FOODS FOR LUNG DISHARMONIES

## Lung Qi Deficiency

Incorporate acrid, warm foods to supplement the lung qi:

*asparagus, carrots, cauliflower, daikon, leeks, onions, mushrooms, mustard greens, olives, radish, sweet potato, water chestnuts, yams*  
*grapes, pears, peaches, tangerines*  
*black beans, garbanzo beans*

*beef, chicken, duck, goose, quail, rabbit, tuna*  
*almonds, walnuts*  
*oats, rice, sweet rice*  
*garlic, ginger, thyme*

Foods to avoid:

*sweet food, refined sugar, citrus*  
*cold foods like ice cream or smoothies, ice water, salads*  
*raw vegetables*  
*dairy, tofu, wheat*  
*fatty, oily, greasy foods*  
*alcohol, coffee, cigarettes*

## Lung Phlegm-Damp Accumulation

Incorporating a simple diet that is easy to digest is best, as well as foods that transform damp and phlegm:

*daikon, mushrooms, onions, radish, seaweeds, turnips, watercress*  
*cherries*  
*fennel, flaxseed*  
*cardamom, cayenne, cinnamon, garlic, ginger, horseradish, thyme*

Foods that treat qi deficiency should be incorporated to prevent further formation of phlegm

Foods to avoid:

*dairy*  
*sugar and sweets*  
*red meat*  
*peanuts, tofu, miso, soy products*  
*greasy, fatty, oily, fried foods*  
*wheat, oats*

Avoid overeating

## Lung Phlegm-Heat

Incorporate foods that clear heat and transform phlegm:

*asparagus, daikon, radish, red seaweed, watercress*  
*grapefruit, lemons, pears, tangerines*  
*millet and rice*  
*green tea, peppermint tea, lemon tea*

Foods to avoid:

*dairy*  
*sugar and sweets*  
*greasy, fatty, oily, fried foods*  
*red meat*  
*wheat, oats*  
*coffee, alcohol*

## Lung Heat

Incorporate foods that clear heat and nourish lungs:

*soups and congees help soothe lung heat*  
*apples, cantaloupe, peaches, pears, strawberry*  
*watercress and white fungus (most effective);*  
*asparagus, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower,*  
*chard, daikon, mushrooms, radish, seaweeds*  
*tomatoes*  
*mung beans*  
*green tea, peppermint tea*

Foods to avoid:

*warming foods*  
*coffee, alcohol*  
*lamb, chicken, beef, trout, salmon*  
*garlic, cinnamon, ginger*

## Lung Yin Deficiency

Incorporate foods that are slightly cooling and neutral to supplement and nourish lung yin:

*seaweed, string bean, white fungus*  
*apple, banana, honeydew melon, orange, peach,*  
*pear, tangerine, watermelon*  
*chicken broth, clams, egg, oysters, pork*  
*almonds, almond, milk, flaxseed, peanuts*  
*pine nuts, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds*  
*cottage cheese, cow's milk, farmer's cheese,*  
*butter (careful, don't use dairy in excess, or if*  
*spleen qi deficiency exists)*  
*milk with honey (folk remedy)*

Foods to avoid:

*hot spices like basil, chili, cinnamon, cloves,*  
*garlic, ginger*  
*coffee, alcohol, cigarettes*

Careful with bitter, aromatic, and warming foods, as they tend to be drying

## Books

Leggett, Daverick, *Helping Ourselves: Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics*. Meridian Press, 1994  
 Kastner, Joerg, *Chinese Nutrition Therapy: Dietetics in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. Thieme, 2004  
 Pitchford, Paul, *Eating with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition*. North Atlantic Books, 2002