



## VATA/KAPHA FOOD PROGRAM

### Basic Principles

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

**Best Taste:** pungent, sour

**Small Amounts:** salty, astringent

**Worst Tastes:** sweet, bitter

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*.

### Grains

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

**Best:** Amaranth, basmati rice, brown rice, buckwheat, quinoa, wild rice

**Small Amounts:** Millet, rye, barley

**Avoid:** Corn flour, oats, rice (sticky, white, short or long grain), wheat

### 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:** Buttermilk, ghee, 2% milk,

**Small Amounts:** Kefir, sour cream, yogurt (whole milk)

**Avoid:** Butter, cheeses, cottage cheese, 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:** Honey

**Small Amounts:** Jaggery, molasses, sucanat

**Avoid:** Date sugar, dextrose, fructose, grape sugar, maltose, maple sugar, maple syrup, rice syrup, white table sugar

### Oils

Oils are very important and should be used abundantly if the skin is dry. Though generally heavy, the lighter oils will not aggravate *kapha*. Ghee should be used with warm spices.

**Best:** Flaxseed, ghee, mustard, safflower

**Small Amounts:** Almond, canola, castor, corn, margarine, olive, peanut, sesame, soy

**Avoid:** Avocado, coconut, lard, sunflower

### Fruits

Fruits are best when they are sour and not overly ripened or sweet. These will bring balance to both *doshas*. 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:** Apricots, grapefruit, lemon, papaya

**Small Amounts:** Apples (baked is best), banana (sour), blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, cherries, lime, mango, oranges (sour), pineapple, plums (sour), pomegranate, prunes, raspberries, tangerines

**Avoid:** Avocado, banana (sweet), coconut, dates, figs, grapes (sweet), jujube, melons (watermelon, cantaloupe), oranges (sweet), nectarines, peaches, pears, persimmons, plums (sweet), raisins, strawberries

## 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:** Artichoke (with a spicy, oily dressing), beets, carrots, cauliflower, chili peppers, corn (fresh), green beans, leeks, mung bean sprouts, mustard greens, onion, parsley, potato, radish, sunflower sprouts, tomato

**Small Amounts:** Alfalfa sprouts, avocado, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, celery, cilantro, kale, lettuce, mushrooms, okra, peas (green, snow), rutabagas, seaweed, spinach, squash (zucchini, crookneck), Swiss chard, turnips

**Avoid:** Asparagus, bitter melon, cabbage, cucumber, eggplant, Jerusalem artichoke, squash (acorn, winter), sweet potato, yams

## Nuts and Seeds

These should be taken lightly dry roasted to assist digestion and only very lightly salted if at all. Nut butters, except for peanut, may also be eaten.

**Best:** Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, piñon (pine nuts)

**Small Amounts:** Filberts

**Avoid:** Almonds, Brazil, cashews, coconut, lotus seeds, macadamia, peanuts, pecans, pistachio, walnuts

## 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:** None

**Small Amounts:** Chicken and turkey (dark meat), fish (fresh river and sea)

**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. As they contain earth and air, they are heavy and dry which can harm both *doshas* when digestion is weak. Those listed as best are easiest to digest and usually will not cause harm.

**Best:** Mung beans, soy milk, tempeh, tofu

**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

## Spices

Spices aid the digestion and absorption of nutrients and they improve flavor. Warm and hot spices are recommended for *vata/kapha* types. It is the overall effect of spicing that is most important and not the individual spice used. If food becomes too hot it may contribute to greater dryness. Hence, the hottest spices should be used in moderation. Food should never be bland.

**Best:** Allspice, anise, asafoetida, basil, bay leaf, black pepper, caraway, catnip, cayenne, celery seed, chamomile, cloves, coriander, cumin, curry powder, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger, horseradish, hyssop, lemon verbena, marjoram, mustard seed, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, parsley, peppermint, poppy seed, rosemary, saffron, sage, spearmint, star anise, tarragon, thyme, turmeric

**Small Amounts:** Salt

**Avoid:** None

### **Condiments**

**Best:** Vinegar

**Small Amounts:** Catsup, carob (with proper sweeteners), chocolate (with proper sweeteners)

**Avoid:** Mayonnaise

### **Beverages**

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

**Best:** Chamomile tea, licorice tea, mint tea, spicy teas, water

**Small Amounts:** Sour fruit juices (cranberry, lemon, lime, pineapple, pomegranate), vegetable juices. Diluted fruit juices preferred.

**Avoid:** Alcohol, black tea, coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated), soft drinks, sweet fruit juices, sweetened soda pop