

AYURVEDA HEALTH CARE CENTER

VATA/ PITTA FOOD PROGRAM

*HEALING THROUGH HARMONY

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Basic Principles

Qualities to reduce: Hot, light, dry

Best: Sweet

Small Amounts: Astringent, sour **Worst tastes:** Salty, pungent, bitter

GRAINS

It is best to eat these as cooked grain or as unyeasted bread.

Best: Cooked oats, wheat, white basmati rice **Small Amounts:** Amaranth, barley, millet, quinoa, rice (brown or white, short or long grain), rye **Avoid:** Buckwheat, corn flour products, dry oats

DAIRY

It is best to use raw or organic milk. Milk should be taken warm with a small amount of spices such as ginger and cardamom.

Best: Butter, cottage cheese, cream cheese, ghee, milk (whole), paneer cheese

Small Amounts: Buttermilk, hard non-salted

cheeses, kefir, sour cream, yogurt **Avoid:** Ice cream, frozen yogurt

SWEETENERS

Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance.

Best: Honey (fresh), maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup, rice syrup

Small Amounts: Date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, jaggery, molasses, sucanat

Avoid: White table sugar

OILS

Oils are very important and should be used abundantly if the skin is dry. They alleviate dryness and are generally heavy and nourishing.

Best: Avocado, coconut, ghee, olive oil, sunflower **Small Amounts:** Almond, castor, corn, flaxseed, sesame, soy

Avoid: Canola, lard, margarine, mustard, peanut, safflower

FRUITS

Fruits are best when they are well ripened and sweet. These will bring balance to both *doshas*. In general, due to their lightness, their intake should be consumed in moderation.

Best: Apricots, avocado, bananas (very well ripened), blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, coconut, dates, figs, jujube (cooked), grapes, lemons, limes, mango, nectarines, oranges (sweet), papaya (sweet), peaches, pears, persimmons, plums (sweet), pomegranate, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries

Small Amounts: Apples, bananas, cherries, cranberries, grapefruit, sweet pineapple, tangerines, watermelon

Avoid: Dry fruit, jujube (dry), olives, oranges (sour), papaya (sour), pineapple (sour), plums (sour)

VEGETABLES

Cooked vegetables are best as they are more nourishing and easier to digest. Only leafy greens may be eaten raw with dressing. More raw salads may be eaten in the hot summer if digestion is strong and there is little gas or constipation.

Best: Artichoke (with oily dressing), avocado, bean sprouts, cauliflower, cilantro, corn, Jerusalem artichoke, leeks, okra, onion (cooked), potato, pumpkin, seaweed, squash (acorn, winter, crookneck, zucchini, etc.), sunflower sprouts, tomato (sweet vine ripened)

Small Amounts: Alfalfa sprouts, asparagus, beets, bell pepper, bitter melon, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrot, celery, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, kale, lettuce (raw), mushrooms, mustard greens, parsley, peas (sweet), spinach, sweet potato, tomato (sour), turnips

Avoid: Cabbage, chilies, hot peppers, radishes, raw onion, tomato paste and sauce

NUTS AND SEEDS

These should be eaten lightly dry roasted to assist digestion and only very lightly salted, if at all. Nut butters, except for peanut, may also be eaten.

Best: Coconut, piňon (pine nuts), sunflower seeds

Small Amounts: Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, lotus seeds, macadamia, pecans, pistachio (non

salted), pumpkin seeds **Avoid:** Peanuts

MEATS

Repeated research shows that plant-based diets are healthier than meat-based diets and prevent many diseases. Ayurveda and Yoga emphasize a vegetarian diet primarily for spiritual reasons. Hence, omnivores should limit meat consumption if possible. Weak patients should take them as a soup broth.

Best: Chicken (white meat), egg, fresh water fish, pork, turkey (white meat)

Small Amounts: Beef, duck, lamb, seafood, veni-

Avoid: Dark meat of chicken or turkey, shellfish

LEGUMES

Those listed in "Small Amounts" are best as a dal or a spread with spices added. When digestion is weak or constipation present, even those beans listed under "Small Amounts" should be avoided.

Best: Mung beans, tofu

Small Amounts: Aduki beans, black gram, chickpeas, kidney beans, black lentils, navy beans, pinto beans, soy beans, split peas

Avoid: Fava beans, red and yellow lentils

SPICES

Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients and improve the flavor. Food should have an overall spicing effect of being warming but not hot. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important and not the individual spice used. You may use large amounts of the best spices and even very small amounts of the avoid spices. Food should never be bland.

Best: Bay leaf, caraway, cardamom, catnip, chamomile, cilantro, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, lemon verbena, peppermint, rosemary, saffron, spearmint, turmeric

Small Amounts: Anise, basil, cinnamon, coconut, fenugreek, ginger (fresh), marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, poppy seeds, sage, salt, star anise, thyme **Avoid:** Asafoetida, black pepper, calamus, cayenne, cloves, garlic (raw), ginger (dry), horseradish,

hot mustards, hyssop

CONDIMENTS

Best: None

Small Amounts: Carob, mayonnaise **Avoid:** Catsup, chocolate, tamari, vinegar

BEVERAGES

These are best taken at room temperature or warm and never ice cold.

Best: Chamomile tea, licorice tea, mild spice teas, milk, mint tea, water

Small Amounts: Carrot juice (diluted), fruit juices (diluted), naturally flavored soda and juice beverages, tea (black or green)

Avoid: Alcohol, coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated), soft drinks, very spicy tea, tomato juice, vegetable juices (green)

❖Foods listed as "Best" can be eaten without reservation on a daily basis. Individuals who are sick should consume only those foods on this list. These foods are the most ideal as they are the most balanced for both doshas.

❖Foods listed as "Small Amounts" can be eaten in small portions fairly often or in larger portions once or twice each week. Eating a wide variety of these foods is better than an abundance of just one. Overreliance upon these foods can cause an imbalance.

◆ Foods listed as "Avoid" should be eaten only on rare occasions and can be eaten once each month. They either cause an imbalance in both doshas or very significantly disturb one of the doshas.

The Six Ayurvedic Tastes

There are six distinct tastes and each, as all of nature, is composed of elements. The overall qualities of the taste will either be harmonious or disharmonious to a doshic imbalance. The tastes form the basis of your food program and your herbal medicines.

SWEET: earth and water

Is heavy, moist, and cool and increases Kapha while decreasing Vata and Pitta. Some examples are nuts, grains and most dairy.

SOUR: fire and earth

Is heavy, moist, and hot and increases Pitta and Kapha while decreasing Vata. Some examples are fermented foods like yogurt and tempeh.

SALTY: water and fire

Is heavy, moist, and hot and increases Pitta and Kapha while decreasing Vata. Some examples are seaweeds and seafood.

PUNGENT: fire and air

Is light, dry, and hot and increases Pitta and Vata while decreasing Kapha. Some examples are chili peppers, ginger and black pepper.

ASTRINGENT: earth and air

Is dry and cool and neither too heavy nor too light, and increases Vata while decreasing Pitta and Kapha. Some examples are most beans, cranberries, and pomegranates.

BITTER: air and ether

Is light, dry, and cool, and increases Vata while decreasing Pitta and Kapha. Some examples are leafy greens and herbs like goldenseal.