

Diet for Kapha

General Considerations

- Changing old patterns to eat less in quantity and frequency, but maintaining a high quality of food is key for balancing Kapha Dosha.
- Keep the diet low in salt, low in fat, and high in fiber. Eat lightly cooked foods.
- Kapha people can happily skip breakfast. Eating between 10:00 am. And 6:00 p.m. is best.
- After eating, take a stroll. Avoid sleeping after meals as this adds to heaviness in the body.
- Fast one day a week.
- Be mindful not to use food for emotional support. This will definitely cause weight gain (especially consuming chocolate, late night ice-cream or other heavy snacks).
- Kapha is increased in early morning, later in the evening, in the winter, and in the spring. Be most careful with your diet at these times, avoiding heavy breakfasts or late night kitchen raids.
- Qualities of food that balance Kapha are pungent, light, dry, astringent, bitter, and hot. Take more of these and more often.
- Qualities of food that imbalance Kapha are sweet, heavy, sour, oily, salty, and cold. Take less of these and less frequently.

Shopping List for Kapha

Grain: Amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, quinoa, basmati rice, and rice cakes.

Legumes: Aduki, black beans, black-eye peas, garbanzos (chick peas), limas, navy beans, pinto, red lentil, split peas, and white peas.

Animal Foods: chicken and turkey (dark meat), eggs, wild game.

Dairy: Ghee, goat milk, lassi.

Vegetables: Asparagus, beets, beet greens, bell pepper, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celery, corn, daikon radish, eggplant, green beans, jicama, kohlrabi, leafy greens, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, okra, onions, parsley, peas, radish, spinach, sprouts.

Nuts and Seeds: Pumpkin and sunflower.

Fruits: Apples, apricots, berries, cherries, cranberries, dry figs, mango, peaches, pears, persimmon, pomegranate, prune, quince, raisin, strawberries.

Sweeteners: Raw honey, fruit juice concentrate.

Oils: Mustard seed is best, also almond, corn, sunflower.

Condiments and Spices: Black pepper, chili, coriander leaf (cilantro), garlic, ginger, mustard, mint leaves, and all spices, generally, with the exception of tamarind.

Drinks: Aloe Vera juice, fruit and vegetable juices, grain coffee, coffee, black tea, spiced herbal teas.

*This symbol is used for foods that should only be taken occasionally.

When Away from Home or Eating Out...

- Order salads rather than soups.
- Choose hot water instead of ice water.
- Enjoy salad bars, Mexican (non-dairy dishes), Indian, Chinese, Thai, and vegetarian restaurants.
- Take a light wine with meals or a cocktail to start.

Preparation Tips

Grains: Small portions are helpful to satisfy and sustain energy. Fruit sweetened granolas, grain flakes, puffed grains, and crisp breads are best.

Legumes: Beans are important as they are the best low fat protein source. Soak beans over night and change water before cooking. Cooking all day over an open fire is best, but a crock or pressure cooker works well in today's kitchen. Spice with any Kapha spices, especially cumin, coriander, ginger, and garlic.

Meats: Generally should be of light quality and cooked with herbs and spices to facilitate fat absorption.

Dairy: For the most part dairy is too heavy and too cooling. A little ghee can help with digestion. Kapha lassi can be taken in moderation:

1 part low fat yogurt with 3-4 parts warm water
Add honey, black pepper, and ginger to taste.

Vegetables: All vegetables that grow above the ground are good. Roots are a little too earthy for regular use. Eat raw vegetables or vegetables lightly steamed.

Fruits: Fruits that are not too sweet, sour, or juicy are best. Dried fruit is a great snack or travel food.

Oils: Use sparingly; substitute water cooking for frying where possible.

Sweeteners: Honey is best, Use no more than one tablespoon per day. Never heat or cook with honey. According to Ayurveda, honey becomes toxic to the body once it is heated.

Spices: Use very little salt or use salt substitutes. Use of herbs and spices to stimulate the palate and digestion is very useful.

Drinks: Kapha people can take a little black tea or coffee occasionally. Use a little ginger in black tea and nutmeg or cardamom with coffee. If these don't agree with you, try spiced cider or hot lemon and honey to start your day. Drink only when thirsty and only enough to stop thirst.

{Inspired by Melanie Sachs' book Ayurvedic Beauty Care}