



## **Diet Guidelines for Heart Qi & Yang Deficiency**

Qi and Yang are closely related ideas in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM for short). Qi is what enables our bodies to move and our organs to do their functions. Yang is what warms and activates the body. Qi deficiency requires that Qi building foods be eaten. Yang deficiency means that both Qi and Yang need to be replenished.

In cases of Heart Qi or Yang deficiency foods that strengthen and warm the Heart Organ Network should be eaten. It is worth remembering that in TCM the Heart Organ Network includes not only the heart muscle but also aspects of overall blood circulation and mental activity.

For Qi deficiency it is best to consume fresh foods that are slightly cooked so that they are more readily digested and absorbed. Meals should consist largely of complex carbohydrates like grains and starchy root vegetables (40 - 60%). Another 30 - 40% of the diet should be comprised of cooked vegetables and proteins should comprise only 10 - 20% of the diet.

Overly rich, oily or heavy foods should be avoided because they can overwhelm the digestive system. Cold foods such as raw fruits and vegetables, tofu, and ice cream should also be avoided. Fragrant, spicy and warming foods should be included to help circulate Qi and Blood.

Below is a list of recommended foods. You should not limit your diet to only these foods. Instead follow the guidelines above of the optimum ratios of and add the recommended foods from the list below within your meals. Where ever possible choose organically grown foods.



### **Specific foods for Heart Qi deficiency**

cooked whole grains, rice, oats, roasted barley, sweet rice, spelt, millet  
pumpkin, sweet potatoes, squash, carrots, corn, parsnips, yams, peas, onions,  
leeks, garlic, turnip, mushrooms including oyster & shitake  
chick peas, black beans, kidney beans, fava beans, eggs  
chicken, beef, Chinese black chicken, quail, goose, rabbit, frog  
mackerel, tuna, anchovy, perch, eel, catfish  
lychee fruit, mulberries, longan berries, grapes, dates, figs, cherries  
black pepper, fresh ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, fennel, molasses, rice syrup,  
barley malt, sugar cane



### **Additional foods for Heart Yang deficiency**

goat milk, lamb, cinnamon, dried ginger, ginseng, walnuts, chinese chives



### **Foods to restrict or avoid**

salads, raw fruits, citrus, wheat, sprouts, wheat grass, raw vegetables, tomatoes,  
spinach, swiss chard  
tofu, dairy, nut butters and other high oil foods  
overly sweet foods, refined sugars, high doses of vitamin C, seaweeds, chocolate  
cold foods like ice cream or smoothies  
iced drinks including ice water, iced drinks including ice water, strong tea,  
coffee, chilies

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### **References:**

*Clinical Handbook Of Internal Medicine, Vol. 2.* MacLean & Lyttleton. University of Western Sydney: Australia. 2002.  
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*The Healing Cuisine of China.* Zhao & Ellis. Healing Arts Press: Vermont. 1998.

### **Disclaimer**

*This factsheet is not intended to diagnose or assess. The information provided is not to be considered a substitute for consultation with a qualified health care practitioner.*