

TCM Dietary Therapy

FOOD ENERGETICS

This chart presents a selection of common foods and herbs in terms of their taste, energy, meridian propensity, effect in traditional Chinese medicine, and clinical applications. Foods are categorized into four groups: vegetables; fruits; nuts and grains; and animal meats and seafood. Commonly-used medicinal herbs are listed after the food categories.

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Vegetables

Name	Taste	Energy	Meridian Propensity	Effects	Applications
Garlic	Pungent; Sweet	Warm	Spleen; Stomach; Lung	Strengthen Stomach; Warm the Middle Burner	Abdominal pain; Dysentery; Pertussis; TB
Carrot	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Liver; Lung	Strengthens the Spleen; Reinforces Liver energy; Clears Heat	Indigestion; Blurred vision; cough
Napa	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Large Intestine	Promotes urination	Constipation; Ulcers
Cabbage	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Stomach	Nourishes Spleen; Regulates Stomach	Spasm and pain in the upper abdomen; Gastric ulcer
Celery	Pungent; Sweet	Cool	Liver; Stomach; Bladder	Clears Heat; Calms the Liver; Reinforces the Stomach	Hypertension; Dizziness; Headache
Spinach	Sweet	Cool	Large Intestine; Stomach; Liver	Moistens dryness; Nourishes the Liver	Thirst; Dizziness; Constipation
Potato	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Stomach; Large Intestine	Reinforces the Spleen and Stomach	Abdominal pain; Gastric Ulcers
Eggplant	Sweet	Cold	Stomach; Large Intestine	Clears Heat; Cools Blood; Assists bowel motions	Hemorrhoids; Bloody stools
Cucumber	Sweet	Cool	Stomach; Bladder	Clears Heat; Quenches thirst; Relieves edema	Edema; Thirst; Difficult urination
Tremella	Sweet	Neutral	Lung; Stomach	Moistens the Lungs; Nourishes Yin; Produces body fluids	Dry Cough; Thirst; Dry throat

Shiitake Mushroom	Sweet	Neutral	Stomach		Resolves hard masses	Rickets; Anemia; Measle Cancers
Kelp	Salty	Cold	Liver; Stomach; Kidney		Dissolves Phlegm; Softens hard masses; Relieves edema	Goiter; hernia; edem carcinomas
Black Fungus	Sweet	Neutral	Stomach; Intestine	Large	Arrests bleeding; Cools blood	Hemorrhoids; Discharge blood from anus
Lettuce	Bitter; Sweet	Cool	Stomach; Intestine	Large	Promotes urination	Difficulty urinating; Discharge of bloody urine
Onion	Pungent; Bitter	Warm	Lung; Stomach; Intestine	Large	Activates Yang; Dissolves hard masses; Sends Chi down	Chest Stiffness; Cough Ulcers
Pumpkin	Sweet	Warm	Spleen; Stomach		Reinforces the Middle Burner; Replenishes Chi	Malnutrition; Cough; Worm infestation
Radish	Pungent; Sweet	Cool	Lung; Stomach		Promotes digestion; Eliminates Phlegm	Respiratory infection Common cold; flu
Ginger	Pungent	Warm	Lung; Spleen; Stomach		Warms the Lungs; Releases the exterior by inducing sweating	Common cold; Vomiting Dysentery; Dyspepsia
Wax Gourd	Sweet	Cool	Lung; Bladder	Intestines;	Promotes water passage; Eliminates phlegm; Clears Heat and toxins	Diabetes; Thirst; Swelling
Squash	Sweet	Warm	Spleen; Stomach		Heals inflammation; Relieves pain	Bronchiectasis, Pulmonary abscess
Yam	Neutral	Neutral	Lung; Spleen; Kidneys		Tonifies Lung, Spleen, and Kidneys	Diarrhea; Cough; Diabetes

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Fruits

Name	Taste	Energy	Meridian Propensity	Effects	Applications
Pear	Sweet; Sour	Cool	Lung; Stomach	Produces fluids; Eliminates mucus; Lubricates dryness	Cough; Sore throat
Orange	Sweet; Sour	Cool	Stomach; Bladder	Produces body fluids; Induces urination	Difficult urination; Thirst

Tangerine	Sweet; Sour	Cool	Lung; Kidneys Stomach;	Promotes digestion; Strengthens the Spleen	Chest congestion; Vomiting Hiccups
Peach	Sweet; Sour	Warm		Promotes Blood circulation; Produces fluids; Lubricates intestines	Cough; Hernia pain
Strawberry	Sweet; Sour	Cool	Lung; Spleen	Moistens the Lung; Strengthens the Spleen	Dry cough; Sore throat Indigestion
Apricot	Sweet; Sour	Neutral	Lung; Stomach	Produces body fluids; Moistens the Lungs	Thirst; Asthma
Plum	Sweet; Sour	Cool	Liver; Stomach	Clears Liver Heat; Produces body fluids	Liver disease; Diabetes
Hawthorn	Sweet; Sour	Warm	Spleen; Stomach; Liver	Promotes digestion; Improves circulation	Indigestion; Abdominal swelling
Apple	Sweet, Sour	Cool	Spleen; Stomach	Produces body fluids; Reinforces the Spleen	Debility; Indigestion; Loss appetite
Banana	Sweet	Cold	Stomach; Large Intestine	Strengthens Stomach; Promotes body fluids; Moistens dryness	Dry throat; Thirst; Constipation
Grape	Sweet; Sour	Neutral	Kidney; Liver; Stomach	Tonifies Chi and Blood; Produces body fluids	Cough; Palpitations; Lack Energy
Pineapple	Sweet; Sour	Neutral	Stomach; Bladder	Induces urination; Promotes digestion; Produces body fluids	Edema; Indigestion Diarrhea; Vomiting
Cherry	Sweet; Sour	Warm	Spleen; Liver	Strengthens Spleen and Stomach; Nourishes Liver and Kidneys	Loss of appetite; Waist knee soreness
Lemon	Sour	Cold	Stomach; Lung; Liver	Produces body fluids; Relieves Heat	Cough; Indigestion Diabetes
Tomato	Sweet; Sour	Cool	Stomach; Liver	Clears Heat; Produces body fluids; Nourishes Yin	Dry throat; Blurred vision Bleeding gums; Nasal Bleeding
Watermelon	Sweet	Cold	Stomach; Heart; Bladder	Clears Heat; Induces urination; Relieves thirst	Urination difficulty; Sore throat; Mouth canker sores
Lychee	Sweet; Sour	Warm	Spleen; Stomach; Liver	Produces body fluids; Nourishes blood	Vomiting; Loss of appetite Palpitations; Dizziness

Grapefruit	Sweet; Sour	Cold	Stomach; Lung	Promotes body fluids; Restores appetite	Indigestion; Poor appetit Vomiting
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Nuts and Grains

Name	Taste	Energy	Meridian Propensity	Effects	Applications
Almond	Sweet	Neutral	Lung; Spleen; Large Intestine	Moistens the Lungs and Intestines; Strengthens the Spleen and Stomach	Cough; Difficulty breathin Constipation
Longan	Sweet	Warm	Heart; Spleen	Tonifies the Heart and Spleen; Nourishes the Blood	Insomnia; Forgetfulness Palpitations; Nervousness
Sunflower Seed	Sweet	Warm; Neutral	Spleen; Large Intestine	Stops diarrhea; Facilitates eruption of rash in measles	Constipation; Diarrhea wi discharge of blood
Walnut	Sweet	Warm	Kidney; Lung; Large Intestine	Lubricates Intestines; Tonifies Lung and Kidney	Asthma; Cough; Semin emission; Impotenc Constipation
Peanut	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Lung	Strengthens Spleen Chi; Moistens the Lungs; Dissolves Phlegm	Dry cough; Upset stomach Beriberi
Pine Nut	Sweet	Warm	Lung; Large Intestine	Nourishes deficiency; Moistens the Lungs; Lubricates the Intestines	Dry cough; Constipation
Lotus Seed	Sweet; Astringent	Neutral	Spleen; Heart; Kidney	Strengthens the Spleen and Stomach; Nourishes the Heart; Calms the mind	Loss of appetit Leukorrhea; Semin emission; Restlessnes Insomnia
Ginkgo Nut	Sweet; Bitter	Neutral	Lung; Spleen; Kidney	Consolidates the Lungs; Nourishes the Spleen	Difficult breathing; Coug Profuse leukorrhe Frequent urinatio Incontinence
Mung Bean	Sweet	Cool	Heart; Stomach	Clears Heat; Detoxifies; Induces urination	Edema; Diarrhea; Dru poisoning
Soya Bean	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Stomach	Strengthens the Spleen; Removes Dampness; Detoxifies	Edema; Beri-beri; Children Malnutrition; Poisoning
Wheat	Sweet	Cool	Heart; Spleen; Kidney	Nourishes the Heart; Strengthens the Spleen	Hysteria; Dry mout Diarrhea

Barley	Sweet	Cool	Spleen; Stomach; Bladder	Strengthens the Spleen; Regulates the Stomach	Loss of appetite; Diarrhea Thirst
Glutinous Rice	Sweet	Warm	Spleen; Stomach; Lung	Strengthens the Spleen and Stomach; Nourishes Lung Chi	Frequent urination; Excessive perspiration; Diarrhea
Millet	Sweet; Salty	Cold	Spleen; Stomach; Kidney	Nourishes the Spleen and Kidney; Relieves thirst; Induces urination	Vomiting; Loss of appetite; Difficulty urinating
Corn	Sweet	Neutral	Stomach; Bladder	Strengthens the Stomach; Regulates the Middle Burner	Loss of appetite; Edema; Difficult urination
Pea	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Stomach	Strengthens the Spleen; Relieves edema; Produces body fluids	Dry throat; Thirst
Sesame	Sweet	Neutral	Liver; Kidney; Large Intestine	Nourishes the Liver and Kidneys; Moistens intestinal dryness	Constipation; Dry skin; Greasy hair

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Animal Meats and Sea Foods

Name	Taste	Energy	Meridian Propensity	Effects	Applications
Chicken	Sweet	Warm	Spleen; Stomach	Nourishes the Spleen; Tonifies the Kidneys; Nourishes Chi and Blood	Weakness after childbirth or surgery; Chronic illness; Frequent urination
Duck	Sweet; Salty	Neutral	Spleen; Lung; Kidneys	Nourishes Yin; Facilitates water passage; Removes dampness	Cough; Dry throat; Edema
Pork	Sweet; Salty	Neutral	Lung; Spleen; Liver	Nourishes Yin; Moistens dryness; Tonifies Blood	Dry cough; Dry mouth; Emaciation; Constipation
Mutton	Sweet	Warm	Spleen; Kidney	Warms the Middle Burner; Tonifies Chi and Blood	Chronic weakness; Abdominal pain; Lumbago
Beef	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Stomach	Strengthens the Spleen and Stomach; Tonifies Chi and Blood	Underweight; Diabetes; Edema; General weakness
Rabbit	Sweet	Cool	Spleen; Stomach	Strengthens the Spleen; Nourishes the Chi	Loss of appetite; Fatigue; Thirst
Carp	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Stomach	Facilitates water passage; Promotes milk secretion	Edema; Beriberi; Jaundice; Cough

Crab	Salty	Cold	Liver	Promotes Blood circulation; Disperses Blood stasis;	Traumatic injuries; Bone fracture; Tinea; Jaundice
Clam	Sweet; Salty	Cold	Liver; Kidneys	Clears Heats; Nourishes Yin; Nourishes the Liver	Dizziness; Blurred vision Thirst
Mussel	Salty	Warm	Liver; Kidney	Nourishes the Liver and Kidney; Tonifies the Blood and Essence	Night Sweats; Lumbago Impotence; Dizziness Headache
Shrimp	Sweet	Warm	Liver; Kidney	Nourishes the Kidney; Tonifies Yang	Impotence; Lack of milk after childbirth
Catfish	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Stomach	Strengthens the Spleen; Nourishes the Chi; Induces urination	Lack of milk after childbirth; Edema

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Medicinal Herbs in Dietary Therapy

Name	Taste	Energy	Meridian Propensity	Effects	Applications
Chinese Ginseng	Sweet; Bitter	Warm	Spleen; Lung; Heart	Tonifies Chi; Nourishes the Lung and Spleen	Breathlessness; Palpitation Collapse
Condonopsis Root	Sweet	Neutral	Lung; Spleen	Tonifies the Middle Burner; Nourishes the Blood and Lung	Breathlessness; Palpitation Chronic illness
American Ginseng	Sweet; Bitter	Cool	Lung; Stomach	Tonifies Chi; Produces fluids; Moistens Lung; Clears Heat	Dry mouth, Thirst, Fatigue
Astragalus	Sweet	Warm	Lung; Spleen	Tonifies the Spleen; Raises the Yang; Augments the Protective Chi	Profuse sweating; Fatigue; Diarrhea; Prolapsed anus
Dioscorea	Sweet	Neutral	Kidney; Lung; Spleen	Tonifies the Spleen and Stomach; Nourishes Lung Chi and Kidneys	Diarrhea; Cough; Frequent urination
Schisandra Fruit	Sour	Warm	Heart; Kidney; Lung	Nourishes Chi; Produces fluids; Calms the Heart	Cough; Dry mouth; Chronic diarrhea; Sweating
Dang-Kuei	Sweet; Acrid; Bitter	Warm	Heart; Liver; Spleen	Tonifies Blood; Regulates menses; Moistens the Large Intestine	Irregular periods; Dizziness; Constipation

Rehmannia	Sweet	Warm	Heart; Liver; Kidney	Nourishes Yin; Tonifies Blood	Back pain; Irregular period; Dizziness
Fo-Ti	Sweet; Bitter; Astringent	Warm	Liver; Kidney	Tonifies Liver and Kidney; Nourishes the Blood	Dizziness; Hair loss; Back pain; High cholesterol
Lycium Fruit	Sweet	Neutral	Liver; Lung; Kidney	Nourishes the Liver and Kidneys	Dizziness; Ringing in Ears; Back pain; Diabetes
Asparagus Tuber	Sweet; Bitter	Cold	Lung; Stomach	Nourishes Yin; Clears Heat; Moistens Lung; Produces fluids	Fever; Cough; Diabetes; Sore throat; Constipation;
Ophiopogon Tuber	Sweet; Bitter	Cold	Heart; Lung; Stomach	Nourishes Yin; Moistens Lung; Calms Heart	Cough; Dry tongue; Constipation; Irritability
Lily Bulb	Sweet; Bitter	Cold	Heart; Lung	Moistens the Lung; Clears Heat; Stops cough; Calms the Spirit	Cough; Sore throat; Insomnia; Irritability; Restlessness; Palpitations
Licorice	Sweet	Neutral	Spleen; Stomach; Lung	Tonifies the Spleen; Moistens the Lung; Clears Heat	Lassitude; Loose stools; Cough; Breath shortness
Eucommia Bark	Sweet; Sour	Warm	Kidney; Liver	Tonifies Liver and Kidneys; Strengthens the sinews and bones; Calms the fetus	Back pain; Abortion; High blood pressure; Restless fetus
Chinese Caterpillar Fungus	Sweet	Warm	Lung; Kidney	Tonifies the Yang; Nourishes the Kidneys; Nourishes the Lung Yin	Impotence; Sore lower back; Chronic cough; Consumptive cough
Chrysanthemum Flower	Sweet; Bitter	Cold	Liver; Lung	Disperses the Wind; Clears the Heat; Clears the Liver and eyes	Fever; Headache; Blurry vision; Dizziness; Deafness
Honeysuckle Flower	Sweet	Cold	Lung; Heart; Stomach	Clears Heat and toxic substance	Fever; Sore throat; Boils; Carbuncles
Fritillaria	Bitter; Sweet	Cold	Heart; Lung	Clears Heat; Transforms phlegm; Dissipates nodules	Cough; Wheezing; Nodule; Sore; Swelling; Scrofula
Job's Tears	Sweet	Cool	Spleen; Lung; Kidney	Strengthens Spleen; Eliminates Dampness; Clears Heat	Immune Deficiency; Cancer
Notoginseng	Sweet; Bitter	Warm	Liver; Stomach; Large Intestine	Stops bleeding; Transforms blood stasis; Reduces swelling	Vomiting blood; Nosebleed; Blood in the urine or stool; Traumatic injuries
Citrus	Acrid;	Warm;	Lung; Spleen; Stomach	Regulates the Chi; Dries	Epigastric distention,

	Bitter	Aromatic	dampness; Transforms phlegm	fullness; bloating; Belching Nausea; Vomiting
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Classical Chinese Dietary Therapy Recipes

Classical Chinese dietary recipes are a treasure of traditional Chinese medicine. These tasteful delicious recipes have helped the Chinese population maintain their health and wellness for several millennia. There are thousands of dietary therapy recipes recorded in the literature, but here we present just six simple examples.

Ginseng/Lotus Seed Soup

Chinese Ginseng 10g

Lotus Seed 10g

Rock Sugar 60g

Preparation: Soak the Chinese ginseng and lotus seeds for 6 hours. Add the rock sugar. Steam boiling for 3 hours. Drink the liquids and eat the ginseng/lotus seeds.

This recipe is to tonify the Qi and strengthen the Spleen. It can apply to general weakness from chronic illness, profuse sweating, loss of appetite, fatigue, diarrhea.

Chicken/Astragalus/Angelica Soup

Chicken 200g

Astragalus 30g

Angelica 10g

Onion 20g

Ginger 20g

Salt 10g

Preparation: Cook and steam/boil for two hours.

This recipe to nourish the Qi and Blood. It can apply to fatigue, general weakness of body and any situation after serious blood loss.

Double Ear Soup

Tremela 20g

Wood-Ear 20g

Citrus 5g

Rock Sugar 30g

Preparation: Add sufficient water to cook for three hours.

This recipe is to enhance the vision and reduce cholesterol. It can be used for high cholesterol, coronary heart disease and arteriosclerosis.

Fried Celery/Shiitake Mushroom

Celery 500g

Shiitake Mushroom 500g

Olive Oil 2 tsp

Salt 20g

Sugar 3g

Preparation: Soak and soften the dry shiitake mushrooms. Cut the celery and mushrooms.

This recipe has the function of reducing blood pressure and protecting the liver. It is a wonderful recipe for high blood pressure, hepatitis and coronary heart disease patients.

Wax Gourd/Job's Tear Soup

Wax Gourd 400g

Job's Tear 50g

Preparation: Cook for half an hour. Add sugar or salt.

This recipe has the function of clearing heat, strengthening the Spleen and inducing urination. It can be used for skin rashes, difficult urination, thirst and anxiety.

Steamed Fritillaria/Pear

Fritillaria 12g

Pear 2

Rock Sugar 20g

Preparation: Peel the pears and take the kernels out from the pears. Mix the fritillaria and rock sugar together. Steam two hours with low flame.

This recipe has the function of moistening and nourishing the Lungs and transforming phlegm. It can be used for chronic cough, thirst, and sore throat.

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