



Diet Guidelines for Kidney Yang Deficiency

The Kidney organ network in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM for short), not only includes our bodies' ability to eliminate wastes through the urine, but also includes the overall reserves stored in our bodies.

A diagnosis of Kidney Yang deficiency means that the reserves that warm the body are weakened and unable to perform their functions. A diet that includes nourishing and warming foods can help to preserve and restore Kidney Yang.

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 Kidney Yang deficiency diet it is best to consume fresh foods that are cooked. Food that is lightly prepared helps to ensure that nutrients are preserved and are 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. Cold natured foods such as raw vegetables need to be avoided to avoid further damaging the 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. Where ever possible choose organically grown foods.



Specific foods for Kidney 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, pistachios
lamb, beef, chicken, lamb, veal, goat, venison and beef kidneys
mackerel, tuna, anchovy, prawns, mantis shrimp, salmon, mussels
black pepper, fresh ginger, dry ginger, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, rosemary,
turmeric, star anise, nutmeg, fenugreek, chives, spring onions, fennel,
molasses, rice syrup, barley malt, dates



Foods to restrict or avoid

raw fruits, raw vegetables, sprouts, spinach, salads
soybeans, tofu, soy milk, glutinous rice, seaweeds
dairy (cheese, milk, yogurt, etc.)
cold foods like ice cream or smoothies
iced drinks including ice water
excessive salt, vinegar and refined sugars

References:

Clinical Handbook Of Internal Medicine, Vol. 2. MacLean & Lyttleton. University of Western Sydney: Australia. 2002.
Chinese Dietary Therapy. Liu, J. Churchill Livingston: Edinburgh. 1995.
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.