

The Mind-Body-Mouth Connection

by Shoshanna Katzman



There is no way to get around the fact that nutritious food and drink provide a strong foundation for creating optimal health. Today chronic, diet-related disease has reached epidemic proportions in the US with almost 900,000 people dying each year – all related to chronically unhealthy eating habits. One out of every three Americans die of heart disease, stroke, cancer, some combined with Type II diabetes.

Fortunately, our physical body has the innate ability to nourish itself through food and drink – a natural process that begins with birth. Yet, for many people achieving this goal is often easier said than done. The Chinese medicine approach to health provides methods for establishing more constructive (versus destructive) ways of nourishing oneself. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the body-mind connection through removing energetic blockages and establishing proper flow of Qi.

This ancient paradigm helps one deal with stressful situations along with reducing cravings and the tendency to binge on sugary, salty or fatty foods. It heals the split between one's physical and energetic counterparts resulting in a greater sense of inner peace, while establishing a strong mind-body-mouth connection.

Chinese medicine dietary recommendations are based on both the physical and energetic components of the foods and drinks consumed. Qi potency depends on both their quality and quantity combined with efficient digestive and metabolic function. The spleen and stomach energetic systems are primarily responsible for transformation and transportation, while the heart and lungs establish the unimpeded flow of blood and Qi required for effective delivery of nourishing energy to all parts of the body.

The following food and drink choices lead to depletion of Qi:

- Those lacking vital quality such as processed, overcooked or containing coloring agents, preservatives and other artificial additives
- Those too rich and overpowering to the overall Qi system such as heavy sauces and organ meats
- Those causing “spleen dampness” due to being too cold or wet (such as too much raw food or ice cream) along with excessively fatty, fried or sweet foods

- Foods and drink that lead to “excessive heart fire” due to being too stimulating such as those containing caffeine or spicy hot
- Drink interfering with energetics of the liver and causing “damp heat” (such as excessive alcohol)
- Eating the same foods over and over
- Food and drink consumed in the wrong amounts, at the wrong time of the day (such as right before bed or when feeling really upset about something)

Modalities such as acupuncture, Chinese herbs, Chinese food therapy and Qigong exercises are highly effective for ensuring an abundant amount of Qi derived from food and drink. They build energetics of key vital organ systems and forge a stronger mind-body-mouth connection resulting in greater inner trust, happy spirit, clear mind and balanced physical body. For example, Qigong integrates movement with deep breathing and balances the upper, middle and lower Dantians (energy centers) of the body. This calms the mind and spirit, activates proper metabolism, builds digestive function and promotes circulation of body fluids.

Chinese medicine can help you discover what is “eating at you” and then “change what you are eating.” Seeking help from a psychotherapist is also a great addition for many people. By listening attentively to the physical needs of your body, you begin to empower your physical body to make more constructive, healthier choices. Know that there is hope and there is a way to bring change into the way you deal with food and drink.

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