

Balance Point Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine

TCM Diet Therapy

Kidney Yin Deficiency

Dietary Recommendations for Kidney Yin Deficiency

In Traditional Chinese Medicine the Kidneys are of great importance and often a focus for treatment. The Kidney system includes not just the urinary system but also the hormonal and endocrine system including aspects of the adrenals, thyroid, pituitary, etc. It is said to supply Yin and Yang to the rest of the organs and body.

Kidney essence closely relates to genetics, vitality, and longevity.

Longevity treatments in Chinese medicine always have a prime focus on the maintenance of the kidneys. A congenital weakness of the Kidneys or lack of Kidney essence results in birth defects and developmental problems. A Kidney deficiency can result in problems with the bones and spine, central nervous system, hormonal system, and premature aging.

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

"the Kidneys pertain to water"

"the Kidneys store essence"

"the Kidneys govern the bones (and teeth)"

"the Kidneys control the fire of the gate of life"

"the emotion of the Kidneys is fear"

"the Kidneys store the will"

"the Kidneys govern reproduction"

"black is the colour of the Kidneys"

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 can 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 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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