



# You are what you eat

## *Chinese dietary therapy*

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) aims at curing the disease from an energetic viewpoint, rather than suppressing the symptoms; looking at the whole body, mind and the spirit of the patient.

TCM practices include theories, diagnosis and treatments such as Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture (body and ear), Moxibustion, Cupping, Massage (Tui Na), energy work (Qigong) life style & dietary advice. According to TCM all diseases have either an internal or external cause. External causes are related to the locality, weather and environment; and the internal causes are mental states, such as, joy, anger, anxiety, etc.

Diet is essential to good health. In TCM all foods possess a certain nature (Cold, Hot, Sweet Sour etc) which can affect the body. Chinese doctors often give dietary advices to the patient to balance their food intake. One might be told to avoid certain foods or to eat more of some food to help the condition. An example is to avoid hot and spicy foods for certain skin conditions.

Food is very important to physical, mental and spiritual health. Our bodies are not designed to deal with artificial additives. Today's food contains chemicals, so our health suffers. This can lead to toxins build up, a lower immune system, bad digestion, and other problems.

One of the most important rules of diet is to avoid unnatural foods that the body cannot process (artificial additives, etc.), heavily processed foods (white flour, sugar etc.), avoiding foods that are hard to digest (e.g. red meat) and so on. The recommendation is to eat the food that are locally grown and in season whenever possible. It also recommends organic is

best, as they don't contain artificial chemicals.

In giving dietary advice, the Chinese physician considers the weather, the season, locality, and the patient's imbalances including emotional ones.

According to TCM, if we consume seasonal foods that are similar in nature to the external environment, we remain in harmony with the environment, and stay healthy.

Living things grow in spring, and in this season, factors such as wind causes more flu, etc. Examples of recommended foods are spinach, celery, lettuce, Chinese yam, and mushrooms.

Summer is hot therefore; daily diet should contain more vegetables and fruit. Greasy and sweet food should be avoided. Factors like summer heat making people sweaty, thirsty, tired, and lacking an appetite. Watermelon, strawberry, tomato, cucumber, and lotus are good choices in summer.

Autumn is dry which mostly affects the lungs. Some people become lacking in fluid, experience dryness in the mouth and throat, rough skin and even constipation. Examples of autumn foods to moisturize and restore normal lung function are pear.

Winter is cold; and many living things slow down to save energy. People have a lower metabolic rate. Appropriate food should be consumed in order to retain warmth. Examples include; duck, dates, and walnuts.

We are a part of the natural world, and should eat the foods that grow around us.

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