



Diet Guidelines for Spleen Qi Deficiency

The Spleen organ network in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM for short) includes the overall health of a person's digestive system. A TCM diagnosis of Spleen Qi deficiency means that your body's ability to generate Qi from foods eaten is compromised.

Digestion in TCM is viewed metaphorically like a pot of soup sitting on a fire. It is the body's metabolic 'fire' that cooks ingested food, allowing the body to extract nourishment from the food. To prevent Qi deficiency it is best to consume fresh foods that are slightly cooked. Food that is lightly prepared helps to ensure that nutrients are preserved and are more readily digested and absorbed. General dietary recommendations to prevent Qi deficiency include eating smaller meals more frequently and enjoying meals by sitting down to relax while you eat and chewing thoroughly to savor flavors.

40 - 60% of meals should consist of complex carbohydrates like grains and starchy root vegetables. 30 - 40% of the diet should be comprised of cooked vegetables. Proteins should comprise only 10 - 20% of the diet.

Small amounts of naturally sweet flavors like molasses, dates and rice syrup and more pungent tastes including onion, garlic, turnip, ginger, fennel, cinnamon and nutmeg are also beneficial in strengthening Qi. 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 since, returning to the soup pot metaphor mentioned above, they will slow down the process and make the body work harder.

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 carbohydrates, vegetables and proteins, and add the recommended foods from the list below within your meals. Wherever possible choose organically grown foods.



Specific foods for Spleen Qi deficiency

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



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

References:

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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.