



Diet Guidelines for Liver Heat or Fire

The liver is responsible for food metabolism and the detoxification of natural and synthetic substances. From a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM for short) perspective, it is also part of a network that helps a person manage stress. Toxins that overload the liver are considered a form of Heat in TCM as are stresses that lead to anger.

A diet that helps to cool the Liver network avoids spicy and overly rich foods, as well as artificial additives and colorings. Stir frying and steaming foods along with some raw foods as opposed to roasting, baking or deep frying is recommended.

Meals should consist largely of lightly cooked and some raw vegetables, roughly 40% to 60% of your diet. About 30% of the diet should be comprised of complex carbohydrates. Proteins should comprise only about 10% of the diet, with a focus on high quality sources. Highly processed foods and well as oily and fatty foods should be avoided.

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

Specific foods for Liver Heat and Liver Fire

rice, millet, wheat, barley, oats
celery, spinach, swiss chard, cucumber, lettuce, daikon radish, asparagus, eggplant, chinese cabbage, tomato, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, alfalfa sprouts, mung bean sprouts, dandelion leaves, watercress, chrysanthemum leaves and flowers, shepard's purse, bamboo shoots, turnips, carrots, purslane, waterchestnuts
apples, pears, watermelon, plums
tofu, tempeh, soy milk, yogurt, mung beans
crab, oysters, clams, snails
spirulina, kelp and other seaweeds, peppermint

Foods to restrict or avoid

chilies, cinnamon, garlic, ginger, onions, shallots, leeks, cloves, wasabi
coffee, vinegar, mustard, horseradish, chocolate,
lamb and large amounts of other red meats, shrimp, prawns, veal, cheese
citrus fruits, peanuts, lard, margarine
all fried foods, BBQ'd foods, cigarettes, alcohol, recreational stimulants
artificial preservatives, artificial colorings and all highly processed foods

References:

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Chinese Dietary Therapy. Liu, J. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1995.

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.