

Dampness

Dampness represents a condition existing within the body that is a reflection of dampness as it occurs in nature. Dampness arises from the body being affected in several ways. It can be due to either a problem arising from the inability of the digestive system to transport and transport fluids, or from the body being overwhelmed by external damp from the environment, (damp weather, damp living conditions, damp-producing foods). It can also arise from as a response to an illness, or from the overuse of medication that promotes dampness, such as certain antibiotics. Phlegm is seen as a condensed form of dampness. Foods to resolve dampness include;



<i>Grains</i>	Corn, barley, basmati rice
<i>Vegetables</i>	Alfalfa sprout, button mushroom, caper, corn, pumpkin, radish, turnip,
<i>Fruit</i>	Papaya, lemon, umeboshi plum
<i>Beans</i>	Aduki, lentils
<i>Fish</i>	Eel, tuna
<i>Herbs, spices</i>	Aniseed, garlic, horseradish, marjoram, nettle, parsley, white pepper
<i>Beverages</i>	Green tea, raspberry leaf tea, jasmine tea

Foods that are useful to resolve damp combining with heat.

<i>Vegetables</i>	Asparagus, celery, Chinese cabbage
<i>Fruit</i>	Blueberry, cranberry
<i>Beans</i>	Kidney
<i>Herbs, spices</i>	Tamarind

Foods that are useful to resolve phlegm.

<i>Vegetables</i>	Button mushroom, olive, radish, shiitake mushroom, watercress
<i>Nuts, seeds</i>	Almonds, walnuts
<i>Fish</i>	Lobster
<i>Herbs, spices</i>	Caraway, cardamon, garlic, horseradish, marjoram, mustard seed, thyme, white pepper
<i>Beverages</i>	black tea, soya milk
<i>Common supplements</i>	horseradish and garlic

Foods that are useful to resolve phlegm with heat.

<i>Vegetables</i>	Seaweed, radish, water chestnut
<i>Fruit</i>	Apple peel, grape fruit, lemon peel, pear, persimmon, tangerine peel
<i>Herbs and spices</i>	Liquorice
<i>Beverages</i>	Elderflower tea, grapefruit juice, peppermint tea

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Foods that are useful to resolve phlegm with cold.

<i>Vegetables</i>	Mustard leaf, onion, scallion
<i>Herbs and spices</i>	Basil, black pepper, cinnamon bark, fennel seeds, fresh ginger, juniper, onion, rosemary, savory
<i>Beverages</i>	Jasmine tea, ginger tea (freshly grated)

Foods especially useful to resolve damp heat in the Bladder

- Cranberry: this is best taken in tablet form as the juices often contain sugar.
- Barley: barley water can be made by pouring 1 litre of water over 30 grams of barley grains. Simmer until the liquid has reduced to half a litre. Add lemon juice, strain through a sieve and drink at least four cups per day.

Foods especially useful for phlegm congesting the Lungs

Phlegm in General

- Thyme: this makes a useful herbal bath to help resolve phlegm and reduce coughing (especially at night). Simply take a handful of fresh garden thyme, crush slightly between your hands and seep in a litre of water that has just boiled while you run a warm, deep bath. Close all the windows and doors, add the thyme water into the bath and take a bath for at least 20 minutes.

Phlegm cold

- Ginger tea: grate some fresh ginger (about the size of your thumb nail), into a cup, seep in boiling water for five minutes, add a little brown sugar to taste and drink warm.
- Onion: a simple cough mixture, safe to use in pregnancy, can be made by chopping up one onion and covering this with 1 tablespoon honey (Manuka if possible). Leave overnight or for several hours before taking the juice 2 –3 teaspoons at a time, as needed.

Phlegm heat

- Grapefruit juice: two to three glasses per day
- Pear juice: two to three glasses per day.

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Foods to avoid in cases of dampness

It is essential that those prone to dampness avoid excessive amounts of food that will contribute to promoting dampness in the body these include:

- Dairy products: this includes milk, cheese, ice cream and all foods that contain high amounts of dairy products such as dairy milk chocolate. It is important to read food labels as some food (such as muesli) may contain high levels of milk powder. Yoghurt is perhaps the exception to the dairy food rule, as I have observed that women do not appear to respond to this as they do other dairy foods. Sheep and goat products are regarded as less prone to causing dampness.
- Pork and rich fatty meats
- Roasted peanuts, including peanut butter
- Concentrated fruit juices, especially orange and tomato juice
- Excess refined wheat products
- Bananas
- Sugar and sweeteners
- Saturated fats, especially deep fried foods

In dampness and phlegm, it is important to nourish the Spleen, which means that the consumption of raw, cold and processed sugary or fatty foods need to be limited to aid the spleen's essential digestive function.