



## **Diet Guidelines for Spleen Yang Deficiency**

The Spleen organ network in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM for short) includes the overall health of a person's digestive system. A TCM diagnosis of Spleen Yang deficiency means that your body's digestive strength is significantly compromised.

Digestion in TCM is viewed metaphorically like a pot of soup sitting on a fire. It is the body's metabolic 'fire' that cooks ingested food, allowing the body to extract nourishment from the food. With Yang deficiency, this 'fire' is weakened and unable to perform its needed functions.

For a Spleen Yang deficiency diet it is best to consume fresh foods that are cooked. Food that is warmed helps to ensure that the Body's Yang is preserved and food is more readily digested and absorbed. Also eating smaller meals more frequently and enjoying meals by sitting down to relax while you eat and chewing thoroughly to savor flavors is recommended.

Meals should consist largely of easily digested complex carbohydrates like grains and starchy root vegetables. 30 - 40% of the diet should be comprised of cooked vegetables and proteins should comprise only 10 - 20% of the diet.

Warming foods and spices like animal meats and cinnamon are recommended. Spicy meals that can make a person sweat should be eaten in moderation to avoid dispersing the digestive system's fire. Cold natured foods such as raw vegetables need to be avoided to avoid further damaging the Spleen Yang.

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 Spleen Yang deficiency**

cooked grains, soups, rice, oats, roasted barley, sweet rice, spelt  
parsnips, sweet potatoes, onions, leeks, pumpkin, squash, carrots, yams, peas,  
garlic, turnip, stewed fruits  
chick peas, black beans, walnuts, chestnuts  
lamb, beef, chicken  
mackerel, tuna, anchovy, prawns, mantis shrimp  
black pepper, dry ginger, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, rosemary, turmeric, star  
anise, nutmeg, fennel, molasses, rice syrup, barley malt, dates

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

citrus, wheat grass, raw fruits, raw vegetables, sprouts, salads, tomatoes,  
spinach, swiss chard, soybeans, tofu, soy milk, dairy (cheese, milk, yogurt, etc.),  
nut butters and other high oil foods  
glutinous rice, seaweeds refined sugars, vinegar, doses of vitamin C, peppermint  
chocolate, cold foods like ice cream or smoothies, iced drinks including ice water

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### **References:**

*Clinical Handbook Of Internal Medicine, Vol. 2.* MacLean & Lyttleton. University of Western Sydney: Australia. 2002.  
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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.*