



Spleen Qi Deficiency Diet Recommendations

In Traditional Chinese Medicine the Spleen does not represent exactly the western medical spleen but a set of functions in the body that include the digestive system, immune system, energy and metabolism, fluid metabolism, certain aspects of the blood and circulatory system, and muscular system. Symptoms of a Spleen Qi deficiency could potentially include low energy, slow or weak digestion, loose bowel movements, prolapse, excess weight gain, water retention, low motivation, or menstrual issues such as mid-period spotting. The TCM Spleen system has a correlation to the digestive system. The digestive system in TCM is viewed as a pot sitting on a stove which “cooks” the food that one eats. One should therefore eat warm slightly cooked whole foods that are soft and easy to digest and avoid too much raw, cold, overly rich and greasy or sweet foods. Pungent foods such as cinnamon, basil, garlic, nutmeg, onions, spring onions, etc are also helpful in stimulating digestion and assisting the spleen’s function.

Recommendations:

Healthy grains and starchy root vegetables such as yams and potatoes should comprise 40-60% of the diet while 30-40% should include lightly cooked vegetables, and the remaining 10-20% lean meat. This is meant to be a tonifying diet and should be hearty though not overly rich and greasy. We generally advise people to eat as they would if they had been doing hard, physical labour outside in cold weather for 12 hours a day.

Specific foods for Spleen Qi deficiency

Grains: rice, spelt, oats, millet, barley, wheat germ, tef, quinoa, amaranth Starchy

Vegetables: carrots , sweet potato, yams, squash, turnips are all great but virtually all vegetables are fine as long as they are not raw.

Beans and Lentils: peas aduki beans, black beans, chick peas, fave beans beans, mung beans, kidney beans, fave beans, black sesame seeds, goji berries

Fruit but not in excess

Protein: lean cuts of pork, beef, chicken, lamb, grass fed when possible, fish

Spices: cinnamon, garlic, ginger, onions, shallots, leeks, basil, cloves, wasabi

Foods to restrict or avoid:

salads and raw vegetables, cold foods, overly rich, greasy, or sweet foods, iced drinks including iced water especially with meals, dairy, nut butters, smoothies, ice cream.