

Dampness and Phlegm

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

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 forming. Examples are 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, combine cheese with chutney, sipping wine with meat meals, green tea with fried foods, 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 a 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 or 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 right. 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 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 (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 foods (except a little butter and yogurt), sugar, chocolate, nuts and seeds (except walnuts) and nut butters.