



Food and Traditional Chinese Medicine

Description

Many of the principles found in traditional Chinese medicine can still be of great benefit today. Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine have been around for 4000 years and used by millions of people, showing that they have really stood the test of time. Rather than simply trying to change a number on a test, traditional medicine works to ensure that the body is working optimally and that a person feels good within themselves.

By themselves, foods and herbs and supplements aren't able to heal the body, rather, changing the environment inside the body better enables it to heal itself. For the best results, medicine, including cancer treatments, should be adapted to the individual. What works best for one person may not necessarily be the best course of action for another. This is echoed in ancient Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine, which make it clear that everybody is different. For example, some people insist that all meat and dairy should be ruled out, while others feel that these can be safely included in the diet.

Some cancer patients may also be struggling with thyroid problems and iron deficiency. In this case, eating meat would be very beneficial in order to help them get enough vitamin B12 and selenium, for example. Conversely, for somebody who is having problems with excessive strain on their liver and gall bladder, consuming too much fat, including the fat found in meat, would be detrimental to their health. A healthy diet should include: fruit (especially berries) and vegetables; herbs and spices; nuts and seeds; organic meat and bone broth and foods that are rich in omega-3 and probiotics.

In ancient Chinese medicine, a sick person would be given bone broth and herbs and spices. However, in modern times, western diets are deficient in these things, especially when compared to the Middle East and Asia. In Okinawa – a chain of islands off the south coast of mainland Japan – there are more centenarians than anywhere else in the world. As a result of their herb and spice consumption, men over 70 in Okinawa consume several times more antioxidants than men in the United States. Their sources of antioxidants include green tea and spices such as ginger and turmeric. [For a guide on how much turmeric to take check this link out.](#) These antioxidants reduce oxidative stress and actually contribute towards slowing down the aging process. Throughout history and even up to the last century or so, herbs and spices have been what is considered to be medicine.

Just as mould will only grow in a damp home, fungus and yeast such as candida will only grow in the body when it is damp internally. Therefore, to eradicate the pathogens, a person's internal environment

needs to be changed. It is also possible for the body to be too dry internally or have too much movement (wind) or too little movement (stagnation). In Chinese medicine, the terms yin and yang are used to describe the different hormones in the body, so it is also possible for these to be imbalanced.

Rather than simply trying to treat the pathogenic bacteria, as is done in conventional medicine, such as through the use of antibiotics, Chinese medicine aims to alter the body's environment so that the pathogens can't survive and the non-pathogenic bacteria will thrive, restoring microbial balance. For example, the common cold is so called because it is identified in Chinese medicine as occurring when the body is cold internally. This can be remedied through the use of warming herbs and spices such as ginger, garlic and cayenne pepper. Also, bitter foods can be used to dry up dampness in the body which manifests itself in the form of candida and excessive mucous. Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) alongside diarrhoea is indicative of cold and dampness, while IBS alongside constipation is indicative of heat and dampness.

Thistles, particularly milk thistle, are very effective in helping to detoxify and heal the liver. Bitter herbs such as Bupleurum, Andrographis and black seed help to get the liver moving and releasing bile, therefore helping the body to digest fat. They also are beneficial for drying up dampness in the body. Astragalus is an amazing herb for helping to boost the immune system and strengthen the digestive system.

Reishi mushroom, which has been known as the mushroom of immortality, can be a great aid to the immune system, kidneys and the adrenal glands, helping the body to adapt more effectively and to be able to cope with stress. Natural substances that help the body to adapt to stress in this way are referred to as adaptogens. Astragalus and liquorice root are said to be adaptogens for the upper gastrointestinal tract. Andrographis is an anti-inflammatory herb that helps to activate the immune system, supporting the body as it tries to overcome parasites and viruses such as cold and flu. Other anti-inflammatory aids include turmeric, Boswellia, ginger, rosemary, skullcap and cat's claw. Turmeric oil also contains the compound turmerone, which has been shown in medical studies to have regenerative properties for the nerves and stem cells in the brain. Bitter foods are good at drying up dampness in order to help get rid of parasites or candida overgrowth. Examples of these include Pau d'arco tea, ginger, sage and oregano.

Problems with the thyroid can be closely related to emotional health. In Chinese medicine, hypothyroidism was known as being low chi and low yang. Chi is a term that refers to how much energy you have as well as being confident and feeling good about yourself. Ashwagandha is an example of a herb that boosts chi and yang, making it effective for treating hypothyroidism. Rehmannia is another herb that can help improve chi. Generally dark blue, green and purple foods such as black rice, blueberries and seaweed are packed full of nutrients and are good for the adrenal glands and the thyroid.

Frankincense contains a compound called beta-pinene which has been shown to help support the nervous system by reducing inflammation. Myrrh is a bitter essential oil that is very good at reducing dampness in the body, which would otherwise create an environment encouraging viruses, bacteria and abnormal cells to grow. Lavender is able to help calm the body by reducing cortisol levels; this enables the body to come out of fight or flight mode and focus on regenerating and healing. Blood glucose levels, and therefore insulin levels, can be stabilised with the help of cinnamon oil. The lymphatic system and liver are supported by citrus oils, making them more able to detoxify effectively.

Category

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Author

drahmedzayed