



# THE “SPLEEN QI” FERTILITY-ENHANCING DIET

Asian dietary therapy provides a powerful tool for correcting disharmonies within the body. Sun Si-miao, a famous doctor of Chinese Medicine, believed the most important therapy was the regulation of a patient's diet, which then could be supported and enhanced with acupuncture and herbal treatment.

**Step #1: Begin to adopt the Spleen Qi diet to help ensure optimal intake of nutrients and digestion and distribution to the reproductive and other organ systems.**

## **Basic Guidelines:**

1. Model your meals on an Asian diet—visualize a plate filled with mostly steamed vegetables, some whole grains and hand-sized portions of protein.
2. Favor cooked or lightly-steamed foods over raw foods. Avoid cold food and drinks that put out the digestive fire.
3. Chew food slowly and mindfully. For optimal digestion, avoid drinking at mealtime and one-half before and after your meal.
4. Eat organic foods, especially if consuming meat.
5. To stabilize blood sugar levels throughout the day, consume a protein and carbohydrate at each meal and snack.
6. Eliminate all refined sugars and artificial sweeteners. Use low-glycemic natural replacements sparingly (e.g., agave nectar, Stevia, xylitol).
7. Replace cow-based dairy products with rice milk, almond milk, or sheep or goat's milk.
8. Eliminate refined carbohydrates and wheat. Look for sprouted breads (e.g., Ezekial, Food for Life) and products made with spelt flour, rice flour, oat flour, corn flour and polenta. Choose brown rice over white rice. Use pasta alternatives including spelt, brown rice, spaghetti squash and quinoa.

9. Cook with unrefined organic oils: extra virgin olive oil, sesame oil, peanut oil and high oleic sunflower oil.
10. Replace coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated) with any of the vast array of healing teas: chamomile (calming), ginger (warming, supportive of digestion), red clover (believed to enhance fertility) and peppermint (cooling).
11. Avoid alcohol

**Spleen Qi Tonics** improve the quality of available energy in the body. Eat these foods if you are often fatigued, especially during your period, and if you have low blood pressure or bruise easily. They are also helpful with certain conditions of luteal phase defect and premenstrual spotting.

*Beef, cherries, chicken, coconut, date, eel, fig, ginseng, goose, grape, ham, herring, Job's tears, barley (coix), lentil, licorice, mackerel, microalgae, molasses, oats, octopus, potato, pumpkin, pumpkin seeds, rabbit, rice, royal jelly, sweet potato, shitake mushroom, squash, sturgeon, tofu, yam.*

**Step #2: Supplement your Spleen Qi diet with foods that will further balance you given your individual diagnosis.** If you have multiple diagnoses and food choices appear conflicting across categories, follow the basic Spleen Qi diet guidelines and eat variety from the foods from your different diagnoses, heeding your body's wisdom about what you need more and less of. Try not to let food become a source of stress, but instead an opportunity to explore new tastes you may be less familiar with.

### **Foods That Supplement and Tonify Deficient Conditions**

**Kidney Tonics** augment and support the reproductive energies.

*Adzuki beans, black bean, bee pollen, blue-green algae, chlorella, clams, corn, gelatin, kelp, legumes, lycium, millet, mulberry, organ meats, oysters, parsley, pumpkin seed, raspberry, royal jelly, spirulina, string bean, tofu, walnuts, wheat germ, wheat grass, wild rice, yam.*

Avoid wheat: the "lectins" in wheat and refined carbohydrates congest the intestines and blood, impeding the hormonal system and causing food sensitivities, allergies, and autoimmune reactions that can inhibit the reproductive response and implantation.

**Kidney Yin Tonics** enhance deep reserves to soothe and calm the system. Consume these foods if you have short cycles, scant cervical mucus, night sweats, hot flashes or back or knee weakness. Yin tonics are moistening, so consume in moderation if your diagnosis includes Spleen Qi deficiency.

*Apple, asparagus, bananas, barley, bean sprouts, beets, blackberry, bulgur, cheese, chlorella, chickpeas, clam, crab, cuttlefish, duck, eggplant, eggs, honey, grapes, kidney bean, jellyfish, lemon, malt, mango, melon, milk, mulberry, organ meats, oyster, pea, pear, pineapples, pomegranate, pork, rabbit, raspberries, rice, seaweed, shellfish, spirulina, string bean, tofu, tomato, watermelon, wheat germ, yam.*

Omit milk. When choosing dairy products, opt for goat or sheep's milk yogurt and cheese, which are easier to digest. It is advisable to omit all cow's milk-based dairy products for the first month of the Spleen Qi Diet. Add any dairy back into your diet slowly, watching how the body responds.

Avoid bananas, which have wonderful moistening properties but exacerbate issues of dampness.

**Kidney Yang Tonics** generate warmth and stimulate the system to heat up cold conditions.

These foods will help raise your yang function if you have premenstrual low back pain, low libido, nighttime urination, and are generally cold in nature. If you also have heat signs, eat in moderation.

*Anchovy, adzuki beans, anise, basil, beets, black beans, black pepper, caraway, cayenne, cherries, chestnut, chicken, chives, cinnamon bark, cloves, coriander, cumin, dates, dill, fennel, fenugreek seed, garlic, dried ginger, kidney, lamb, leeks, lentils, lobster, mussels, mustard leaf, mutton, nutmeg, oats, onions, peach, pine nuts, pistachio, quinoa, raspberry, rosemary, sage, scallions, shrimp, spelt, star anise, sweet brown rice, thyme, trout, turnip, walnuts.*

**Blood Tonics** nourish the body. Eat these if you have scant menstrual blood, premenstrual dizziness, hair loss, and dry skin. If your Spleen energies are weak, blood tonics can be cloying (cause clumping, gumminess), so consume them in moderation if your diagnosis includes Spleen Qi deficiency.

*Adzuki beans, apricot, beef, beetroot, blackberries, bone marrow, eggs, cuttlefish, dark leafy greens, date, dandelion, fig, grape, kidney bean, liver, hormone-free meat and liver, microalgae, nettle, octopus, oyster, parsley, raspberry, sardine, spinach, spirulina, sweet rice, watercress.*

### **Foods That Benefit Excess Conditions by Facilitating Clearing**

**To Move the Qi and Reduce Stagnation**, these foods will help you if you suffer from many premenstrual symptoms, irritability, headaches, or have breast tenderness at ovulation. Consume in moderation if your Kidney Yin energies are very deficient.

*Basil, caraway, cardamom, carrot, cayenne, chive, clove, coriander, dill seed, garlic, marjoram, mustard leaf, orange peel, peppermint, radish, rosemary, spearmint, star anise, tangerine peel, thyme, turmeric.*

Avoid all animal products treated with hormones and eat small meals throughout the day.

**To Move the Blood to Treat Blood Stasis**, these foods will help if you have dark, brown or black menstrual blood, clotting during the period, fibroids or endometriosis.

*Abalone, beets, bilberry, Brussels sprouts, chestnut, chili pepper, chive, crab, cucumbers, dark green vegetables, eggplant, evening primrose oil, fish and fish oil, hawthorn berry, kelp, lemon, lime, linseed oil, mustard leaf, nuts and seed oils, onion, peach, saffron, scallion, seaweed, spirulina, squid, sturgeon, turnips, vinegar.*

Avoid all fatty meats other than seafood.

**To Cool Heat** if you are prone to fevers, night sweats, hot flashes or hot skin rashes (including acne) or irritation. May be used with Yang tonics to cool Heat.

*Asparagus, bamboo shoot, banana, egg whites, clam, eggplant, elderflower, grapefruit, lemon, lettuce, melon, millet, mung beans, bean sprouts, peppermint, potato, salt, tofu, watermelon, wheat*

See notes above on avoiding wheat and bananas.

**To Dry Dampness** if you suffer from abnormal menstrual discharges, vaginal itching or irritation, and pustular skin eruptions. Weak Spleen energies can make you prone to dampness. May be used with all other conditions.

*Adzuki beans, alfalfa, anchovy, barley, cabbage, carrots, celery, corn, cranberries, garlic, green leafy vegetables, green tea, horseradish, jasmine tea, Job's tears, kidney beans, lemon, mackerel, marjoram, button mushrooms, mustard leaf, onion, parsley, pumpkin, radish, rye, scallion, turnip, plum.*

Avoid the following damp foods: cow's milk products, pork, roasted peanuts, fruit juices, wheat, yeast, breads, alcohol, bananas, sugar, sweeteners and saturated fats.

**To Eliminate Phlegm**, add these foods if you have skin or thyroid nodules, fibrocystic breasts or ovaries or the accumulation of phlegm in the throat.

*Almonds, apple peel, clam, garlic, grapefruit, kelp, lemon peel, licorice, marjoram, button mushrooms, mustard leaf, mustard seed, olive, onion, orange peel, pear, black pepper, white pepper, peppermint, persimmon, plantain, radish, seaweed, shitake mushroom, shrimp, tea, thyme, walnuts.*