

Wellbeing with Chinese Medicine



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Weight Loss Using Chinese Medicine

Introduction

Overweight and obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally, affecting more than one billion adults. This poses a major risk for serious diet-related chronic diseases, including type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke and some forms of cancer.¹

Chinese medicine uses four different methods to initiate weight loss:

1. Chinese medicine dietary advice;
2. Acupuncture;
3. Herbal medicine;
4. Additional lifestyle advice.

Chinese Medicine Dietary Advice

To induce weight loss, Chinese medicine aims for a balanced Spleen and Stomach. By strengthening the Spleen and Stomach, the body is able to break down and extract nutrients while sending the waste products to the intestines for proper elimination. The speed of metabolism is increased, allowing the body to process and utilize nutrients with greater efficiency while providing energy and vitality. Water transformation is made more efficient; helping the body rid excessive water and harmful toxic accumulations, whilst the regulation of bowel movements creates a balance of consumption against elimination.

Eating a balanced diet in accordance with the principles of Chinese medicine will rebalance the Spleen and Stomach

naturally. There are three general groups of foods within Chinese medicine; carbohydrates, proteins and fruits and vegetables. Each group has a specific nutritional value and energetic activity. Generally, carbohydrates are sweet and warm, strengthen the Spleen and build *Qi* (energy). Proteins nourish *Qi*, Blood, *Yin* (Water) and *Jing* (Essence) and tend to be warmer than carbohydrates. Fruits and vegetables tend to be cooling, clearing and mobilizing in nature, thus providing a balance to the other groups.² By varying the proportions, a holistic balance can be achieved, leading to greater water and fat metabolism.

Salads and Juices

In the developed world, a balanced diet has been associated with the European Naturopathic movement's beliefs in a diet high in raw foods, such as salads and juices. According to Chinese Medicine, too much raw food weakens the Spleen, eventually leading to weight gain. Eating foods that are already at body temperature or higher protects the Spleen and Stomach *Qi*. Digestive enzymes (Spleen and Stomach *Qi*) only work at physiological temperatures. The act of cooking actually contributes to the breakdown of foodstuff, thus aiding digestion. This does not mean that all raw food is bad. In hot weather, some raw foods are good at cooling the body down.

Quality of Ingredients

All produce should be of the best quality available. Food should appeal to the senses, being vibrant in colour and aroma, bursting with vitality and *Qi*.² It is important to buy fresh produce frequently, from locally grown areas in the correct season.

Timing of Eating

The Spleen and Stomach have their own internal cycle and prepare to receive food at specific times of the day. If food is not consumed at these intervals, internal disruption results, causing weight gain. Generally, carbohydrate rich meals should be consumed early in the day between 7am and 11am.² Smaller meals are recommended towards the end of the day as the body slows down, preparing for sleep. It is not advised to eat anything after 9pm.

Eating in a Relaxed State

Energy intensive activities, such as working breakfasts, working through lunch and eating on the run, have a significant negative impact on the function and efficiency of the Spleen, resulting in weight gain.

Overeating – Under Eating

In the developed world we tend to eat too much or too little. Both these imbalances damage the Spleen. It is important to stop eating when you feel

you could eat a little bit more, whilst skipping meals or restricting calorie intake can damage the Spleen, leading to weight gain once this practice is stopped.

Acupuncture

More recently, acupuncture has been used to aid weight loss by strengthening the Spleen and Stomach, regulating the endocrine function, reducing appetite, increasing defecation and increasing overall energy and vitality. Following acupuncture, the concentrations of blood sodium and aldosterone decrease whilst the concentration of blood potassium increases, thus improving water and salt metabolism.³ Further studies have also shown that acupuncture reduces the sense of hunger and slows down absorption in the small intestine whilst inhibiting the hyperactive digestion of the stomach.⁴ Acupuncture has been shown to reduce weight in those suffering from hyperglycemia, hypertension, oedema, diabetes, menoxenis, coronary heart disease, cholecystitis and cholelithiasis.

Herbal Medicine

Chinese herbal medicine has long been used to aid digestion, reduce appetite, remove toxins and reduce excessive weight as part of an overall healthcare strategy. Today, Chinese medicine uses herbal slimming capsules such as *Shou Fu Jiang Zhi* (Abdomen Reduce Fat), which removes the need to decoct and drink raw herbs.

Additional Lifestyle Advice

Additional lifestyle advice forms an important part of Chinese medicine treatment. Chinese medicine believes in regular, moderate exercise, for example, fast walking or *Tai Chi*. This not only burns off calories, but also invigorates the *Qi*, making it efficient whilst making you feel vibrant, bright and positive. It is also advised to sleep at regular times, take time to relax, not smoke or drink excessively and generally lead a balanced, moderate life.

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