



## VATA FOOD PROGRAM

### Basic Principles

**Qualities to Reduce:** cold, dry, light

**Best Taste:** Sweet, salty, sour

**Worst Tastes:** Bitter, astringent, pungent

Foods listed as "Best" can be eaten without reservation on a daily basis. Individuals who are sick should consume only those foods on this list. These foods are the most ideal as they are the most balanced for both *doshas*. Foods listed as "Small Amounts" can be eaten in small portions fairly often or in larger portions once or twice each week. Eating a wide variety of these foods is better than an abundance of just one. Over-reliance upon these foods can cause an imbalance. Foods listed as "Avoid" should be eaten only on rare occasions and can be eaten once each month. They either cause an imbalance in both *doshas* or very significantly disturb one of the *doshas*.

In the North. Where food was not dependable the body learned to burn fat as a baseline energy supply and carbs for high energy and to store sugar for emergencies. They relied on food sources rich in Lipids (animal and vegetable fats) which made the energy last for days until they needed another meal. The protein gave them strength and the fat gave them energy. A certain amount of mucus production is necessary to keep our system from drying out in the colder months. To the extent that you got dried out by not eating high fat, high protein, and warm moist oily foods is the extent to which you will suffer from excess mucus in the spring in the form of asthma, allergies, coughs, and yeast. 40% protein 30% vegetables, fruits, ancient grains 30% fat

### Grains

It is best to eat these as cooked grains, though a small amount of gluten free bread may be eaten.

**Best:** Amaranth, basmati rice, brown rice, buckwheat, quinoa, wild rice, gluten free oats (cooked)

**Small Amounts:** Millet, barley, wheat (if well tolerated)

**Avoid:** Buckwheat, corn flour (chips, bread, and tortillas), dry oats (granola), polenta, rye

### Dairy

It is best to use raw or organic milk products. Milk should be taken warm with a small amount of spices such as ginger and cardamom. Ghee and yogurt should also be used with warm spices.

**Best:** Butter, buttermilk, kefir, milk, sour cream, goat yogurt (fresh), sheep milk feta

**Small Amounts:** Hard cheeses

**Avoid:** Ice cream, frozen yogurt

### Sweeteners

Overuse of any sweetener will eventually cause an imbalance. Those listed under "Small Amounts" are more likely to cause imbalance with regular usage and should not be used more than once each month.

**Best:** Raw, uncooked honey, jaggery (raw sugar), maltose, maple syrup, molasses, sucanat

**Small Amounts:** Date sugar, grape sugar

**Avoid:** Brown sugar, white sugar

### Oils

Oils are very important and should be used abundantly if the skin is dry. Ghee should be used with warm spices.

**Best:** Almond, ghee, sesame

**Small Amounts:** Avocado, castor, coconut, flaxseed, mustard, olive, peanut, sunflower

**Avoid:** Safflower

## Fruits

Fruits are best when they are sour and not overly ripened or sweet. In general, due to their cooling effects on the body, their intake should be consumed in small amounts. The best fruits may be taken in greater amounts. Fruit in general should not be a staple of the diet but is all right for occasional use.

**Best:** Baked apples, apricots, avocados, bananas (ripe), blackberries, cantaloupe, cherries, coconut, cranberry sauce, dates (not dry), figs (fresh), grapefruit, grapes, lemons, mangos, nectarines, oranges, papaya, peaches, pears, persimmons, pineapple, plums, raspberries, strawberries (ripe), tangerines

**Small Amounts:** Apples (sour is best), pomegranate

**Avoid:** Dried fruit of any kind, cranberries

## Vegetables

The diet should consist primarily of cooked vegetables. However, occasional use of raw vegetables is all right as long as there is no constipation or gas.

**Best:** Avocado, beets, carrots (not as a juice), leeks, mustard greens, okra, onions (well cooked), parsnips, shallots, acorn squash, winter squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, water chestnuts

**Small Amounts:** Broccoli, cauliflower, celery, corn, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, kale, medium chilies and hot peppers, mushrooms, potatoes, radishes, seaweed, spinach, sweet peas, zucchini. The following may be eaten uncooked with a creamy or oily dressing: lettuce, spinach, and any leafy green (occasional use only and with a spicy heavy dressing)

**Avoid:** Alfalfa sprouts, artichokes (unless served with a butter-lemon sauce), asparagus, bean sprouts, Brussels sprouts, cabbage (even cooked), raw vegetables, snow peas

## Nuts and Seeds

Lightly roasted nuts are best. Dry roasting should be avoided. Salted nuts are fine. Nut butters are recommended in moderation except for peanut butter.

**Best:** Almonds

**Small Amounts:** Cashews, filberts, pecans, pinon, pistachio, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, and any other nut not mentioned

**Avoid:** Peanuts

## Meats

Repeated research shows that plant-based diets are healthier than meat-based diets and prevent many diseases. Ayurveda and Yoga emphasize a vegetarian diet primarily for spiritual reasons. Hence, omnivores should limit meat consumption if possible. Weak patients should take meat as a soup broth.

**Best:** Wild game meats: buffalo, turkey, elk, salmon, halibut, boar, rabbit

**Small Amounts:** Chicken, farm raised fish

**Avoid:** Beef, duck, pork, lamb, shellfish

## Legumes

Legumes are best taken well cooked with warm spices, as they can be hard to digest. Soaking them before cooking improves digestibility as well. Those listed as best are easiest to digest and usually will not cause harm.

**Best:** Mung beans, tempeh

**Small Amounts:** None

**Avoid:** Aduki beans, black beans, black gram, chickpeas, fava beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, navy beans, peas (dry or split), pinto beans, soybeans, tofu, tempeh, soy beans

## Spices

When spicing, the overall spiciness is more important than individual spices. Even some "Avoid" spices can be used if balanced with other spices on the "Best" list. For *vata*, food should be spiced moderately and never very hot or bland.

**Best:** Anise, basil, bay leaf, caraway, cardamom, catnip, cinnamon, clove, cumin, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger (fresh), marjoram, mustard, nutmeg, oregano, pepper, peppermint, poppy seeds, rosemary, saffron, sage, spearmint, thyme, turmeric

**Small Amounts:** Cayenne pepper, cilantro, ginger (dry), horseradish, mustards (very hot), parsley

**Avoid:** None

### **Condiments**

**Best:** Vinegar, Mayonnaise

**Small Amounts:** Catsup

**Avoid:** Carob (with proper sweeteners), chocolate (with proper sweeteners)

### **Beverages**

Beverages are best taken at room temperature or warm, and never ice cold.

**Best:** Three or four cups of room temperature or warm water per day. Spicy teas such as chamomile, cinnamon, clove, and ginger.

**Small Amounts:** Diluted fruit juices

**Avoid:** All alcohol, black tea, carbonated mineral water, coffee, fruit juices, soft drinks