

Balancing excess Kapha dosha with diet

The qualities of Kapha include heavy, cool, sweet and moist. Eat foods with the opposite qualities to balance excess Kapha.

Dietary recommendations

Include a few dry foods in your daily diet to balance the oily nature of Kapha, foods that are nourishing but light to counter the heaviness of Kapha and warm foods with a zing to them to balance the sweet, cold quality of Kapha.

So what exactly does this mean in terms of foods you should choose and foods you should stay away from? Here are some specific dietary tips:

1. If you need to balance Kapha, choose ghee, in very small quantities, as your cooking medium. Ghee can be heated to high temperatures without affecting its nourishing, healing qualities, so use ghee to sauté vegetables, spices or other foods. Steaming foods and then adding a mixture of spices sautéed in very little ghee is best. In general, avoid too many oily foods.
2. Light, warming foods help balance Kapha. Clear vegetable soups with beans and diced vegetables, stews made with Kapha-balancing vegetables, bean casseroles, dhal soups and light grain/vegetable combinations are ideal for balancing Kapha, especially when combined with Kapha-balancing spices. Stay away from too much salt and instead infuse dishes with fresh herbs and spices for flavor.
3. The three ayurvedic tastes that help balance Kapha are pungent, bitter and astringent, so include more of these tastes in your daily diet. Apples, garbanzo beans cooked with Kapha-balancing spices or steamed broccoli or cauliflower with a light olive oil and spice mixture make healthy Kapha-pacifying snacks.

Eat less of the salty, sweet and sour tastes.

4. Dry cereal, salt-free crackers and rice cakes balance the liquid nature of Kapha dosha and make good snacks. However, eat snacks in moderation if you are trying to balance Kapha, and avoid sugary snacks. Honey in small quantities is the recommended sweetener.

5. Carrots, asparagus, okra, bitter leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, and brussel sprouts, daikon radish and bitter melon are good vegetable choices. They become more digestible when chopped and cooked with Kapha-pacifying spices. Vegetables can be combined with lighter grains or mung beans for satisfying one-dish meals. Fresh green chili peppers and fresh ginger root add flavor while balancing Kapha.

6. Choose lighter whole grains, and eat grains in moderation. Barley, buckwheat, millet and couscous are good choices. If you choose heavier grains, such as rice or wheat, eat very small quantities.

7. Zesty warming spices are wonderful for balancing Kapha. Recommended spices are turmeric, cumin, coriander, cayenne, black pepper, dried ginger, asafoetida (hing), cloves and fenugreek.

8. Drink lassi infused with digestion-enhancing spices and herbs with lunch and lots of warm water through the day to help flush toxins from the body.

Suggested Food Choices for Kapha dosha

Grains: Buckwheat, quinoa, barley, millet, oats, amaranth, small portions of Basmati rice, all cooked until tender

Vegetables: Asparagus, all kinds of greens, green beans, artichoke, celery, Brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, kohlrabi, daikon, radish, cabbage, all cooked

Fruits: Apricots, prunes, peaches, pears, cherries, berries,

apples, lemons, limes, pomegranates, dried figs, raisins

Lentils: Mung beans, mung dhal, toor dhal, red or brown lentils, small portions of garbanzos, lima beans, black beans, all cooked until butter-soft

Dairy: Whole milk diluted with water, lassi, small portions of cottage cheese or fresh paneer cheese

Oils: Small portions of ghee and olive oil

Herbs: Cilantro, curry leaves, parsley, fresh basil, fresh mint, fresh oregano, fresh thyme, sage, neem leaves

Nuts and Seeds: Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds

Spices: Turmeric, cumin, cardamom, coriander, fennel, dried ginger, Chinese cinnamon, black pepper, Chinese cinnamon, mint, saffron, dill, lime zest, nutmeg, cayenne, fenugreek, mustard seed, oregano, marjoram, thyme, rosemary, paprika, mace, cloves

Other: Raw honey in moderation, unsalted unbuttered popcorn, crackers in moderation, cooked tofu in small quantities (diced small and cooked with spices)