

Chinese Dietary Principles for Optimal Health

Chinese nutritional principles date back over 6,000 years serving as a cornerstone in promoting optimal health and preventing disease.

Food is powerful medicine. In fact, the different qualities of the foods we eat have an essential place in the roots of Traditional Chinese Medicine—nutritional knowledge dating back 6,000 years. With a logical premise that the food we eat acts as medicine and fuel to the body, combinations of foods can encourage good health – or contribute, as we’ve all experienced on occasion – to discomfort or dis-ease.

Chinese nutrition is a healing system where balance in the diet is essential. According to Chinese nutritional theory, foods have different properties like flavor, temperature, direction, and energetic action. Based on an individual’s unique health condition, foods are “prescribed” to help balance the body’s energy and promote healing. Because different foods have distinct qualities, they’re considered more appropriate for some people and conditions than others. Virtually every common food has been described in Chinese nutrition according to their unique qualities and actions.

For example, we know a watermelon as a nutritious fruit, rich in carbohydrate and vitamins. Chinese nutrition sees watermelon as cold and sweet, acting to quench thirst, relieve irritability, promote urination and relieve heat. As a result, one might eat watermelon to produce those actions, but avoid it during the cold winter. Isn’t it convenient to know that we have such an appropriate summertime fruit?

Western and Chinese nutrition have some important differences, but also many complementary aspects. Their principles can be integrated to create a diet that is healthy and balanced for each individual, the pillar of both nutritional systems.

References:

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