

Balance Point Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine

TCM Diet Therapy

Heart Yin Deficiency

Dietary Recommendations for Heart Yin Deficiency

In Traditional Chinese Medicine the Heart includes the Heart, arteries and veins, and many aspects of the spirit and mind. In TCM it is commonly said, "the Heart houses the "Shen" (spirit). Thus, a deficiency, weakness, or disharmony of the Heart can lead to not only disorders of the heart organ and circulation, but also problems of the mento-emotional aspect of the individual.

Some of the phrases commonly referencing the heart in TCM include:

"The Heart houses the Shen (spirit)"

"The Heart governs the vessels"

"The Shen (spirit) flows in the blood"

"The colour red pertains to the Heart"

In TCM theory, Yin represents the nutritional, cooling, calming, and moistening aspects of the body. A deficiency of Yin generally leads to a relative excess of Yang and symptoms which may include a feeling of heat, restlessness, dryness, sweating, anxiety, or insomnia all of which have a tendency to worsen in the evening or at night.

In general, TCM Diet therapy is aimed at consuming highly nutritious and easily digested foods at regular mealtimes. When diagnosed with a Yin deficiency one should follow a calming lifestyle with regular "early to bed" sleep patterns and a nourishing diet which avoids Yang activating foods like hot spicy foods such as cayenne and ginger and stimulating or drying foods such as coffee, tea, and alcohol.

Recommendations

About 40% of your meals should consist largely of easily digested complex carbohydrates like grains and starchy root vegetables. Another 40% of the diet should be cooked vegetables and fruit. Proteins should make up the remaining 10 - 20% of the diet. 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 Heart Yin deficiency

rice, oats, millet, barley, wheat germ, tef, quinoa, amaranth,
milk, goat milk, eggs, yogurt, tofu, beans, nuts & seeds, aduki beans, black
beans, mung beans, kidney beans, fava beans, black sesame seeds, goji berries
pork, beef, chicken, duck,
fish, clam, abalone, oyster, sardines
seaweeds, spiralling, chlorella,
virtually all vegetables especially the starchy and/or green ones
virtually all fruit
olive oil, coconut oil, flaxseed oil, almond oil

Foods to restrict or avoid

chilies, cinnamon, garlic, ginger, onions, shallots, leeks, basil, cloves, wasabi coffee,
vinegar (excluding apple cider vinegar), pickles, tea
lamb, shrimp, prawns, veal, game birds
cigarettes, alcohol, recreational stimulants

For those interested in learning more about Chinese Diet therapy, you can pick up a great book called "*Healing With Whole Foods*", by Paul Pitchford usually available at Chapters.

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