

How to Eat: Cultivating a Healthy Relationship with Food

While what we eat is certainly important, good nutrition is much more than putting the right things in our mouths. Food needs time to be digested and absorbed well so we can benefit from all the energy and nutrients it contains. Good eating habits are the bedrock of a healthy diet. How we eat is as important as what we eat.

Below are some fundamental guidelines based on Chinese medicine principles that will help you achieve better digestion, sleep and overall wellbeing.

Don't worry so much

Stress created by trying to adhere to a rigid or overly restrictive diet is detrimental to good digestion. It is far better to be imperfect and enjoy your food. Remember, food is not your enemy, it is what supplies us with the nourishment to go out and live our lives. When it comes to trying to eat in a healthy way, make sure to be gentle with yourself.

Create Space for Meals

It takes a lot of energy to digest a meal. Eating and digesting is best done in a state of calm and relaxation. Do your best to create a healthy environment in which to eat and digest. Try to avoid watching television, reading or doing work. Share meals with good friends and family members who relax you. After eating, spend a bit of time relaxing before jumping back into your long to do list.

Eating as Meditation

Pay attention to your food. Strive to make eating a multisensory experience by noticing how your food looks, feels, smells, and tastes. Listen to yourself chew. Eating is a pleasurable activity that is best savored.

Eat Slowly

Chew each bite thoroughly. Breathe. Take one bite at a time.

Regularity

The Spleen and Stomach, the primary digestive organs in Chinese medicine, like routine. Eating regular meals at consistent times each day helps them function optimally.

Balance and Moderation

Chinese medicine is fundamentally based on the concepts of balance and moderation. Strive for a balance between the amount you eat and your activity level. Be moderate in the amount you eat at any one sitting, stopping before you are stuffed. Experiment with leaving the table while still slightly hungry.

Evolution not Revolution

Make changes to your diet gradually, giving yourself time to adjust. Move slowly towards healthier eating habits that you can maintain for the rest of your life. And be gentle with yourself when you make a mistake, there is always tomorrow.