

# Qi depletion

A diet that 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 small amounts of high-quality protein and lightly cooked vegetables. To get the best Qi from food, it should be fresh, vibrant, and appealing to both the eye and the palate. Locally grown, seasonal produce has the strongest Qi.

All food should be cooked, but not to the point of becoming soggy. Light cooking that leaves a bit of crunch is usually enough. Green leafy and delicate vegetables, such as broccoli and beans, need only light cooking, while root vegetables and grains keep their shape, texture, and Qi with long, slow cooking.

Digestion starts in the mouth, so food is best when it is chewed well and enjoyed slowly. Pleasure in eating is important. Strict or dull diets can weaken the Spleen.

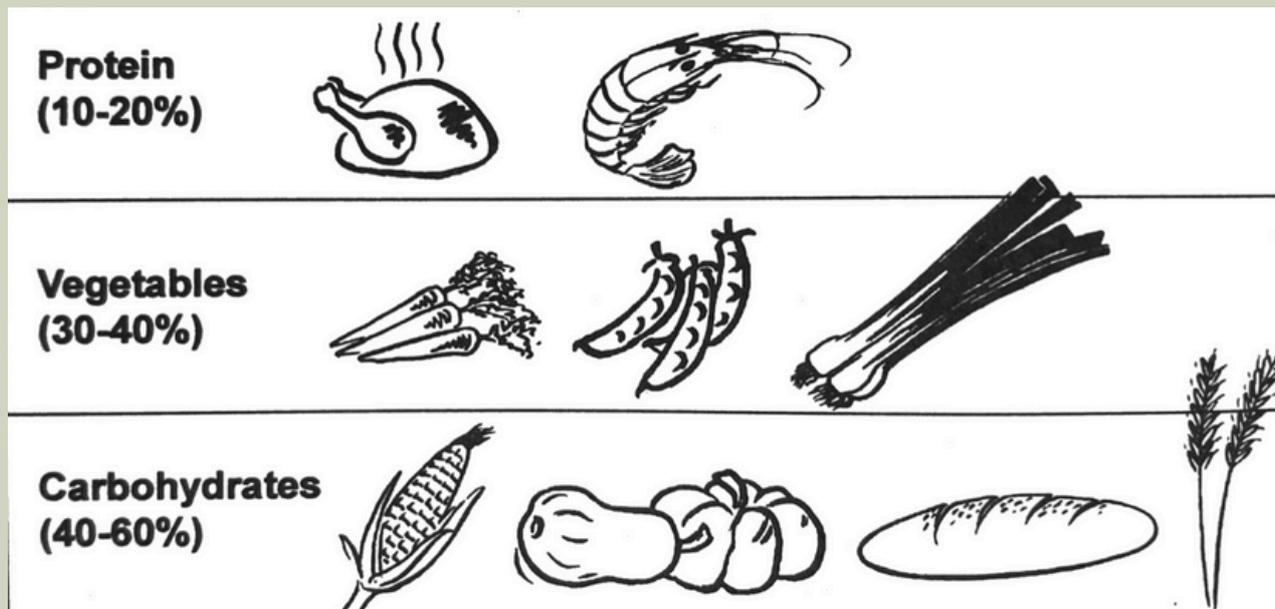
The way food is prepared can also affect its Qi. Meals made with care and enjoyment have more benefit than meals bought ready-made or cooked in a rushed or resentful way. This can be challenging, as not everyone enjoys cooking or has the time, but making space to nurture yourself can be a meaningful part of healing. Preparing soups, stocks, and stews on the weekend for the week ahead can support the Spleen-strengthening process.

The Lungs work closely with the Spleen in Qi production. Gentle exercise and deep breathing help keep the Lungs strong. Foods that support the Lungs include small amounts of pungent ingredients, which help their natural function of dispersing and descending energy. However, too many pungent foods can be draining if you are already very weak.

Proportions:

Easily digested carbohydrates, such as white rice, oats, and starchy root vegetables, should form the majority of each meal, around 40–60%. Cooked green, red, and yellow vegetables make up 30–40%, and a small portion of high-quality protein makes up the remaining 10–20%. This balance is especially helpful in the early stages of treatment. As the Spleen grows stronger, other foods can gradually be added. Keep an eye on overall 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 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 in foods (except a little butter and yoghurt), sugar, chocolate, nuts and seeds (except walnuts) and nut butters.