

Balancing excess Pitta dosha using diet

The qualities of Pitta include hot, sharp, and acidic. Eat foods with the opposite qualities to balance excess Pitta.

Dietary recommendations

Include a few dry foods in your daily diet to balance the oily nature of Pitta, some "heavy" foods that offer substance and sustained nourishment, and foods that are cool to balance the fiery quality of Pitta.

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 Pitta, choose ghee, in moderate quantities, as your cooking medium. Ghee is cooling for both mind and body. Coconut oil is also a good choice.
2. Cooling foods are wonderful for balancing Pitta dosha. Sweet juicy fruits, especially pears, can cool a fiery Pitta quickly. Milk, sweet rice pudding, coconut and coconut juice, and smoothies made with ripe mangoes and almonds or dates are examples of soothing Pitta-pacifying foods.
3. The three ayurvedic tastes that help balance Pitta are sweet, bitter and astringent, so include more of these tastes in your daily diet. Milk, fully ripe sweet fruits, and soaked and blanched almonds make good snack choices. Eat less of the salty, pungent and sour tastes.
4. Dry cereal, crackers, granola and cereal bars, and rice cakes balance the liquid nature of Pitta dosha and are good snack choices.
5. Carrots, asparagus, bitter leafy greens, fennel, green beans

and cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts are good vegetable choices. They become more digestible when chopped and cooked with Pitta-pacifying spices. Vegetables can be combined with grains or mung beans for satisfying one-dish meals.

6. Basmati rice is excellent for balancing Pitta. Wheat is also good--fresh flatbreads made with whole-wheat flour combine well with cooked vegetables or Pitta-balancing chutneys. Oats and amaranth are other Pitta-balancing grains.

7. Choose spices that are not too heating or pungent. Recommended spices are turmeric, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, cardamom and fennel.

8. Drink sweet lassi with lunch to help enhance digestion and cool, not ice-cold, water to quench thirst.

Suggested Food Choices for Pitta dosha

This list is not all inclusive, but provides a good starting point.

Grains: Rice, wheat, barley, oats, amaranth, all cooked until tender

Vegetables: Asparagus, tender and bitter greens, carrots, fennel, peas, green beans, zucchini, artichoke, parsnips, okra, celery, Brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, sweet potatoes, all cooked, small quantities of raw lettuce, carrots or cucumber

Fruits: Avocado, pineapple, peaches, plums, grapes, mangoes, melons, pears, pomegranates, cherries, all kinds of berries, apples, coconut, dates, fresh and dried figs, raisins (soaked), all ripe and sweet

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

Dairy: Whole milk, cream, butter, fresh yogurt (cooked into foods), lassi, cottage cheese, fresh paneer cheese

Oils: Ghee, olive oil, walnut oil

Herbs: Cilantro, curry leaves, parsley, fresh basil, fresh fennel, fresh mint

Nuts and Seeds: Almonds (soaked and blanched), sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds

Spices: Turmeric, cumin, cardamom, coriander, fennel, small quantities of black pepper, Chinese cinnamon, mint, saffron, dill, sweet orange zest

Other: Rice milk, soy milk, sucanat, turbinado sugar, date sugar, and tofu in moderation (diced small and cooked with spices)