

# Dampness and Phlegm

To treat Dampness and Phlegm, two aspects must be considered regarding diet. Firstly, avoid Damp and Phlegm-producing foods such as dairy, processed carbohydrates, sweets, and rich or overly supplementing foods. Secondly, a diet that supports optimum Spleen and Stomach function is essential.

Where complete removal of offending foods is too restrictive, certain modifications and combinations can be made. Specifically, bitter, pungent, or drying foods can be added to rich or cloying foods to prevent Dampness from forming. Examples include adding mustard, horseradish, or bitter and pungent vegetables like turnip and pumpkin to meats, using pungent toppings on pasta made with lots of onion, garlic, or pesto, combining cheese with chutney, sipping wine with meat meals, and having green tea with fried foods, as well as selecting a bitter ale. With a bit of thought, most Western meals can become less damp-producing.

Always remember: the digestive process starts in the mouth, and food should be well chewed and savoured slowly. The food must be enjoyed. Rigid or boring diets are detrimental to the Spleen.

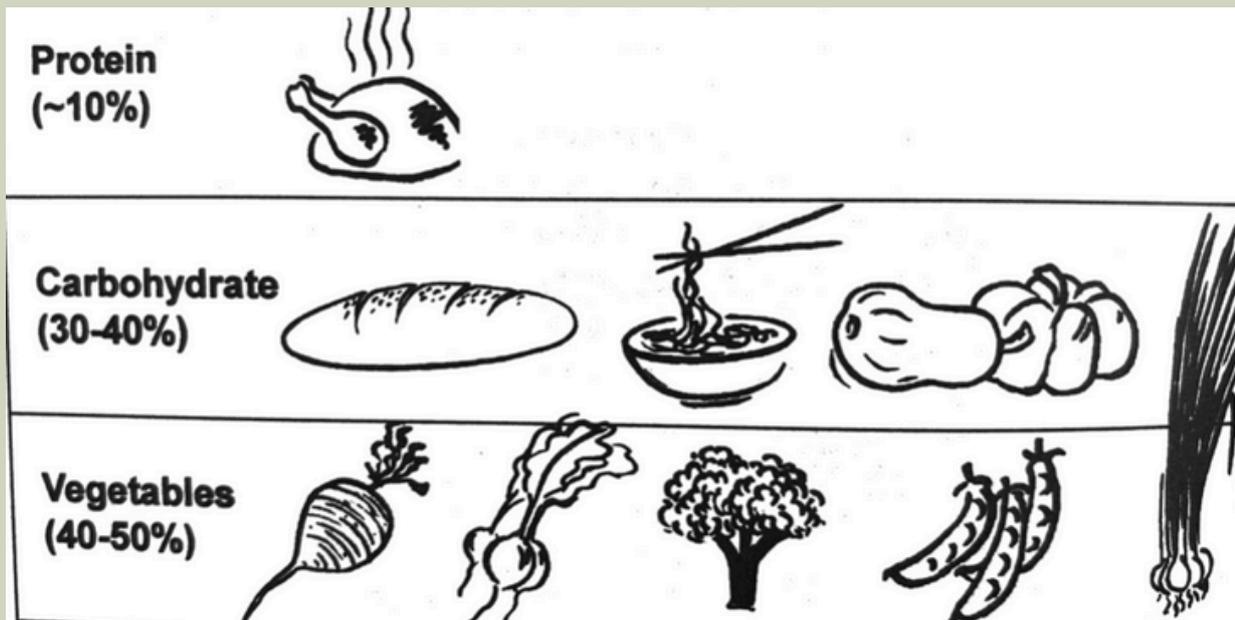
The preparation of food can be a significant factor in its overall Qi quality and benefit. It goes without saying that meals prepared with pleasure and love taste better than those that are store-bought or made in haste and resentment. This can be difficult as not everyone likes to cook or has the time. However, making time and effort to nurture can be an important part of the therapeutic process. Setting aside time on weekends to prepare hearty soups, stocks, and stews for the coming week is a way of actively participating in the Spleen-strengthening process and has many benefits that also assist the Spleen.

## Proportions

Carbohydrates should be used moderately as they tend to be sweet, and an excessive amount can create or aggravate Dampness. In general, between 30-40% of the dietary bulk can be composed of carbohydrates. The best sources are the more drying varieties such as rice, rye, barley, millet, and oats.

Vegetables with a mixture of sweet, bitter, and pungent varieties can make up 40-50% of the diet. The remainder can be small amounts of high-quality animal protein; around 10% is appropriate. Soy proteins, especially tofu, can be too cooling and moistening when used in excessive amounts. Nuts and seeds should be avoided.

# Portions



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### General comments

All foods cooked and warm, long slow cooking; soups, broths and stews; thorough chewing, simple combinations of a few ingredients; smaller meals more often; regular meal times; high complex carbohydrates and vegetables, low meat.

No: excessive fluids with meals; overeating missing meals; eating while working.

### Beneficial

Neutral or sweet, warm flavours: light grains especially white rice and rice porridge (congee), oats, roasted barley, sweet rice, spelt, pumpkin, sweet potato, celeriac, squash, carrot, corn, parsnip, chickpeas, black beans, kumara, yams, peas, walnuts, stewed fruit, chicken, beef, lamb, liver, kidney, mackerel, tuna, anchovy.

Pungent flavours (small amounts): onion, leek, garlic, turnip, pepper, fresh ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, fennel, kitchen spices.

Complex sweet flavours (small amounts): molasses, dates, rice syrup, barley malt, palm sugar.

### Restrict or avoid

Cold-natured, uncooked and raw food: salads, raw fruits (whole and juiced, especially citrus), wheat, sprouts and cereal grasses, raw vegetables, tomato, spinach, Swiss chard, tofu, millet, seaweeds, salt, too many sweet foods and concentrated sweeteners, brown rice, antibiotics, vitamin C (over 1-2 grams per day), beer.

Contesting, Damp generating: ice cream and dairy foods (except a little butter and yoghurt), sugar, chocolate, nuts and seeds (except walnuts) and nut butters.