

Balanced nutrition from the Oriental Medicine view

Have you ever heard people describe durian, curry, and chili as hot? Do you know why cucumbers are used for facials? The Theory of Chinese Medicine has actually classified food according to their temperatures.

While the West has analyzed food and nutrition very scientifically, coming up with many scientific terms and actually investigating the different components of food, the Oriental also have developed their own theories relating to food and diet. The theory of Oriental medicine on food has yet to be completely proven scientifically, but has benefited the Orientals and many other people. The *Temperature of Food* has been a useful guideline for many to maintain good health.

There are five main points to look out for:

- The Proportions of the Food We Eat
- Temperature of Food
- The Taste of the Food
- The Quality of the Food
- How and When We Eat the Food

The Proportions of the Food We Eat

The West has the Food Pyramid Guide and the Recommended Daily Allowance, and the Chinese also have their guidelines to the proportions of the food they eat. A Chinese diet should contain plenty of grains, some fruits and vegetables, and a little of the meat, fat, and dairy groups. This is somewhat similar to the Food Pyramid Guide, except that meat and dairy make up a lower percentage of the diet. This is because the meat is more nourishing and should only be taken in small amounts. Also, meat is considered hot to the body.

Temperature of Food

In China, the temperature of food does not refer to how hot or cold the food is physically, but rather the heating effect and the cooling effect of the food. Food can be classified as *Hot, Warm, Neutral, Cool* or *Cold*.

Hot food has a heating effect on us. Have you eaten curry and found that there is heat stirring up within you and you even start sweating? This also happens when we eat chili or something spicy. This is due to the heat present in the food. This heat warms our bodies, and is also responsible for causing heat-related health problems such as fever, headache, sore eyes, sore throat, and bloodshot eyes. It is this heat that causes pimples to rise on your face, so the Chinese are careful not to eat too much hot food. The heat can also irritate us and make our temper "hotter". During cold seasons, the Chinese eat more hot food to keep warm.

Have you seen women sticking slices of fruit or cucumber on their face? You may wonder how it helps their faces. Cucumbers and other fruits and vegetables are known for their cooling effect, and cucumbers have been used for facials. Beauticians have also encouraged people to eat more fruits and vegetables and to drink water (water is neutral) to have a good skin. Cold food cool us down, but also require more energy for digestion, as they take away warmth. But overcooling can cause us to have a cold, cough, diarrhea, and stomach pains.

It is possible to balance the heat in our food. People have also adjusted the temperature of the food they eat according to the climate.

Here is a list of foods and their temperatures:

Hot Black pepper, butter, chicken fat, chocolate, coffee, crispy rice, curry, hot chilies, lamb, mango, onions, peanut butter, sesame seeds, smoked fish, trout, whisky

Warm Beef, brown sugar, cheese, chestnuts, chicken, egg yolk, dates, garlic, ginger, green pepper, ham, leeks, oats, peaches, pomegranates, potato, turkey, turnips, walnuts, vinegar, wine

Neutral Apricots, beet roots, bread, broad beans, brown rice, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cherries, egg whites, grapes, honey, water, milk, oysters, peanuts, peas, plums, pork, raisins, salmon, sugar, sweet potatoes

Cool Almonds, apples, barley, broccoli, celery, corn, fish, mushrooms, mangos, oranges, pears, pineapple, radishes, salt, seaweed, spinach, strawberries, tangerines, turnip, watermelon, wheat

Cold Bananas, bean sprouts, cucumbers, duck, grapefruit, green tea, lettuce, ice cream, mussels, peppermint, tofu, tomato, yogurt

Eating Cooking and Raw Food

Generally raw food is cold and should not be eaten in excess. The Chinese maintain that food should be cooked before consumption. Moreover, taking cold raw food may upset our stomachs because digestion will require more energy.

The Taste of the Food

There are five main tastes of food: Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Pungent, and Salty. It is recommended that our diets contain all these flavors, not taking too much of any. It is also believed that salt should be avoided because it can affect the functioning of the kidneys.

Quality of the Food

It is best that we eat food that is fresh and pure, free from chemicals, preservatives, and additives. The vegetables and fruits we buy in our supermarket often have been sprayed with insecticides, and we should wash them before consumption. Some animals are also injected with antibiotics or hormones to prevent diseases from attacking them. Do you know that an apple can be sprayed up to 26 times before reaching your fruit basket? Processed food should also be avoided.

How and When We Eat the Food

If you have always gobbled fast food, eating on the run, then you may be shocked to know that a Chinese meal can take hours. The Chinese believe that eating has to be at a leisurely pace to give time for digestion, and it is best to eat in a relaxing environment. The food is to be chewed thoroughly and properly. This breaks down the food and aids digestion. Drinking is not advisable when eating because the fluid may wash down the food rather than allow it to be digested fully. We should drink before the meal or between meals. It is good to eat up to three-quarters full, so that the stomach would not be over-stressed, causing us to feel tired due to the extra energy spent in digestion.

We should eat regularly at usual times of the day. The breakfast should be nourishing enough to provide us with enough energy for the day. Heavy meals late at night can make our digestive system work overtime, even after we sleep. This may cause insomnia and we will not be well rested. Hence it is best to eat our last meal early in the evening.

ORIENTAL MEDICAL DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Blood Stagnation

Damp Heat

Dampness

Liver Qi Constraint

Spleen Qi Deficiency

Yang Deficiency

Yin Deficiency

References

BLOOD STAGNATION

INTRODUCTION:

- Barbara and I see many patients manifesting the Chinese medical condition known as Blood Stagnation or Blood Stasis. We get very good results treating this condition with a combination of craniosacral acupuncture, hara visceral work, herbs, dietary and lifestyle modifications. We have written this article to identify for you those foods which you can incorporate into your diet to resolve Blood Stagnation as well as to identify certain foods which should be avoided.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATION OF BLOOD STAGNATION:

- Dark complexion, purple lips, pain which is boring, fixed and stabbing in character, abdominal masses that do not move, purple nails, bleeding with dark blood and dark clots. These are only the general symptoms of Blood stagnation or Blood stasis without reference to particular organs.

USEFUL FOODS:

- Vinegar, turmeric, chives, garlic, basil, scallion, leek, ginger, chestnut, rosemary, cayenne, nutmeg, kohlrabi, eggplant, white pepper, adzuki bean, sweet rice, spearmint, butter, lotus root, hawthorn berry, brown sugar, squid, crab, rose, peanuts, lotus root, spinach, peach, peach seed, peach flower powder, wood ear (black fungus) and cinnamon.

Precautions:

- Warming foods such as garlic and ginger should be used carefully if at all in cases of heat signs.
- Butter is most useful in cases of emaciation and weakness and a dietary history low in animal products. It is contraindicated in cases of liver excess, dampness and mucous conditions.
- Vinegar and sweet rice are contraindicated in patterns of deficient digestive fire with signs such as watery stools and a feeling of coldness.

NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT:

- Vitamin E – is helpful in reducing blood stagnation as well as painful inflammation.

DAMP HEAT

DAMP HEAT CONSTITUTIONS:

- Persons with Damp Heat constitutions easily develop skin sores; and if they are young - acne. Their face is often shiny and oily. They have a dry mouth and there will be a slightly bitter taste in the mouth. There is a tendency towards anger and irritability. Often they feel fatigued and have a lack of energy. They will be somewhat impatient and anxious. They like eating oily, sweet and fried foods. Their stools are usually dry. There will be scanty urine that is more yellow in color. If they get sick it is often associated with emotional upset or associated with the food that they have eaten. Their pulse is slippery and fast and their tongue has a red body and a sticky yellow coat.

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USEFUL FOODS:

- Majority of foods should be vegetables and foods that remove dampness and heat such as: Adzuki beans, lima beans, mug beans, black beans, celery, carrots, winter squash, potatoes with skins, asparagus, mushrooms, corn, peas, amaranth, Chinese barley, day lily, bamboo shoots, wax gourd, white gourd, cucumber and duck
- Lemon (diluted juice), cranberry juice, huckleberries, bananas, Chinese pears and watermelon.
- Useful herbal teas: Uva ursi, dandelion leaf, plantain leaf, flax seed, watermelon seed and pipsissewa (pipsissewa is good for chronic bladder infections).

FOODS TO AVOID:

- Refined sugar and other concentrated sweeteners, meat, greasy, oily foods, too much starch, and overeating.

DAMPNESS

INTRODUCTION:

- Barbara and I see many patients manifesting the Chinese medical condition known as Dampness. We get very good results treating this condition with a

combination of craniosacral acupuncture, herbs, dietary and lifestyle modifications. We have written this article to identify for you those foods which you can incorporate into your diet which counteract Dampness as well as to identify certain foods which when avoided will help you in reducing Dampness.

GENERAL CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF DAMPNESS:

- A feeling of heaviness of the body or head, muzzy headedness, no appetite, stuffy feeling in the chest and/or epigastria, a sticky taste in the mouth, cloudy urine, vaginal discharges, certain types of oozing skin diseases, a sticky tongue coating and a slippery pulse. Dampness can obstruct the circulation of Qui in the abdomen and, besides affecting the intestines, it can affect the Spleen and the Liver. This causes abdominal pain, a feeling of fullness and heaviness and possibly diarrhea. Long term stagnation of Dampness in the Middle Burner can also gradually spread upwards filling the head causing a sensation of heaviness of the head, dull headache and a difficulty in thinking.

USEFUL FOODS WHICH COUNTERACT DAMPNESS:

- Lettuce, Amaranth, Asparagus, Wild Blue Green Algae, White Pepper, Vinegar, Papaya, Chaparral, Pau d'arco, Valerian, Chamomile, Celery, Turnip, Rye, Barley, Adzuki Beans, Alfalfa, Pumpkin

Useful Foods for Spleen Dampness:

- Celery, Turnip, Rye, Barley, Adzuki Beans, Alfalfa, Pumpkin, Chinese Cabbage, Watermelon, Corn, Anchovy, Kidney Beans, Button Mushrooms, Shrimp, Chestnuts, Kohlrabi, Mustard Greens, Radish, Chicken, Chicken Gizzards, Mackerel.

FOODS TO AVOID IN CASES OF DAMPNESS:

- Dairy Products, Meat, Eggs, Tofu, Pineapple, Salt and Concentrated Sweeteners, Peanuts, Ice Water, Ice Cream.

Foods to Avoid for Spleen Damp Conditions:

- Salt, Milk, Cheese, Eggs, Sugar, Soybean, Pine nuts, Asparagus, Cucumber, Seaweed, Tofu, Bamboo Shoots, Kelp, Agar, Cabbage, Coconut Milk, Spinach, Olives, Black Sesame, Goose, Duck, Pork, Shellfish, Clams, Mussels, Crabs, Sardines, Octopus, Shark Meat, Red Meat, Excessive Watery Foods. Also use sour foods sparingly.

LIVER QI CONSTRAINT (Liver Qi Stagnation)

WHAT IS LIVER QI CONSTRAINT?

- Liver Qi Constraint, also known as Liver Qi Stagnation, is by far the most common Liver pattern and also one of the most common patterns in general. It manifests clinically as distending pain the hypochondriac region, stuffiness of the chest, sighing, epigastric and abdominal distention, nausea, vomiting, poor appetite, sour regurgitation, belching, borborygmi, diarrhea, feeling of being "wound up", feeling of a lump in the throat, irregular periods, painful periods, distention of the breasts prior to periods, pre-menstrual tension and irritability, melancholy, depression and moodiness. We hope the suggestions given below are helpful in your quest for optimal liver health.

THESE ARE USEFUL FOODS IF YOU HAVE LIVER QI CONSTRAINT:

- Lemon, lime or grapefruit, moderately pungent foods, spices and herbs, members of the onion family, mustard greens, cardamom, cumin, fennel, horseradish, various mints, lemon balm, angelica root, prickly ash bark. Also

sweet rice, strawberry, peach, cherry, pine nuts, cabbage, turnip root, cauliflower, broccoli and brussel sprouts. Also sprouted grains, beans and seeds, fresh vegetables and fruit. Mushrooms, rye, asparagus, amaranth, quinoa, alfalfa, radish leaves, citrus peel, chaparral, bupleurum, chamomile, peony root, dandelion root.

- **Foods that relax the Liver:** Beef, chicken, liver, mussels, black sesame, kelp, plums, mulberries, celery, nori, lotus seeds, Chinese red dates and gotu kola.
- **Foods that activate Liver Qi:** Vinegar, amasake, beets, coconut milk, garlic, leeks, marjorams, safflower, basil, black pepper, dill seed, ginger, longan, rosemary, scallions, by leaves, cabbage, litchi, kohlrabi, saffron, peaches, oregano, turmeric, eggplant, chives, chestnuts.
- **Foods that also detoxify and cool the Liver:** Celery, seaweed, watercress, mung beans, lettuce, cucumber, tofu, millet, plum, rhubarb root or stem, daikon, radish, carrots, spinach, Swiss chard, kale, parsley.

THESE ARE FOODS TO AVOID IF YOU HAVE LIVER QI CONSTRAINT:

- Foods high in saturated fats (such as lard, mammal meat, cream cheese and eggs), hydrogenated or poor quality foods (such as shortening, margarine, refined and rancid oils), deep fried, greasy, fatty foods, coffee, alcohol, food preservatives, excessively spicy foods, sugar and sweets, peanut butter, excesses of nuts and seeds, chemicals in food and water, all intoxicants and highly processed refined foods (refined flour products are hard on the Spleen and make it easier for the Liver to invade it).

SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY

- No appetite, abdominal distension after eating, tiredness, lassitude, sallow complexion, weakness of the limbs, loose stools, pale or normal colored tongue,

empty pulse. If Spleen Qi Deficiency gives rise to Dampness there may also be nausea, stuffiness of the chest and epigastrium and a feeling of heaviness.

USEFUL FOODS FOR TREATING SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY:

- (These should be cooked or taken at room temperature. Limit the number of cooked fruits.)
Quinoa, parsnip, adzuki beans, black beans, pine nuts, garbanzo beans, cooked squash, cooked turnips, oats, rice, cooked cherries, cooked carrots, cooked leeks, mussels, shrimp, cardamom, black pepper, cooked strawberries, ginger, tapioca and custards, cooked yams, cooked onions, cooked rutabagas, cooked pumpkin, cooked peaches, dried litchi, cinnamon, arrowroot, dried figs, nutmeg, sweet potato, garlic, fennel.
- Moderate amounts of: honey, molasses, barley malt, maple syrup and raw sugar.
- Small amounts of: chicken, lamb, beef, turkey and anchovies.

FOODS TO AVOID IN CASES OF SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY:

- Too many sweets, seaweed, milk, chilled, iced or frozen foods or liquids, citrus fruits and citrus juices, tofu, cheese, salads, too much salt, millet, too many liquids with meals, raw foods, hard to digest food, undercooked grains, buckwheat, agar.

YANG DEFICIENCY

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF YANG DEFICIENCY:

- Includes those of Qi deficiency (pale face, a weak voice, slight sweating in daytime, slight breathlessness, tiredness, lack of appetite and an empty pulse) plus chilliness, a bright pale face, cold limbs, no thirst, a desire for hot drinks, loose stools, frequent-pale urination, a weak pulse and a pale wet tongue.

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USEFUL FOODS FOR YANG DEFICIENCY:

- Rice, sweet brown rice, oats, spelt, quinoa, corn, buckwheat and rye.
- Sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, fennel, dill, anise, caraway, carob pod, cumin, peanuts, chestnuts, cinnamon bark and pine nuts.
- Yellow onions, Chinese yam, Chinese cabbage, parsnip, winter squash, sweet potato, kale, leek, scallion, mustard greens and carrots.
- Chives, garlic, ginger, cloves, basil, rosemary, angelica root and parsley.
- Lychee, pumpkin, cherry, citrus peel, dates and raisins.
- Hot peppers and cayenne (caution: use hot peppers and cayenne in small pinches or they can have a strong cooling effect).

- Walnuts (start eating one walnut a day, then add one more each day, not to exceed 20 per day).
- Coffee and cocoa (caution: coffee and cocoa damage the yin in Yin deficient persons, and they are contraindicated in insomnia).
- Chicken, goat's milk, beef, lamb, shrimp, mussels, fish (e.g., anchovy and trout).
- In general, use warming foods and methods of preparation.

FOODS TO AVOID IN CASES OF YANG DEFICIENCY:

- Use fewer cooling foods and fruits and raw foods.

YIN DEFICIENCY

MAIN MANIFESTATIONS OF YIN DEFICIENCY:

- General symptoms include low-grade fever or a feeling of heat in the afternoon, a dry throat at night, night sweats, emaciation, a floating-empty pulse and a red, peeled and dry tongue. Other symptoms will depend upon which organ is mostly involved.

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USEFUL FOODS:

- Millet, barley, wheat germ, wheat, rice, seaweed, micro-algae, tofu, black beans, kidney beans, adzuki beans, mung beans and their sprouts, beets, string beans, kuzu, potatoes, whole salt, spirulina, chlorella, wild blue green algae, lettuce, kamut, lily root, cucumber, soybean milk, spinach, tomato, radish and mushroom
- Persimmon, grapes, blackberries, raspberries, mulberries, watermelon, plums, pears, strawberries, lemons and pineapple, kiwi and banana (use banana with caution in case of Spleen Qi Deficiency with Dampness).
- Crab, clam, mussels, sardines, sea cucumber, beef, dairy products, yogurt, cheese, abalone, oyster, duck, chicken eggs, duck eggs, ham and pork.

FOODS TO AVOID:

- Alcohol, cigarettes, coffee, shrimp, excessive and poor quality meat.

Food therapy for Dampness

Foods and Spices Known to Cause Dampness:

Milk products (except yogurt), sugar and sweets, white wheat flour, refined starch and highly processed starch products, excess raw fruits (sugar) and vegetables (mold from

the soil), excess mushrooms and fungi, any of the pepper family vegetables, icy and cold beverages (which immobilize immune cells on the walls of digestive track), an excess of fermented foods, yeast containing foods and an excess of vinegar.

Foods and Spices Known to Cause Damp-Heat:

Drinking alcohol in any of its many forms; fatty, greasy and deep fried foods of any kind.

Foods and Spices Known to Relieve Damp & Damp-Heat:

Eat more spices that contain yeast/fungus-inhibiting properties such as garlic, onion, cinnamon, ginger, scallion, basil, rosemary, dill, oregano, sage, parsley, cardamom, nutmeg, fennel, anise, clove, coriander, leek, chives and other Dampness relieving foods like Job's Tears (yi yi ren), Euryale (Fox nut) seed (qian shi), Aduki beans (chi xiao dou), Ginkgo nut (bai guo), rye, celery, lettuce, alfalfa, turnips, raw honey and corn.

Tumeric is a spice that is very anti-inflammatory, anti-dampness and is known to suppress the growth of new blood vessels necessary for the rapid growth of cancerous cells. Turmeric by itself is not very well absorbed by the small intestine mucosa.

However, if you mix turmeric with black pepper, the absorption increases by 2000 times better! Combine turmeric powder with equal amounts of freshly ground black pepper in olive oil and add to a stir-fry.

RECIPES FOR ANTI-DAMP PORRIAGE

1. Basic Congee

- Method One (per person): 2 cups of grain to 10 cups of water. Bring very slowly to the boil in a large saucepan and barely simmer for at least one and a half hours. The heat must be extremely low and the congee should be stirred regularly to keep it from sticking to the bottom and burning. Take a cup of the plain congee and put into a shallow saucepan with twice its volume of stock (i.e. chicken or vegetable) with your herbs of choice. Slowly bring to the boil and simmer very gently for about half an hour,

stirring frequently, until it looks like very soft porridge.

- Method Two (per person): 1 cup of grain to 4 - 8 cups of water (depending upon how thick the porridge is desired) and your herbs of choice. Place and stir all the ingredients in a slow cooker as the last thing at night before retiring. In the morning, the breakfast meal will be ready to eat. Choice of Grain: The basic grain utilized is usually rice. This should be long grain (not basmati) and can be either white or whole grain, depending on the strength of the person's digestion, with white rice being easier to assimilate. Barley and Buckwheat also makes an excellent porridge, and can be mixed with rice 1-3 or 1-2. Oats have the action of producing fluids and moistening, and so is generally too damp forming. Oats do however decrease serum cholesterol. Use oats after control of dampness.
 - Method Three (per person): One part Euryale seed to 4 parts Job's Tears as 2 cups with 12 cups of water in a pressure cooker is also an excellent choice. Cook for 20 minutes. A mixture of rice and aduki beans makes a good meal, cook the aduki beans after soaking overnight for 15 minutes before adding the rice. Cook for 40 minutes together or so on the stovetop or for 20 minutes together in a pressure cooker. Everyone's stove and wants vary so the exact times will need to be determined individually using the above guidelines.
 - Method Four (per person): An equal ratio of yi yi ren (Job's Tears) and shan yao (Chinese yam), ½ cup or so per day with 4 cups of water as a congee.
2. Yam and Tangerine Peel Porridge - Use Chinese yam (Dioscorea, shan yao) 30 grams, mature Tangerine Peel (chen pi) 6 grams with 1-2 cups of rice. Make into a Congee. All citrus peels have drying (breaking up phlegm) and qi promoting properties due to their content of terpene oils. If you use fresh peel, be sure to scrub with soap first before peeling in order to remove any pesticides.

A DECOCTION THERAPY

Many of the foods that one finds in the typical grocery store have been manufactured such that they are inimical to your health, one estimate being at least 85%. Any food that causes any kind of adverse affect on the Spleen system (in TCM) will eventually result in Dampness in the organs and meridians, depending upon the particular genetic constitution of the patient.

One may find the result of decades of dampness in the body by searching the skin and finding the following lesions: white or dark colored patchy and rough raised splotches around the eyes due to cholesterol deposits, skin tags due to toxic damp-heat in the skin and seborrheic keratoses due to chronic damp-heat in the skin.

The author has found that the daily drinking of a decoction (tea) made from dried flowers (seed pods) of the Red Sorrel (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) and Ju Hua (*Chrysanthemum* flower) is very effective in drying up these type of lesions. One must make the tea very concentrated for it to be effective. Results may not become visible for as long as a year and longer due to the number of years the condition has been building. If the tea is too weak, there is no affect. If the tea is too strong it will cause constipation. Each person will need to determine the effective dose for themselves.

Studies have shown that drinking hibiscus tea can effectively lower high blood pressure and reduce high cholesterol levels in many individuals! Read an article about it in the February 1, 2009 issue of Internal Medicine News. Hibiscus and hibiscus mint tea are caffeine free. Hibiscus tea is also rich in Vitamin C; has a unique, delicious taste; has a smooth, pleasant fragrance; has a distinctive, vibrant, natural color (fushia to purple); is great served hot or cold; has long been known to act as a natural body refrigerant.

CONCLUSIONS

The most pervasive thing about the foods that are a direct cause of producing Dampness in a person's body is the ready availability of them in the Supermarket. Cooking and eating healthy foods is a challenge these days since the food industry

wants you to think that their products taste good even if they are not actually good for you. It all boils down to money. Lazy people eat damp producing foods because they taste good and are quick to prepare (if they need any preparation) and someone in some government agency has not banned it.

The following should assist you in preparing meals according to the needs of your body!

YIN FOODS: Almonds, Apples, Asparagus, Bamboo, Bananas, Barley, Bean Curd, Bean Sprouts, Beer, Broccoli, Cabbage, Celery, Clams, Crab, Corn, Corn Flour, Crab, Cucumber, Duck, Eels, Fig, Fish, Grapes, Grapefruit, Honey, Ice creams, Kelp, Lemons, Longan, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mango, Mussels, Melons, Oranges, Oysters, Pear, Persimmons, Peppermint Tea, Pineapples, Salt, Shrimps, Spinach, Strawberries, Soya Beans, Tomatoes, White Sugar, Water.

YANG FOODS: Beef, Black Pepper, Brown Sugar, Butter, Cheese, Chicken Liver and Fat, Chillies, Chocolate, Coffee, Eggs, Lychee, Garlic, Ginger, Green Peppers, Goose, Ham, Kidney Beans, Lamb, Leeks, Onions, Peanut Butter, Roasted Peanuts, Potatoes, Rabbit, Smoked Fish, Snake, Turkey, Walnuts, Whisky, Wine.

NEUTRAL FOODS: Apricots, Beets, Bread, Carrots, Cauliflower, Cherries, Cinnamon, Dates, Fennel, Guava, Kumquats, Lean Chicken Meat, Milk, Nutmeg, Peaches, Peas, Pigeon, Plums, Raisins, Brown Rice, Squash, Steamed White Rice.

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There are five main points to look out for:

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The Proportions of the Food We Eat

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In China, the temperature of food does not refer to how hot or cold the food is physically, but rather the heating effect and the cooling effect of the food. Food can be classified as *Hot, Warm, Neutral, Cool* or *Cold*.

Hot food has a heating effect on us. Have you eaten curry and found that there is heat stirring up within you and you even start sweating? This also happens when we eat chili or something spicy. This is due to the heat present in the food. This heat warms our bodies, and is also responsible for causing heat-related health problems such as fever, headache, sore eyes, sore throat, and bloodshot eyes. It is this heat that causes pimples to rise on your face, so the Chinese are careful not to eat too much hot food. The heat can also irritate us and make our temper "hotter". During cold seasons, the Chinese eat more hot food to keep warm.

Have you seen women sticking slices of fruit or cucumber on their face? You may wonder how it helps their faces. Cucumbers and other fruits and vegetables are known for their cooling effect, and cucumbers have been used for facials. Beauticians have also encouraged people to eat more fruits and vegetables and to drink water (water is neutral) to have a good skin. Cold food cool us down, but also require more energy for digestion, as they take away warmth. But overcooling can cause us to have a cold, cough, diarrhea, and stomach pains.

It is possible to balance the heat in our food. People have also adjusted the temperature of the food they eat according to the climate.

Here is a list of foods and their temperatures:

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Neutral Apricots, beet roots, bread, broad beans, brown rice, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cherries, egg whites, grapes, honey, water, milk, oysters, peanuts, peas, plums, pork, raisins, salmon, sugar, sweet potatoes

Cool Almonds, apples, barley, broccoli, celery, corn, fish, mushrooms, mangos, oranges, pears, pineapple, radishes, salt, seaweed, spinach, strawberries, tangerines, turnip, watermelon, wheat

Cold Bananas, bean sprouts, cucumbers, duck, grapefruit, green tea, lettuce, ice cream, mussels, peppermint, tofu, tomato, yogurt

Eating Cooking and Raw Food

Generally raw food is cold and should not be eaten in excess. The Chinese maintain that food should be cooked before consumption. Moreover, taking cold raw food may upset our stomachs because digestion will require more energy.

The Taste of the Food

There are five main tastes of food: Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Pungent, and Salty. It is recommended that our diets contain all these flavors, not taking too much of any. It is also believed that salt should be avoided because it can affect the functioning of the kidneys.

Quality of the Food

It is best that we eat food that is fresh and pure, free from chemicals, preservatives, and additives. The vegetables and fruits we buy in our supermarket often have been sprayed with insecticides, and we should wash them before consumption. Some animals are also injected with antibiotics or hormones to prevent diseases from attacking them. Do you know that an apple can be sprayed up to 26 times before reaching your fruit basket? Processed food should also be avoided.

How and When We Eat the Food

If you have always gobbled fast food, eating on the run, then you may be shocked to know that a Chinese meal can take hours. The Chinese believe that eating has to be at a leisurely pace to give time for digestion, and it is best to eat in a relaxing environment. The food is to be chewed thoroughly and properly. This breaks down the food and aids digestion. Drinking is not advisable when eating because the fluid may wash down the food rather than allow it to be digested fully. We should drink before the meal or between meals. It is good to eat up to three-quarters full, so that the stomach would not be over-stressed, causing us to feel tired due to the extra energy spent in digestion.

We should eat regularly at usual times of the day. The breakfast should be nourishing enough to provide us with enough energy for the day. Heavy meals late at night can make our digestive system work overtime, even after we sleep. This may cause insomnia and we will not be well rested. Hence it is best to eat our last meal early in the evening.

ORIENTAL MEDICAL DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Blood Stagnation

Damp Heat

Dampness

Liver Qi Constraint

Spleen Qi Deficiency

Yang Deficiency

Yin Deficiency

References

BLOOD STAGNATION

INTRODUCTION:

- Barbara and I see many patients manifesting the Chinese medical condition known as Blood Stagnation or Blood Stasis. We get very good results treating this condition with a combination of craniosacral acupuncture, hara visceral work, herbs, dietary and lifestyle modifications. We have written this article to identify for you those foods which you can incorporate into your diet to resolve Blood Stagnation as well as to identify certain foods which should be avoided.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATION OF BLOOD STAGNATION:

- Dark complexion, purple lips, pain which is boring, fixed and stabbing in character, abdominal masses that do not move, purple nails, bleeding with dark blood and dark clots. These are only the general symptoms of Blood stagnation or Blood stasis without reference to particular organs.

USEFUL FOODS:

- Vinegar, turmeric, chives, garlic, basil, scallion, leek, ginger, chestnut, rosemary, cayenne, nutmeg, kohlrabi, eggplant, white pepper, adzuki bean, sweet rice, spearmint, butter, lotus root, hawthorn berry, brown sugar, squid, crab, rose, peanuts, lotus root, spinach, peach, peach seed, peach flower powder, wood ear (black fungus) and cinnamon.

Precautions:

- Warming foods such as garlic and ginger should be used carefully if at all in cases of heat signs.
- Butter is most useful in cases of emaciation and weakness and a dietary history low in animal products. It is contraindicated in cases of liver excess, dampness and mucous conditions.
- Vinegar and sweet rice are contraindicated in patterns of deficient digestive fire with signs such as watery stools and a feeling of coldness.

NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT:

- Vitamin E – is helpful in reducing blood stagnation as well as painful inflammation.

DAMP HEAT

DAMP HEAT CONSTITUTIONS:

- Persons with Damp Heat constitutions easily develop skin sores; and if they are young - acne. Their face is often shiny and oily. They have a dry mouth and there will be a slightly bitter taste in the mouth. There is a tendency towards anger and irritability. Often they feel fatigued and have a lack of energy. They will be somewhat impatient and anxious. They like eating oily, sweet and fried foods. Their stools are usually dry. There will be scanty urine that is more yellow in color. If they get sick it is often associated with emotional upset or associated with the food that they have eaten. Their pulse is slippery and fast and their tongue has a red body and a sticky yellow coat.

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USEFUL FOODS:

- Majority of foods should be vegetables and foods that remove dampness and heat such as: Adzuki beans, lima beans, mug beans, black beans, celery, carrots, winter squash, potatoes with skins, asparagus, mushrooms, corn, peas, amaranth, Chinese barley, day lily, bamboo shoots, wax gourd, white gourd, cucumber and duck
- Lemon (diluted juice), cranberry juice, huckleberries, bananas, Chinese pears and watermelon.
- Useful herbal teas: Uva ursi, dandelion leaf, plantain leaf, flax seed, watermelon seed and pipsissewa (pipsissewa is good for chronic bladder infections).

FOODS TO AVOID:

- Refined sugar and other concentrated sweeteners, meat, greasy, oily foods, too much starch, and overeating.

DAMPNESS

INTRODUCTION:

- Barbara and I see many patients manifesting the Chinese medical condition known as Dampness. We get very good results treating this condition with a

combination of craniosacral acupuncture, herbs, dietary and lifestyle modifications. We have written this article to identify for you those foods which you can incorporate into your diet which counteract Dampness as well as to identify certain foods which when avoided will help you in reducing Dampness.

GENERAL CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF DAMPNESS:

- A feeling of heaviness of the body or head, muzzy headedness, no appetite, stuffy feeling in the chest and/or epigastria, a sticky taste in the mouth, cloudy urine, vaginal discharges, certain types of oozing skin diseases, a sticky tongue coating and a slippery pulse. Dampness can obstruct the circulation of Qui in the abdomen and, besides affecting the intestines, it can affect the Spleen and the Liver. This causes abdominal pain, a feeling of fullness and heaviness and possibly diarrhea. Long term stagnation of Dampness in the Middle Burner can also gradually spread upwards filling the head causing a sensation of heaviness of the head, dull headache and a difficulty in thinking.

USEFUL FOODS WHICH COUNTERACT DAMPNESS:

- Lettuce, Amaranth, Asparagus, Wild Blue Green Algae, White Pepper, Vinegar, Papaya, Chaparral, Pau d'arco, Valerian, Chamomile, Celery, Turnip, Rye, Barley, Adzuki Beans, Alfalfa, Pumpkin

Useful Foods for Spleen Dampness:

- Celery, Turnip, Rye, Barley, Adzuki Beans, Alfalfa, Pumpkin, Chinese Cabbage, Watermelon, Corn, Anchovy, Kidney Beans, Button Mushrooms, Shrimp, Chestnuts, Kohlrabi, Mustard Greens, Radish, Chicken, Chicken Gizzards, Mackerel.

FOODS TO AVOID IN CASES OF DAMPNESS:

- Dairy Products, Meat, Eggs, Tofu, Pineapple, Salt and Concentrated Sweeteners, Peanuts, Ice Water, Ice Cream.

Foods to Avoid for Spleen Damp Conditions:

- Salt, Milk, Cheese, Eggs, Sugar, Soybean, Pine nuts, Asparagus, Cucumber, Seaweed, Tofu, Bamboo Shoots, Kelp, Agar, Cabbage, Coconut Milk, Spinach, Olives, Black Sesame, Goose, Duck, Pork, Shellfish, Clams, Mussels, Crabs, Sardines, Octopus, Shark Meat, Red Meat, Excessive Watery Foods. Also use sour foods sparingly.

LIVER QI CONSTRAINT (Liver Qi Stagnation)

WHAT IS LIVER QI CONSTRAINT?

- Liver Qi Constraint, also known as Liver Qi Stagnation, is by far the most common Liver pattern and also one of the most common patterns in general. It manifests clinically as distending pain the hypochondriac region, stuffiness of the chest, sighing, epigastric and abdominal distention, nausea, vomiting, poor appetite, sour regurgitation, belching, borborygmi, diarrhea, feeling of being "wound up", feeling of a lump in the throat, irregular periods, painful periods, distention of the breasts prior to periods, pre-menstrual tension and irritability, melancholy, depression and moodiness. We hope the suggestions given below are helpful in your quest for optimal liver health.

THESE ARE USEFUL FOODS IF YOU HAVE LIVER QI CONSTRAINT:

- Lemon, lime or grapefruit, moderately pungent foods, spices and herbs, members of the onion family, mustard greens, cardamom, cumin, fennel, horseradish, various mints, lemon balm, angelica root, prickly ash bark. Also

sweet rice, strawberry, peach, cherry, pine nuts, cabbage, turnip root, cauliflower, broccoli and brussel sprouts. Also sprouted grains, beans and seeds, fresh vegetables and fruit. Mushrooms, rye, asparagus, amaranth, quinoa, alfalfa, radish leaves, citrus peel, chaparral, bupleurum, chamomile, peony root, dandelion root.

- **Foods that relax the Liver:** Beef, chicken, liver, mussels, black sesame, kelp, plums, mulberries, celery, nori, lotus seeds, Chinese red dates and gotu kola.
- **Foods that activate Liver Qi:** Vinegar, amasake, beets, coconut milk, garlic, leeks, marjorams, safflower, basil, black pepper, dill seed, ginger, longan, rosemary, scallions, by leaves, cabbage, litchi, kohlrabi, saffron, peaches, oregano, turmeric, eggplant, chives, chestnuts.
- **Foods that also detoxify and cool the Liver:** Celery, seaweed, watercress, mung beans, lettuce, cucumber, tofu, millet, plum, rhubarb root or stem, daikon, radish, carrots, spinach, Swiss chard, kale, parsley.

THESE ARE FOODS TO AVOID IF YOU HAVE LIVER QI CONSTRAINT:

- Foods high in saturated fats (such as lard, mammal meat, cream cheese and eggs), hydrogenated or poor quality foods (such as shortening, margarine, refined and rancid oils), deep fried, greasy, fatty foods, coffee, alcohol, food preservatives, excessively spicy foods, sugar and sweets, peanut butter, excesses of nuts and seeds, chemicals in food and water, all intoxicants and highly processed refined foods (refined flour products are hard on the Spleen and make it easier for the Liver to invade it).

SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY

- No appetite, abdominal distension after eating, tiredness, lassitude, sallow complexion, weakness of the limbs, loose stools, pale or normal colored tongue,

empty pulse. If Spleen Qi Deficiency gives rise to Dampness there may also be nausea, stuffiness of the chest and epigastrium and a feeling of heaviness.

USEFUL FOODS FOR TREATING SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY:

- (These should be cooked or taken at room temperature. Limit the number of cooked fruits.)
Quinoa, parsnip, adzuki beans, black beans, pine nuts, garbanzo beans, cooked squash, cooked turnips, oats, rice, cooked cherries, cooked carrots, cooked leeks, mussels, shrimp, cardamom, black pepper, cooked strawberries, ginger, tapioca and custards, cooked yams, cooked onions, cooked rutabagas, cooked pumpkin, cooked peaches, dried litchi, cinnamon, arrowroot, dried figs, nutmeg, sweet potato, garlic, fennel.
- Moderate amounts of: honey, molasses, barley malt, maple syrup and raw sugar.
- Small amounts of: chicken, lamb, beef, turkey and anchovies.

FOODS TO AVOID IN CASES OF SPLEEN QI DEFICIENCY:

- Too many sweets, seaweed, milk, chilled, iced or frozen foods or liquids, citrus fruits and citrus juices, tofu, cheese, salads, too much salt, millet, too many liquids with meals, raw foods, hard to digest food, undercooked grains, buckwheat, agar.

YANG DEFICIENCY

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF YANG DEFICIENCY:

- Includes those of Qi deficiency (pale face, a weak voice, slight sweating in daytime, slight breathlessness, tiredness, lack of appetite and an empty pulse) plus chilliness, a bright pale face, cold limbs, no thirst, a desire for hot drinks, loose stools, frequent-pale urination, a weak pulse and a pale wet tongue.

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USEFUL FOODS FOR YANG DEFICIENCY:

- Rice, sweet brown rice, oats, spelt, quinoa, corn, buckwheat and rye.
- Sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, fennel, dill, anise, caraway, carob pod, cumin, peanuts, chestnuts, cinnamon bark and pine nuts.
- Yellow onions, Chinese yam, Chinese cabbage, parsnip, winter squash, sweet potato, kale, leek, scallion, mustard greens and carrots.
- Chives, garlic, ginger, cloves, basil, rosemary, angelica root and parsley.
- Lychee, pumpkin, cherry, citrus peel, dates and raisins.
- Hot peppers and cayenne (caution: use hot peppers and cayenne in small pinches or they can have a strong cooling effect).

- Walnuts (start eating one walnut a day, then add one more each day, not to exceed 20 per day).
- Coffee and cocoa (caution: coffee and cocoa damage the yin in Yin deficient persons, and they are contraindicated in insomnia).
- Chicken, goat's milk, beef, lamb, shrimp, mussels, fish (e.g., anchovy and trout).
- In general, use warming foods and methods of preparation.

FOODS TO AVOID IN CASES OF YANG DEFICIENCY:

- Use fewer cooling foods and fruits and raw foods.

YIN DEFICIENCY

MAIN MANIFESTATIONS OF YIN DEFICIENCY:

- General symptoms include low-grade fever or a feeling of heat in the afternoon, a dry throat at night, night sweats, emaciation, a floating-empty pulse and a red, peeled and dry tongue. Other symptoms will depend upon which organ is mostly involved.

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USEFUL FOODS:

- Millet, barley, wheat germ, wheat, rice, seaweed, micro-algae, tofu, black beans, kidney beans, adzuki beans, mung beans and their sprouts, beets, string beans, kuzu, potatoes, whole salt, spirulina, chlorella, wild blue green algae, lettuce, kamut, lily root, cucumber, soybean milk, spinach, tomato, radish and mushroom
- Persimmon, grapes, blackberries, raspberries, mulberries, watermelon, plums, pears, strawberries, lemons and pineapple, kiwi and banana (use banana with caution in case of Spleen Qi Deficiency with Dampness).
- Crab, clam, mussels, sardines, sea cucumber, beef, dairy products, yogurt, cheese, abalone, oyster, duck, chicken eggs, duck eggs, ham and pork.

FOODS TO AVOID:

- Alcohol, cigarettes, coffee, shrimp, excessive and poor quality meat.

Food therapy for Dampness

Foods and Spices Known to Cause Dampness:

Milk products (except yogurt), sugar and sweets, white wheat flour, refined starch and highly processed starch products, excess raw fruits (sugar) and vegetables (mold from

the soil), excess mushrooms and fungi, any of the pepper family vegetables, icy and cold beverages (which immobilize immune cells on the walls of digestive track), an excess of fermented foods, yeast containing foods and an excess of vinegar.

Foods and Spices Known to Cause Damp-Heat:

Drinking alcohol in any of its many forms; fatty, greasy and deep fried foods of any kind.

Foods and Spices Known to Relieve Damp & Damp-Heat:

Eat more spices that contain yeast/fungus-inhibiting properties such as garlic, onion, cinnamon, ginger, scallion, basil, rosemary, dill, oregano, sage, parsley, cardamom, nutmeg, fennel, anise, clove, coriander, leek, chives and other Dampness relieving foods like Job's Tears (yi yi ren), Euryale (Fox nut) seed (qian shi), Aduki beans (chi xiao dou), Ginkgo nut (bai guo), rye, celery, lettuce, alfalfa, turnips, raw honey and corn.

Tumeric is a spice that is very anti-inflammatory, anti-dampness and is known to suppress the growth of new blood vessels necessary for the rapid growth of cancerous cells. Turmeric by itself is not very well absorbed by the small intestine mucosa. However, if you mix turmeric with black pepper, the absorption increases by 2000 times better! Combine turmeric powder with equal amounts of freshly ground black pepper in olive oil and add to a stir-fry.

RECIPES FOR ANTI-DAMP PORRIAGE

1. Basic Congee

- Method One (per person): 2 cups of grain to 10 cups of water. Bring very slowly to the boil in a large saucepan and barely simmer for at least one and a half hours. The heat must be extremely low and the congee should be stirred regularly to keep it from sticking to the bottom and burning. Take a cup of the plain congee and put into a shallow saucepan with twice its volume of stock (i.e. chicken or vegetable) with your herbs of choice. Slowly bring to the boil and simmer very gently for about half an hour,

stirring frequently, until it looks like very soft porridge.

- Method Two (per person): 1 cup of grain to 4 - 8 cups of water (depending upon how thick the porridge is desired) and your herbs of choice. Place and stir all the ingredients in a slow cooker as the last thing at night before retiring. In the morning, the breakfast meal will be ready to eat. Choice of Grain: The basic grain utilized is usually rice. This should be long grain (not basmati) and can be either white or whole grain, depending on the strength of the person's digestion, with white rice being easier to assimilate. Barley and Buckwheat also makes an excellent porridge, and can be mixed with rice 1-3 or 1-2. Oats have the action of producing fluids and moistening, and so is generally too damp forming. Oats do however decrease serum cholesterol. Use oats after control of dampness.
 - Method Three (per person): One part Euryale seed to 4 parts Job's Tears as 2 cups with 12 cups of water in a pressure cooker is also an excellent choice. Cook for 20 minutes. A mixture of rice and aduki beans makes a good meal, cook the aduki beans after soaking overnight for 15 minutes before adding the rice. Cook for 40 minutes together or so on the stovetop or for 20 minutes together in a pressure cooker. Everyone's stove and wants vary so the exact times will need to be determined individually using the above guidelines.
 - Method Four (per person): An equal ratio of yi yi ren (Job's Tears) and shan yao (Chinese yam), ½ cup or so per day with 4 cups of water as a congee.
2. Yam and Tangerine Peel Porridge - Use Chinese yam (Dioscorea, shan yao) 30 grams, mature Tangerine Peel (chen pi) 6 grams with 1-2 cups of rice. Make into a Congee. All citrus peels have drying (breaking up phlegm) and qi promoting properties due to their content of terpene oils. If you use fresh peel, be sure to scrub with soap first before peeling in order to remove any pesticides.

A DECOCTION THERAPY

Many of the foods that one finds in the typical grocery store have been manufactured such that they are inimical to your health, one estimate being at least 85%. Any food that causes any kind of adverse affect on the Spleen system (in TCM) will eventually result in Dampness in the organs and meridians, depending upon the particular genetic constitution of the patient.

One may find the result of decades of dampness in the body by searching the skin and finding the following lesions: white or dark colored patchy and rough raised splotches around the eyes due to cholesterol deposits, skin tags due to toxic damp-heat in the skin and seborrheic keratoses due to chronic damp-heat in the skin.

The author has found that the daily drinking of a decoction (tea) made from dried flowers (seed pods) of the Red Sorrel (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) and Ju Hua (*Chrysanthemum* flower) is very effective in drying up these type of lesions. One must make the tea very concentrated for it to be effective. Results may not become visible for as long as a year and longer due to the number of years the condition has been building. If the tea is too weak, there is no affect. If the tea is too strong it will cause constipation. Each person will need to determine the effective dose for themselves.

Studies have shown that drinking hibiscus tea can effectively lower high blood pressure and reduce high cholesterol levels in many individuals! Read an article about it in the February 1, 2009 issue of Internal Medicine News. Hibiscus and hibiscus mint tea are caffeine free. Hibiscus tea is also rich in Vitamin C; has a unique, delicious taste; has a smooth, pleasant fragrance; has a distinctive, vibrant, natural color (fushia to purple); is great served hot or cold; has long been known to act as a natural body refrigerant.

CONCLUSIONS

The most pervasive thing about the foods that are a direct cause of producing Dampness in a person's body is the ready availability of them in the Supermarket. Cooking and eating healthy foods is a challenge these days since the food industry

wants you to think that their products taste good even if they are not actually good for you. It all boils down to money. Lazy people eat damp producing foods because they taste good and are quick to prepare (if they need any preparation) and someone in some government agency has not banned it.

The following should assist you in preparing meals according to the needs of your body!

YIN FOODS: Almonds, Apples, Asparagus, Bamboo, Bananas, Barley, Bean Curd, Bean Sprouts, Beer, Broccoli, Cabbage, Celery, Clams, Crab, Corn, Corn Flour, Crab, Cucumber, Duck, Eels, Fig, Fish, Grapes, Grapefruit, Honey, Ice creams, Kelp, Lemons, Longan, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mango, Mussels, Melons, Oranges, Oysters, Pear, Persimmons, Peppermint Tea, Pineapples, Salt, Shrimps, Spinach, Strawberries, Soya Beans, Tomatoes, White Sugar, Water.

YANG FOODS: Beef, Black Pepper, Brown Sugar, Butter, Cheese, Chicken Liver and Fat, Chillies, Chocolate, Coffee, Eggs, Lychee, Garlic, Ginger, Green Peppers, Goose, Ham, Kidney Beans, Lamb, Leeks, Onions, Peanut Butter, Roasted Peanuts, Potatoes, Rabbit, Smoked Fish, Snake, Turkey, Walnuts, Whisky, Wine.

NEUTRAL FOODS: Apricots, Beets, Bread, Carrots, Cauliflower, Cherries, Cinnamon, Dates, Fennel, Guava, Kumquats, Lean Chicken Meat, Milk, Nutmeg, Peaches, Peas, Pigeon, Plums, Raisins, Brown Rice, Squash, Steamed White Rice.

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