



Dietary restriction while taking Chinese medicine

服用中藥的忌口(英文)

For Chinese culture, we value dietary restrictions and taboos while taking medication; to guarantee the effect of medication, Chinese medicine physicians often strictly ask their patients to be aware of the negative interactions between medicine and food. Some might incur negative effect of endangering patient' s health condition, reducing the effect of the medicine, and triggering possible side-effects.

1. It is generally better to take Chinese medicine with warm water:
Abide by instructions given by the doctors unless there is alternative to taking the medicine.
2. It is prohibited to drink tea before or after taking sedative or hypnosis medicine: Taking medicine with tea is worse because tea leaves contain caffeine, theophylline, and theobromine which could strengthen your heart, stimulate urination and secretion of gastric juice, and excite cerebral cortex.
3. It' s better to have at least one hour between taking western medicine and taking Chinese medicine.
4. For patients with poor gastrointestinal functions, intake lighter and blended food up to 80% full. Avoid eating too much meat and calorie and protein rich food because it adds burden to the stomach and aggravates conditions.
5. Do not eat white carrot if your physician advises you to take Ginseng. It is unwise to eat white carrot because it promotes digestion, removes phlegm, and improves respiration. Since Ginseng is a kind of potent drug, that the effect will be bothered by the white carrot. If patients take Ginseng and white carrot together, they may suffer from chest tightness, shortness of breath, fidgeting, and loss of appetite.

6. When patients start to take Chinese medicine for quenching heat and nourishing females; onion, garlic, chilly, pepper, and mutton are prohibited. Patients with “hot constitution” take those foods may suffer from deteriorated heat condition; thus the effects of such a drug, for quenching heat and nourishing females, will be deducted. As to patients undergoing treatment for cold symptoms, they should avoid eating raw and cold foods.
7. From the perspective of Chinese medicine, dietary restriction differs with each individual’s constitution. For example, spicy dry foods are prohibited for those with poor digestive functions. In the initial stage of cold, patients should avoid eating raw, cold, and greasy foods while taking exterior relieving Chinese medicine. Children who have diarrhea are not supposed to eat raw, cold, and greasy foods as well; instead, they should eat light and blended foods. For patients who suffer from chest tightness, stagnated respiration, and abdominal fullness; it is not suitable for them to eat beans and potato which may cause abdominal fullness. Patients with edema should avoid eating salt. As to patients with asthma and allergic dermatitis should avoid mutton, fish, shrimp, crab, and egg. Of course, spoiled and unclean foods, raw meat, wild mushroom, and food not thoroughly cooked are all prohibited.
8. In brief, when patients take Chinese medicine for any disorder, they should avoid raw, cold, greasy, smelling fish, pungent food, barbecued, roasted, and fried oily foods. Light and blended foods are highly recommended.