

Food Cures

As an infant, I was already quite sickly. My mum had fallen on the ice in her sixth month of pregnancy and while she lay flat on her back in the middle of the road in a patch of ice unable to right herself, I had done a flip-flop in sympathy. As a result, I tried to enter the world bum first, a painful experience for all. This seemed the start of a rough road ahead.

At six months of age, I contracted pneumonia and almost ended my journey there but some kind saint sent a Sky Eye text message to my mum and she went to check on me in my cot and found me not breathing. I was rushed to the hospital where I lived for the next several days in an oxygen tent.

My grandmother said that bad things always come in sets of three. So unsurprisingly, another event followed and at age three, I entered hospital to have eye surgery to help correct my lazy eye. Although I was too young to remember, I still carry with me a horror of needles and feel sick at the smell of anaesthesia. My mum said this is because just before I was ready to go to surgery, a nurse came in wanting to do a whole series of blood works on me...again...as someone had lost the previous ones.

The doctor arrived to find a screaming toddler and was furious. He banished the nurse with sharp words and although he took me in his arms to comfort me, I presume the memory is still there because if I see someone getting an injection on the telly, I can telepathically feel that needle jabbing into my own flesh and always have to hide my eyes until such a scene has passed.

That is one set of three and, of course, there were more but nothing quite so dramatic. However, all of this contributed to my being a bit of weakling. My step-father used to joke that when he came into our lives when I was four, he wondered if I would live out the year as I was so skinny and pale. More often than not his patience was tried on holidays as I would constantly feel car sick as we drove on various trips. He would stop the car so that I could urk in the roadside bushes but, of course, by then the feeling had passed. This cycle would be repeated quite often much to my embarrassment.

He was our lucky star, though. When my mum and he married, she and I moved from the city to his home in the country and I

was force-fed fresh air and exercise which absolutely saved me. My bones filled out, my eyes healed and I could run up and down hills barefoot with the rest of my step-cousins. My motion sickness also passed as I got stronger and stronger.

Funnily enough, I seemed to have traded my weak spleen with my step-father. He was a bit of a worrier and also stubborn. The combination of the two was like a kami-kazi piranna fish. When he locked onto a problem, there was no letting go. All that over-thinking took its toll on his body and damaged his spleen.

Raw Foods

Looking back, I can also see how the foods we ate only aggravated the problem. He loved all the raw foods from our garden every summer, eating raw spring onions, radishes, lettuce and green beans. Raw food is a lot of work for the body. It can also create dampness which in turn makes the other internal organs suffer.

Even in the winter, we generally always had a salad of some sort to supplement our meals. At that time four veg a day was a mantra being marketed on telly and taught in schools.

This is probably the diet of many Americans and if the body is healthy, it can handle it. However, when it is weak, one cannot treat it as though it were a strong body, just as a person lacking in self-esteem cannot pretend to be confident. In the end, the problem will come out and cannot stay hidden. So many raw and cold foods can, over time, damage the spleen so even

For the Spleen



healthy persons should balance their diet to include cooked foods.

Today, I understand that my spleen was weak because my whole body was weak. When people have ulcers or weak spleen/stomach, more often than not, the doctor's prescription is for antacids or even antibiotics, with the thinking that there is harmful bacteria causing all the problems.

The side which is often neglected is the diet. Of course, doctors will usually prescribe gentle diet foods including more dairy and less fats and no fried foods. Unfortunately, many of the foods which are still eaten have a cold energy or are eaten raw. These kind of food can easily deplete what Qi is there in a weak patient. I call them Qi stealers.

I know that raw food diets are all the rage at the moment but when I see interviews with the dieters, it is frightening how unhealthy both the dietician and the eaters look. Their skin looks grey and some look almost anorexic. In one programme, people went on a food "boot camp" where they were given diet plans of raw foods to follow for a month. In the beginning, they lost weight dramatically. Then it tapered off. Most found positive results in the beginning but at the end, all said they would not eat a wholly raw food diet.

The thing is, no one is looking to see how a person's health is affected by eating only raw foods for five, ten, even twenty years. I think the story would be different then. I know a



also have lost the sensation of what is really good. There are so many artificial ingredients and flavour enhancers that our tongues have lost their palate. Food additives are a big money industry and there are even chemicals which create an addictive state telling the stomach it is not full or that it wants more.

Some friends who have visited England and Europe from America have commented on how good the food tastes by comparison, for instance butter, cream, cheese, milk, bread and vegetables. When I first moved to England, I was surprised at how little sugar there was in desserts like pies and cakes. Now I find most American cakes so over-saturated with sugar that all the natural flavours of any fruit or spices is lost. This over-lading of the senses also makes us lose our natural palate.

If we can learn how to diagnose and treat ourselves just by changing our diets, then we can help to enhance our health not only through Qigong but through diet. A good diet alone will not make us healthy but the wrong foods can by themselves make us unhealthy.

For weak spleens we need to make our bodies stronger and eat the right foods. For ulcers we need to reduce worry and also make our internal Qi strong. Strong Qi will make the kidneys strong and as kidneys relate to the element water, it will help to balance any internal fire that stress creates.

“Raw food is a lot of work for the body.”

woman who has eaten an exclusively raw food diet for many years with seemingly no bad effects, however, she also practises martial arts and Qigong which give her a lot of internal Qi. Her daughter, who is now in her teens, is quite the opposite. She has learning difficulties, bleeding sores on her legs constantly and is very poorly in her general health.

So in the end, it means that raw food diets are only a short term solution for dieting and not a life solution. For me, I want a life solution for eating and health. Just as our bodies have a Dantian, we need a centre, a foundation for any philosophy. Otherwise, all we have is just a collection of ideas and not a seed which can grow a tree which can develop and bear fruit. For development, we need to decide on a path and stick with it. That does not mean it does not change. As we get older, our diet should definitely change with our changing bodies. In fact, our diet should take into account our current state of health, the seasons and climate.

The more I study of the Chinese food cures, the more I am amazed at the depth of knowledge of healing and health that existed over 1,000 years ago. We have gone backwards in our eating and diet wisdom because we have too many choices, too little time and not enough trust in ourselves. We

Foods to avoid for weak spleen:

Raw foods
Alcohol (as depletes Qi)
Cold energy foods like:-
Cucumber
Celery
Beer (too cold on the spleen and can create dampness in body)
Lettuce such as iceberg, romaine, lambs lettuce. (Rocket is warming but should be cooked not eaten raw.)
Pear

Foods to enjoy more:-

Cooked oatmeal
Steamed Rice (but not the sticky rice which can create blockages)
Cooked apples
Potatoes – steamed, boiled or mashed – not fried
Honey
Steamed vegetables such as carrot
Stir fried spinach
Ginger tea or ginger as condiment in cooking vegetables
Lean pork cooked in soup or in small portions such as in a stir fry ■

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