

Qi depletion

A diet which strengthens Spleen Qi focuses on well cooked, simple food with relatively few components in each meal. The basis of the diet is complex carbohydrates with the addition of small amounts of high quality protein and lightly cooked vegetables. To get the best quality Qi from the food itself it should be fresh and vibrant, and should appeal to the eye as well as palate. Locally grown seasonal produce has the best Qi.

Even though all food should be cooked, overcooking to the point of sogginess is not recommended. Depending on the food, light cooking, leaving a residual crunch is sufficient. Green leafy and delicate vegetables, like broccoli and beans require light cooking only while root vegetables and grains retain their shape and texture and Qi with long slow cooking.

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.

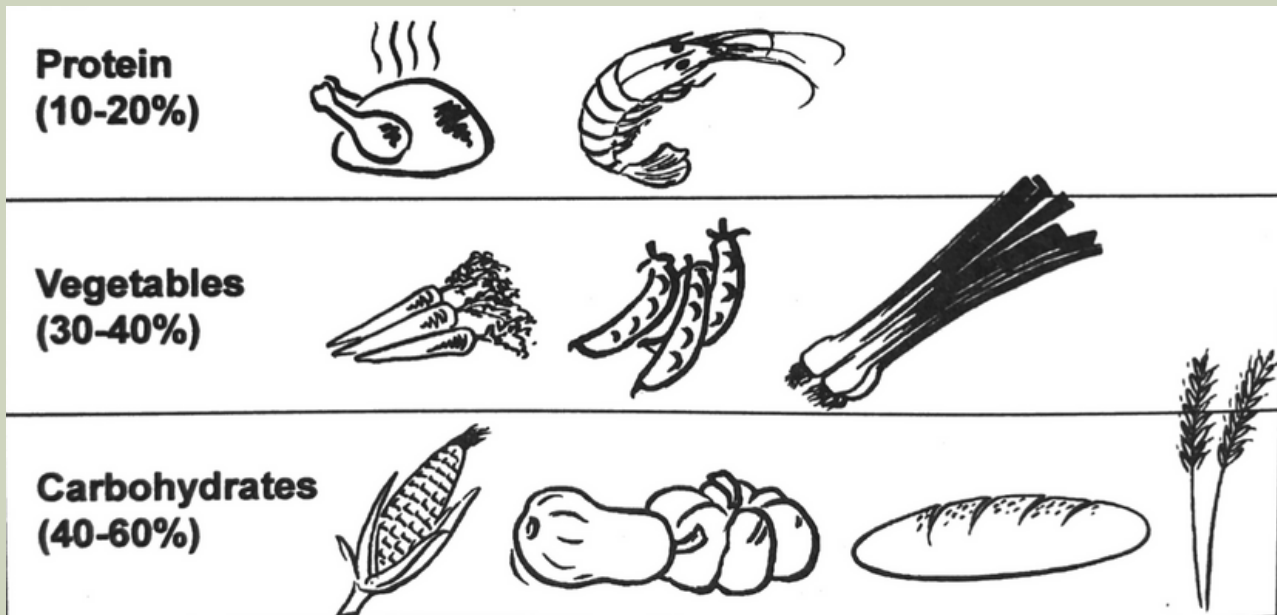
The preparation of food can be a significant factor in its overall Qi quality and benefit. It goes without saying that meals prepared with pleasure and love, taste better than those that are store bought or made in haste and resentment. This can be difficult as not everyone likes to cook or has the time. 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.

The Lungs are an important partner of the Spleen in the Qi production process. Moderate exercise and deep breathing help to strengthen the Lungs. In terms of foods for the Lungs specifically they benefit from a small addition of pungent foods which assist in their natural function of dispersing and descending energy. But do not do too much pungent foods if you are very weak it disperses the Qi too much.

Proportions

Easily digested carbohydrates, such as white rice, oats and starchy root vegetables should make up the bulk of the material ingested, around 40-60%. The remainder is composed of cooked green, red, and yellow vegetables 30-40% and a small proportion ~10-20% or high quality protein. This is especially important in the early stages of a treatment. AS the Spleen strengthens or course other elements can be introduced. Care with the volume.

Portions



General principles

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 carbohydrate and vegetable, 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 j(congee), oats, roasted barley, sweet rice, spelt, pumpkin, sweet potato, celeriac, squash, carrot, corn, parsnip, chick peas, black beans, kumera, yams, peas, walnuts, stewed fruit, chicken, beef, lamb, liver, kidney, mackerel, tuna, anchovy.

Pungent flavours (small amounts): onion, leek, gallic, 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 in foods (except a little butter and yogurt), sugar, chocolate, nuts and seeds (except walnuts) and nut butters.