



## **Diet Guidelines for Damp & Phlegm**

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM for short), Dampness and Phlegm are created when digestion and fluid metabolism are not functioning properly. To address this through diet, foods that contribute to dampness are avoided or modified and foods that support healthy digestion are emphasized.

For optimum digestion, it is best to consume fresh foods that are slightly cooked. Food that is lightly prepared helps to ensure that nutrients are preserved and are more readily digested and absorbed. General dietary recommendations include eating smaller meals more frequently, enjoying meals by sitting down to relax while you eat and chewing thoroughly to savor flavors.

30 - 40% of meals should consist of complex carbohydrates, especially rice, rye, barley and millet. 40 - 50% of the diet should be comprised of cooked vegetables and proteins should comprise only about 10% of the diet.

Pungent flavours including onion, garlic, turnip, ginger, mint and basil are beneficial in dispersing congested fluids, while overly rich, oily or heavy foods should be avoided because they can overwhelm the digestive system. Cold foods such as raw fruits and vegetables, tofu, and ice cream should also be avoided since they will slow down the digestion process and make the body work harder.

Below is a list of recommended foods. You should not limit your diet to only these foods. Instead follow the guidelines above of the optimum ratios of carbohydrates, vegetables and proteins, and add the recommended foods from the list below within your meals. Wherever possible choose organically grown foods.



### **Specific foods for Dampness and Phlegm**

cooked whole grains – esp. rice, toasted oats, barley, rye, millet, buckwheat, sourdough breads

asparagus, cucumber, celery, pumpkin, squash, carrots, corn, parsnips, peas, onions, shallots, leeks, garlic, turnip, radish, mustard greens, chrysanthemum leaves, day lily bulbs, waterchestnuts, mushrooms including oyster & shiitake  
adzuki beans, chick peas, black beans, kidney beans, fava beans, cowpeas  
chicken, Chinese black chicken, quail, lean meats, goose, rabbit, frog  
clam, seaweeds, mackerel, tuna, anchovy, perch, eel, catfish, crab, oyster  
black pepper, fresh ginger, mustard, nutmeg, cloves, cardamon, nutmeg, thyme, basil, fennel, horseradish, chili peppers, jasmine, rose  
rice syrup, barley malt, dates, figs, sugar cane, stewed fruit- esp. pears, persimmons, kumquats, grapefruit, cherries



### **Foods to restrict or avoid**

salads, raw fruits, citrus, wheat, sprouts, wheat grass, raw vegetables, avocados  
tofu, dairy (except for goat milk products), nut butters, pork, duck and other fatty foods, eggs, soy milk  
overly sweet foods, refined sugars, high doses of vitamin C, seaweeds, chocolate  
cold foods like ice cream or smoothies  
iced drinks including ice water

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### **References:**

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*The Healing Cuisine of China.* Zhao & Ellis. Healing Arts Press: Vermont. 1998.

### **Disclaimer**

*This factsheet is not intended to diagnose or assess. The information provided is not to be considered a substitute for consultation with a qualified health care practitioner.*