

Blood deficiency

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The concept of blood in traditional Chinese medicine shares a close relationship with the western concept in that it has both a nourishing and moistening function. However, with the concept of blood deficiency there is also emphasis placed on your body's qi.

Blood is seen as a condensed form of qi with qi playing a vital role in helping the blood to circulate to where it is needed. Attention is also focused on the strength of your digestive system's ability to successfully obtain the nutrients from your food necessary for the production of blood.

Food to build blood includes;

Grains	Barley, corn, oats, rice, sweet rice, wheat, bran
Vegetables	Alfalfa sprout, artichoke, beetroot, button mushroom, cabbage, celery, dandelion leaf, dark leafy greens, kelp, shiitake mushroom, spinach, watercress, wheatgrass
Fruit	Apple, apricot, avocado, date, fig, grape, longan, mulberry
Beans	Aduki, black soya, kidney
Nuts and seeds	Almonds, black sesame
Fish	Mussel, octopus, oyster, sardine, tuna
Meat	All red meat especially bone marrow and liver (beef, pork, sheep)
Dairy	Chicken egg,
Herbs, spices	Nettle, parsley
Oils, condiments	Amasake, molasses
Beverages	Soya milk
Common supplements:	Algae, dongui, pollen

Foods especially useful to tonify Liver Blood Deficiency.

Vegetables	artichoke, beetroot, dandelion leaf, kelp
Fruit	avocado, date, mulberry, grape
Nuts /seeds	black sesame
Fish	oyster
Meats	beef, liver (both pork and sheep)
Herbs/ spices	nettle
Oils/ condiments	molasses

Examples of every day western foods that can be used to build Blood include

- Rice porridges with Soya milk, apricots and almonds
- Dark leafy green salads with avocado and grated beetroot
- Scrambled Eggs with parsley
- Mussel Chowder with calamari
- Snacks of dried apricots and almonds
- Kidney bean and mushroom lasagne with a spinach salad
- Any red meat dish. (Note that in traditional Chinese medicine meat is viewed as a strong tonifying food to be eaten in small amounts so that serving sizes are based around two to four ounces per serving, taken several times a week depending on individual energetic patterns).

Compiled by Debra Betts author of "The essential guide to Acupuncture in Pregnancy and Childbirth" © 2006

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