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❧ Vata/Kapha Food Program ❧

Basic Principles

Qualities to Reduce: cold, dry, heavy

Best Taste: pungent, sour

Small Amounts: salty, astringent

Worst Tastes: sweet, bitter

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. Over-reliance 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*.

Grains

It is best to eat these as cooked grains, though a small amount of bread may be eaten.

Best: Amaranth, barley, basmati rice, brown rice, buckwheat, quinoa, wild rice

Small Amounts: Millet, rye

Avoid: Corn flour, oats, rice (sticky, white, short or long grain), wheat

Dairy

Ghee and yogurt should also be used with warm spices.

Best: Ghee, Nut yogurts

Small Amounts: Kefir, sour cream, yogurt

Avoid: Butter, cheeses, cottage cheese, ice cream, frozen yogurt

Sweeteners

Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance. Those listed under “Small Amounts” are more likely to cause imbalance with regular usage and should not be used more than once each month.

Best: Honey

Small Amounts: Jaggery, molasses, sucanat

Avoid: Date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup, rice syrup, white table sugar

Oils

Oils are very important and should be used abundantly if the skin is dry. Though generally heavy, the lighter oils will not aggravate *kapha*. Ghee should be used with warm spices.

Best: Flaxseed, ghee, mustard, safflower

Small Amounts: Almond, canola, castor, corn, margarine, olive, peanut, sesame, soy

Avoid: Avocado, coconut, lard, sunflower

Fruits

Fruits are best when they are sour and not overly ripened or sweet. These will bring balance to both *doshas*. In general, due to their cooling effects on the body, their intake should be consumed in small amounts. The best fruits may be taken in greater amounts. Fruit in general should not be a staple of the diet but is all right for occasional use.

Best: Apricots, grapefruit, lemon, papaya

Small Amounts: Apples (baked is best), banana (sour), blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, cherries, lime, mango, oranges (sour), pineapple, plums (sour), pomegranate, prunes, raspberries, tangerines

Avoid: Avocado, banana (sweet), coconut, dates, figs, grapes (sweet), jujube, melons (watermelon, cantaloupe), oranges (sweet), nectarines, peaches, pears, persimmons, plums (sweet), raisins, strawberries

Vegetables

The diet should consist primarily of cooked vegetables. However, occasional use of raw vegetables is suitable as long as there is no constipation or gas.

Best: Artichoke (with a spicy, oily dressing), beets, carrots, cauliflower, chili peppers, corn (fresh), green beans, leeks, mung bean sprouts, mustard greens, onion, parsley, potato, radish, sunflower sprouts, tomato

Small Amounts: Alfalfa sprouts, avocado, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, celery, cilantro, kale, lettuce, mushrooms, okra, peas (green, snow), rutabagas, seaweed, spinach, squash (zucchini, crookneck), Swiss chard, turnips

Avoid: Asparagus, bitter melon, cabbage, cucumber, eggplant, Jerusalem artichoke, squash (acorn, winter), sweet potato, yams

Nuts and Seeds

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

Best: Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, piñon (pine nuts)

Small Amounts: Filberts

Avoid: Almonds, Brazil, cashews, coconut, lotus seeds, macadamia, peanuts, pecans, pistachio, walnuts

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 for spiritual and health reasons.

Best: None

Small Amounts: None

Avoid: Beef, duck, pork, lamb, shellfish

Legumes

Legumes are best taken well cooked with warm spices, as they can be hard to digest. Soaking them before cooking improves digestibility as well. As they contain earth and air, they are heavy and dry which can harm both *doshas* when digestion is weak. Those listed as best are easiest to digest and usually will not cause harm.

Best: Mung beans, soy milk, tempeh, tofu

Small Amounts: None

Avoid: Aduki beans, black beans, black gram, chickpeas, fava beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, navy beans, peas (dry or split), pinto beans, soybeans

Spices

Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients and they improve flavor. Warm and hot spices are recommended for *vata/kapha* types. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important and not the individual spice used. If food becomes too hot it may contribute to greater dryness. Hence, the hottest spices should be used in moderation. Food should never be bland.

Best: Allspice, anise, asafoetida, basil, bay leaf, black pepper, caraway, catnip, cayenne, celery seed, chamomile, cloves, coriander, cumin, curry powder, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger, horseradish, hyssop, lemon verbena, marjoram, mustard seed, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, parsley, peppermint, poppy seed, rosemary, saffron, sage, spearmint, star anise, tarragon, thyme, turmeric

Small Amounts: Salt

Avoid: None

Condiments

Best: Vinegar

Small Amounts: Catsup, carob (with proper sweeteners), chocolate (with proper sweeteners)

Avoid: Mayonnaise

Beverages

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

Best: Chamomile tea, licorice tea, mint tea, spicy teas, ginger tea, water

Small Amounts: Sour fruit juices (cranberry, lemon, lime, pineapple, pomegranate), vegetable juices. Diluted fruit juices preferred.

Avoid: Alcohol, black tea, coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated), soft drinks, sweet fruit juices, sweetened soda pop