



FOOD AS MEDICINE

Food as Medicine: Helping the Body Through Seasonal Changes

Craig Williams, LAc, AHG

It can be very important for TCM clinicians to keep in mind how the environment can have a significant impact on the body. Months of heat, both damp heat and dry heat, can slowly deplete what Traditional Chinese Medicine refers to as Qi, Blood, and Fluids. Now that fall is upon us, I will cover three highly effective food-based options for helping patients recover from the summer season, and strengthen the body to enter the fall season in a state of balance and vitality. All three remedies are simple and user-friendly for patients, which allows for a high rate of patient compliance leading to more consistent clinical outcomes.

Cucumber Water

This is one of my favorite food-based home remedies which can have significant health impacts related to basic hydration and the nutritious/cooling effects of cucumbers. In TCM energetics, cucumber clears heat, especially summer heat. Cucumber is commonly used in conditions where heat signs are present and often include stagnation and/or vacuity of fluids. Making cucumber water is a very simple process. I always recommend only using organic cucumber for this recipe. Simply wash the organic cucumber and cut into slices. One option is to wash and slice one organic cucumber and add to a quart of water and store in the refrigerator to steep overnight. Ideally, consume this amount within two days to avoid spoilage. This beverage is an excellent home remedy for dehydration, summer heat issues, red irritated eyes, and sleep issues aggravated by heat/improved by cooler environments.



Overnight Goji Berry Water

In TCM energetics, Goji Berries or Gou Qi Zi have a sweet and balanced flavor, they enter the Liver/Kidney channels, Supplement the Liver and Kidneys, and brighten the eyes. Take two tablespoons of organic goji berries and pour two cups of boiling water over berries. Let this sit overnight. In the morning drain water and drink, and then consume the rehydrated goji berries.

This food-based remedy is an excellent daily tonic for helping the body recover from months of activity/sweating, which is common over the hot summer season. It works particularly well with individuals who express patterns of Liver Blood/Yin Vacuity and Kidney Yin Vacuity with such signs as poor night vision, dry eyes, low back pain, knee pain, chronic dry skin, night sweats, insomnia with heat signs, and chronic fatigue. I also often use this food-based remedy in conjunction with chrysanthemum tea or Ju Hua for recalcitrant heat signs.

Mung Bean Tea

One of my favorite foods for the summer season, particularly the end of summer, is Lu Dou/Mung beans. Entering the Heart and Stomach channels, Mung beans are sweet and cooling and are especially effective for treating summer heat issues, as well as an antidote for toxic substances. Mung beans are the base of an important food-as-medicine recipe in Ayurveda known as *Kicharee*.

One of the simplest ways to use mung beans is to make Mung Bean tea. Soak two tablespoons of mung beans in a cup of boiling water and let soak overnight. Upon arising, strain the mung beans and drink the water saving the mung bean in a cup. Pour another cup of boiling water over the same mung beans and let soak for four hours. Once again, drink the tea water and save the mung beans for one more serving. As earlier pour a cup of boiling water and let used mung beans soak for four hours. Drink this last cup of tea and consume the two tablespoons of mung beans. After the three soakings the mung beans should be soft enough to easily consume. This simple recipe is

highly effective for heat issues which arise after a long hot summer, or if a patient has health issues which are exacerbated by the summer season.

These three food-as-medicine recipes are very simple yet highly effective remedies to use during the end of the summer season to effectively clear heat issues. Keep in mind - if left untreated it may lead to more complicated patterns of disharmony during the fall/winter seasons. All three recipes can easily be used together and can help patients see the important relationship between food, the seasons, and patterns of disharmony in clinical practice.

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