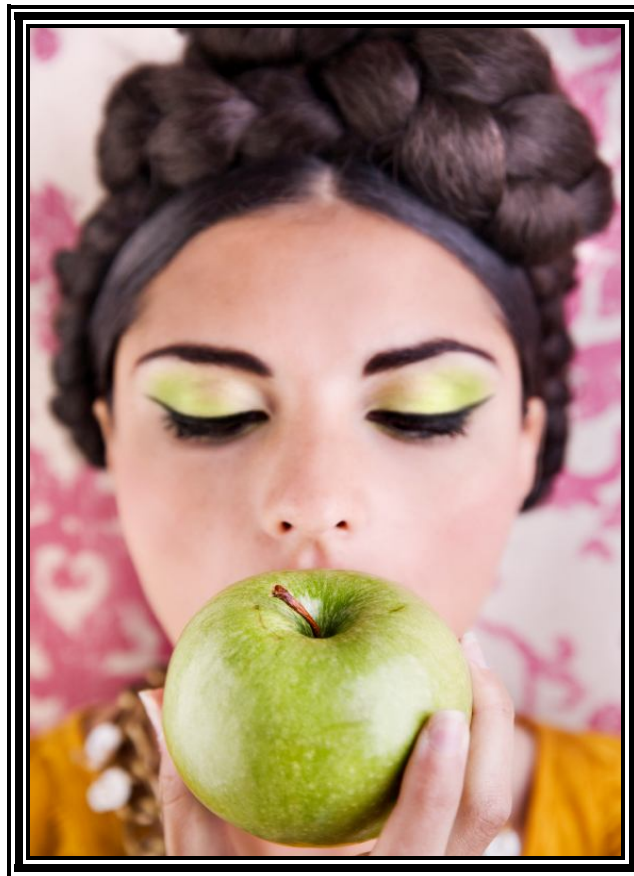


Four Temperament Foods



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Foods of the Four Temperaments

The four temperaments address foods for the different climates in which we live, the four seasons, and people of different temperaments. We will also explore the Ayurvedic and Chinese traditions.

The temperaments of humoral medicine have been around for several hundred years. *Culpeper's Medicine* by Graeme Tobyn is the main reference for tastes of the temperaments.

The four temperaments recognize four flavors corresponding to the four humors. While different from Chinese and Ayurvedic it is nonetheless just as valid and has several hundred years of experience as the other systems do. Both Chinese and Ayurvedic descriptions which follow only add to our understanding of the four temperament tastes.

- **Sanguine** is hot and wet and corresponds to the springtime. Its taste is **bitter**.
- **Choleric** is hot and dry and corresponds to the summer time. Its taste is **sweet**.
- **Melancholic** is cold and dry and is seen in the autumn time. Its taste is **sour**.
- **Phlegmatic** is cold and wet and is associated with winter. Its taste is **salty**.

Climate and using Opposite Foods to Balance

The first question is about eating for where we live. The weather and climate of the place we live will influence our temperament and our diet. These factors along with our temperament contribute to our physical, mental, and emotional health. Use the opposite taste to balance the temperament, either your environment or your personal temperament.

- A **mountainous** area is a cold and dry environment that tends to a **melancholic** influence. Use more warming and moistening (sanguine-bitter) foods.
- A **sandy** area suggests a hot and dry environment that increases the **choleric** temperament. Add more cooling and moistening (phlegmatic-salty) foods.
- A **damp ground** is cold and moist and makes one a **phlegmatic** environment. Eat more warming and drying foods (choleric - sweet).
- **Woodland** is warm and moist and increases the **sanguine** temperament. Eat more cooling and drying (melancholic – sour) foods.

Wind and its Influences

The ancients also considered the wind as an influence and many cultures recognized it in their medical practice. It is remembered in humoral medicine. The following section includes wind influences by their direction. This may not be as important as the “quality” of the wind.



The famous Culpeper considered air as being generally cold and moist and has a general **phlegmatic** influence. The different types of wind have different influences. He described the **east wind** as hot, and dry, or a choleric (summertime) influence. Its effects are relaxing to the body and joints; it weakens digestion and makes one thirsty. Too hot, it dries out the body and shortens life.

The **west wind** (wintertime) is cold and moist and is of **phlegmatic** influence. The cold aids digestion, closes the pores of the skin, reducing transpiration (losing moisture). If too cold it can engender constipation and increase urine output. It can also cause mucus and sinus problems.

The **south wind** was thought to be hot and moist of a **sanguine** character. It was seen in the springtime and was thought to cause rotting and spread infections. This kind of air can moisten the body and soften the skin. It can cause the body to be slow and dull the brain.

The **north wind** is cold and dry like the autumn of a **melancholic** character. The moral of this story is to connect with our environment and observe nature.

For season influences the book *Regimen for Health* says,

In spring your dinner must not much exceed
 In summer's heat but little meat shall need
 In autumn ware you eat not too much fruit
 With winter's cold full meats do fittest suit.

We need to be aware and eat according to the season. Eat foods opposite to the season to balance your temperament. Moderate this with your climate and temperament.

Your age will also influence the foods you eat to balance your temperament. In general, the youth are hot and dry and need more moist and cooling diets for the phlegmatic (opposite their dispositions). The elderly were seen as slowing down and getting dry. This would suggest warming and moistening food such as for sanguine.

Look at the following chart for foods t to heat, cool, moist, or dry. This is according to Grame Tobyn's book:

Heating foods	Cooling foods	Moistening foods	Drying foods
Wine, mead	Beer, cider & water		
Fresh bread		Fresh bread	Old bread
Oats	Barley		
Egg yolk	Egg white		
		Butter	
	Cottage cheese	Cottage cheese	
Soft cheese		Soft cheese	
Hard cheese			Hard cheese
		Milk	
	Fish	Fish	
Shellfish		Shellfish	
Chicken		Chicken	
Veal		Veal	
Lamb		Lamb	
	Beef		Beef
Mutton			Mutton
Garlic, onions, leeks			Garlic, onions, leeks
Artichokes			Artichoke
Cabbage			Cabbages
Fennel			
Asparagus		Asparagus	
	Spinach	Spinach	
Turnip		Turnip	
Carrot			Carrot
Chickpeas, beans		Chickpeas, beans	
	Lentils		Lentils
Parsnip			Parsnip
	Lettuce	Lettuce	
	cucumber	Cucumber	
	Oranges, lemon		Oranges, lemons
Olive oil		Olive oil	
	Pears, apples	Pears, apples	
Figs, raisins, dates		Figs, raisins, dates	
	Other summer fruits	Other summer fruits	
	Quinces		Quinces
Nuts		Nuts	

The Chinese Viewpoint on Taste

The following ideas come from the highly quoted book *Healing with Whole Foods* by Paul Pitchford, 3rd edition. It is one of the best books on healing with food. Each taste affects the organs of the body differently and is called the five flavors.

Chinese Bitter Taste

Properties of bitter: cooling; causes contraction and encourages energy to descend; reduces excessive person (robust, extroverted, loud, reddish complexion, thick tongue coating); antipyretic, lowering fever; dry fluids and drain dampness. Certain bitter foods have purgative effects and induce bowel movement. Bitter is associated with the fire element.

Uses of bitter: inflammation; infections; overly moist, damp conditions; constipation. (Bitter is one of the most underused and least appreciated flavors.)

Organ functions for bitter: clears heat and cleans arteries of damp mucoid deposits of cholesterol and fats and lowers blood pressure (Celery is a specific food for this purpose.); clears stagnancy and cools heat in the liver (normally caused by overconsumption of rich foods; drains various damp-associated conditions in the forms of Candida yeast overgrowth, parasites, mucus, swellings, skin eruptions, abscesses, growths, tumors, cysts, obesity, and all moist accumulations including edema in the intestines and flesh of the body; increases intestinal muscle contractions; tonifies and vitalizes kidneys and lungs; removes mucus/heat conditions in the lungs signified by yellow phlegm discharges; "proper" flavor for the lungs ---Inner Classic.

Seasonal: in order to contract and channel energy lower into the body for the colder season, increase the use of bitters through the fall and winter. Heat symptoms that arise any time can be neutralized by bitter flavor.

Those most benefited: slow, overweight, lethargic, watery (damp) individuals (phlegmatic); overheated, aggressive persons are cooled by the bitter flavor.

Cautions: deficient persons who are cold, weak, thin, nervous, and dry (melancholic), should limit bitter food intake. "Those with bone diseases should not eat much bitter food." -Inner Classic

Examples of Bitter

To make bitter herbs and foods more palatable, they can be cooked with a little licorice root, stevia leaf, or other sweetener.

Strong bitter for major imbalances: dandelion leaf or root, burdock leaf or root, yarrow, chamomile, hops, valerian, chaparral, Echinacea, and pau d' arco.

Bitter: alfalfa, bitter melon, romaine lettuce, rye

Bitter and pungent: citrus peel (also sweet), radish leaf, scallion, turnip (also sweet), white pepper.

Bitter and sweet: amaranth, asparagus, celery, lettuce, papaya, quinoa

Bitter and sour: vinegar.

Chinese Sweet Taste

Properties of sweet: Full sweet is more tonifying and empty sweet is more cleansing and cooling (occurs in most fruits); sweet, when found in warming foods helps energy expand upward and outward in the body and is harmonizing, slowing and relaxing; sweet build the yin of the body – the tissues and fluids – and therefore tonify the thin dry person (melancholic); strengthens weakness and deficiency in general.

Uses of sweet: sweet foods are the center of most traditional diets as they energize yet relax the body, nerves, and brain; reduces harsh taste of bitter foods; in the form of complex carbohydrates such as grains, vegetables and legumes, if not cooling, are suitable for treating cold or deficient person. Most dairy and animal products are considered sweet and these may be necessary for extreme deficiencies.

Organ functions for sweet: strengthens the spleen-pancreas; appropriate food for the liver since it soothes aggressive liver emotions such as anger and impatience, also calms acute liver attacks; moistens dry conditions of the lungs; slows an overactive heart and mind.

Seasonal: sweet is appropriate in every season, especially desirable for harmony at the time of the equinoxes and solstices as well as during late summer, the juncture between summer and fall.

Those most benefited: the dry cold nervous thin weak or scattered person needs whole sweet foods in greater quantity; the aggressive person benefits from less sweet. Using grains, then wheat, rice, and oats benefits both these individuals.

Cautions: sluggish, overweight individuals; those with damp signs, including mucus conditions, should take very sweet foods sparingly and whole-food carbohydrates moderately; chewing carbohydrates well makes them much less mucus-forming and therefore a lighter and less damp impact on digestion.

According to the Chinese healing arts, too much sweet food damages the kidneys and spleen-pancreas, weakens the bones, and causes heat-heat loss. The inner Classic warns not to eat much sweet food when diseases of the flesh are present (including obesity, tumors, and edema).

Examples of sweet

All grains number among the most important sweet foods although rye, quinoa and amaranth are also quite bitter. All legumes (beans, peas, lentils) and most meats and dairy products are considered sweet.

Fruits: apple, apricot, cherry, date, fig; grape, grapefruit, olive, papaya, peach, pear, strawberry, and tomato are also sweet and sour.

Vegetables: beet, button mushroom, carrot, chard, cucumber, eggplant, kuzu, potato,

shiitake mushroom, squash, sweet potato, yam; cabbage, and spearmint are also sweet and pungent; celery and lettuce are sweet and bitter.

Nuts and seeds: almond, chestnut, coconut, sesame seed and oil, sunflower seed, walnut.

Sweeteners: amasake, barley malt, molasses, rice syrup, whole sugar (unrefined cane juice powder); honey is sweet to the taste, but raw honey has a pungent drying effect on the body after digestion.

Chinese Sour Taste

Properties of sour: cooling; causes contraction and has a gathering absorbent astringent effect to prevent or reverse abnormal leakage of fluids and energy; dry and firm up tissues. Has a yin quality.

Uses of sour: urinary dripping; excessive perspiration; hemorrhage; diarrhea; weak sagging tissues (including skin, hemorrhoids, uterine prolapse). Sour flavor derives from a great variety of acids (citric, tannic, and ascorbic acid of vitamin C). The sour of black tea, green tea and blackberry leaves is classified as astringent.

Organ functions for sour: sour is most active in the liver where it counteracts the effects of rich, greasy food, helping break down fats and protein; helps in digestion to dissolve minerals for improved assimilation; can help strengthen weakened lungs; "proper" food for heart-mind (union of heart and mind).

Seasonal: sour food attunes one to the fall, a time of gathering and beginning of the period of contraction with the onset of cooler weather.

Those most benefited: sour flavors collect and hold together the dispersed capriciously changing personality. (Sour foods don't occur frequently enough in the modern diet.)

Cautions for use of sour: do not use sour if you have dampness, heaviness of mind or body, constipation or constrictions. "In diseases of the sinews (tendons and ligaments), do not eat much sour food." ---Inner Classic

Examples of Sour

Hawthorn berry, lemon, lime, pickles, rose hip, sauerkraut, crab apple, sour plum.

Sour and bitter: vinegar.

Sour and pungent: leek.

Sour and sweet: adzuki bean, apple, blackberry, cheese, grape, huckleberry, mango, olive, raspberry, sourdough bread, tangerine, tomato, yogurt.

Chinese Salty Taste

Properties of salty: cooling effect; moves energy downward and inward; centering; earthy qualities; moistens dryness; softens hardened lumps and stiffness; improves digestion; detoxifies; can purge the bowels and promote emesis. Salty is associated with the water element.

Uses of salty: increase salty to soften lumps (hardened lymph nodes, cataracts, other knotting of the muscles and glands); constipation, abdominal swelling and pain; impure blood conditions (heat signs such as skin discharges, sore throat, and pyorrhea); counteracts toxins in the body; appetent (increases appetite).

Organ functions for salty: strengthens the digestive function; fortifies a weak heart-mind and improves mental concentration.

Seasonal: the descending cooling nature of salty flavor attunes one to the colder seasons and climates and should be progressively more throughout fall and winter.

Those most benefited: moistens and calms the thin dry nervous persons (Natrum muriaticum – melancholic).

Cautions for use of salt: restrict salt for those with damp, overweight, lethargic (phlegmatic), or edema (swelling or water retention) conditions and high blood pressure. Seaweeds are an exception because they speed up metabolism. Even though salt is yin, too much salt may have the opposite effect. "Do not eat much salt in blood diseases." --- Inner Classic.

Examples of Salty

Salt, seaweed (kelp, kombu, bladderwrack, dulse).

Salty and sweet: barley and millet have some salty quality although they are primarily sweet.

Products made with substantial amounts of salt: soy sauce, miso, pickles, umeboshi (salt plum), and gomasio (sesame salt).

Chinese Pungent Taste

Properties of pungent: expansive, dispersive, and if warming stimulates circulation of energy and blood, tending to move energy upwards and outwards to the periphery of the body. Pungent includes acrid, spicy, hot and aromatic flavors and is Yang.

Uses of pungent: stimulates digestion; disperses mucus caused by highly mucus-forming foods such as dairy and meat and offers protection against mucus conditions such as the common cold; lightens the effects of grains, legumes, nuts and seeds all of which

have moderate mucus-forming properties; disperse stagnant blood and increase qi energy as well. Some of the pungent flavors such as garlic, Mugwort, and cayenne destroy or expel parasites.

Organ functions of pungents: clears the lungs of mucus conditions (do not use warming pungent if there are heat conditions anywhere in the body); improves digestive activity and expel gas from the intestines; moistens kidneys which affect fluids in the entire body; increases saliva and sweat; stimulates blood circulation and is cardio tonic; helps clear obstructions and improve sluggish liver function.

Seasonal: pungent attunes a person to the spring. Those pungent flavors that are also attune a person to summer (cayenne, black pepper, hot peppers, and fresh ginger. Use ginger and cinnamon for overcoming coldness (may be used long term). Cayenne and other peppers are warming, but are so extreme that they change to a cooling effect after thirty minutes or so.

Those most benefited: sluggish, dull, lethargic, or excessively heavy (bitter flavor also - phlegmatic); people inclined to damp/mucus conditions (metal element organs of lungs and colon); cold persons; dry, thin individuals who are nervous and restless (seed pungents relax nervous system and improve digestion such as fennel, dill, caraway, anise, coriander, cumin – beware, all pungents do not calm this type).

Cautions for use of pungents: some flavors worsen the condition of the dry, windy, nervous or thin person (sage, raw onion, and all hot peppers especially cayenne). Avoid warming pungents when heat signs exist. Those who are overweight from overeating should choose cooling pungents.

Examples of Pungents

Pungency may be diminished by cooking; steaming may preserve, but for full effect, eat the heat-sensitive pungents raw or pickled. Pungent leafy herbs such as the mints should be steeped although most barks and roots such as ginger need to be simmered.

Warming: spearmint, rosemary, scallion, garlic and all onion family members, cinnamon bark and branch, cloves, fresh and dried ginger root, black pepper, all hot peppers, cayenne, fennel, anise, dill, mustard greens, horseradish, basil and nutmeg.

Cooling: peppermint, marjoram, elder flowers, white pepper, and radish and its leaves.

Neutral: taro, turnip and kohlrabi.

The Ayurvedic Viewpoint on Taste

The following are opinions on tastes affecting digestion in the *Textbook of Ayurveda* by Vasant Lad. It is an excellent book of Ayurvedic medicine. They also talk about how foods affect us emotionally as well as physically and mentally. In Ayurveda there are six tastes which correspond to different organs.

Taste	Sweet	Sour	Salty	Pungent	Bitter	Astringent
Associated organs	Thyroid, upper lungs	Lungs	Kidneys	Stomach, heart	Pancreas, liver, spleen	Colon

Ayurvedic Bitter Taste

Bitter is called tikta. It has the air and ether elements and is cool, light, and dry in nature. Bitter taste increases vata but decreases pitta and kapha. Bitter is the most lacking in the North American diet. Bitter taste improves all other tastes, because if you have a little bitter, then any food will taste good. Alone, bitter is nauseating.

Qualities of bitter: promotes the flavor of other tastes; anti-toxic and kills germs; helps relieve burning sensations, itching, fainting, and obstinate skin disorders; anti-inflammatory; antipyretic (reduces fever, laxative, and cleansing to the liver; stimulates firmness of the skin and muscles; small doses can relieve intestinal gas and work as a digestive tonic; drying causing reduction in fat, bone marrow, urine and feces; pancreas support (Neem and Turmeric for high blood sugar); cleansing (scraping of fat and toxins); promotes celibacy and aversion to worldly attachments; inhibits sexual energy; kills worms; antibacterial and antiviral.

Excess consumption of bitter may deplete any of the dhatus (body systems) and can induce dizziness and unconsciousness; extreme dryness and roughness; emaciation; weariness; reduction in bone marrow (osteoporosis). Certain antibiotics such as chloramphenicol and tetracycline are bitter and can create blood disorders and bone marrow depression.

Examples: bitter melon, turmeric root, dandelion root, aloe vera, yellow dock, fenugreek, sandalwood, neem, and coffee.

Psychological effects of bitter

Bitter in moderation: makes mind celibate; withdrawing from temptation and mind becomes more introverted; creates aversion to desires; more self-conscious and self-aware; help to unfold the withdrawing of the mind and senses from the outer world into the inner world which is introspective.

Excess bitter: makes a person cynical, boring and can lead to rejection; it can create aversion; separation, isolation, and loneliness.

Ayurvedic Sweet Taste

Madhura means pleasant, charming, beautiful, agreeable, and melodious as well as sweet. Love is madhura, so you call a person you love “honey.” You never say “Oh, my chili pepper,” because love is associated with sweet taste, not pungent. Sweet is appealing to our taste buds. If you dip one finger into honey and a second into bitter herbs, then offer these two fingers to a baby, the baby will grab the finger with sweet hone and go on sucking it, but hat the bitter finger.

Qualities of sweet: heavy, cooling, and oily; encourages the senses, improves complexion, promotes healthy skin and hair and a melodious voice; sweet enhances the vital essence of life (ojas); it unfolds the love divine. When used moderately, sweet is wholesome to the body and anabolic, promoting the growth of all seven dhatus (body systems) – plasma, blood, muscles, fat, bones, marrow, and reproductive fluids. Proper use gives strength and longevity. Earth and Water are the elements. Sweet taste pacifies both vata and pitta, but increases kapha.

Sweet in moderation: relieves thirst and burning sensation, enhances blood sugar, is nutritive to body tissues, helps to heal emaciation, and has a sustained cooling effect. If your tong is burnt by chili pepper, eat a little sugar and it will cool down the burning sensation. Sweet can bring stability and gives energy, vigor, and vitality.

Excessive use of sweet: causes cold, cough congestion, heaviness, loss of appetite, laciness, and obesity; abnormal muscle growth, lymphatic congestion, tumors, edema and diabetes; creates thirst; increases the need for sleep makes a person sluggish; healing capacity diminished because it is the best media for bacteria, fungi, and parasites to grow; affects the heart, brain, kidneys, and pancreas leading to diabetes, nephritic syndrome, or high triglycerides; accumulations of sugar in the brain may lead to stroke paralysis; makes blood viscous which can lead to high cholesterol, high triglycerides and arteriosclerosis.

Sweet in moderation is nectar, but sweet in excess is poison.

Examples: sugar, honey, dates, maple syrup and licorice, as well as more mildly in milk, rice, and wheat.

Psychological effects of sweet

Sweet in moderation: enhances love and compassion; has a natural affinity towards joy, happiness, and bliss. Prasāda means compassion, love, richness, holiness, and wholesomeness.

Excess sweet: attachment, greed, possessiveness; it is tempting and addictive.

Ayurvedic Sour Taste

Sour is called amla, and is comprised of predominantly earth and fire elements. Amla means sour, acidic, and that which easily ferments. Sour taste decreases vata but increases pitta and kapha. Sour substances are liquid, light, heating and oily in nature and stimulate metabolism.

Qualities of sour: makes your senses sharp; immediately makes the eyes, ears, and teeth sensitive; increases salivary secretions, stimulates appetite, enhances of digestive enzymes; anti-flatulent and anti-spasmodic; refreshing; energizing, nourishing to the heart; enlivens the mind. In small quantity sour increases secretions; this is the reason why a regular small dose of apple cider vinegar works well for some people, balancing cholesterol and eliminating congestion.

Sour in excess dries membranes, created congestion. Be aware of taking vitamin C – just the right amount will help but too much will cause congestion. Sour in excess can cause teeth sensitivity, excessive thirst, hyperacidity, heartburn, indigestion, gastritis, ulcerative colitis, and ulcers. As it has a fermentation action, it is toxic to the blood and can cause skin conditions like dermatitis, acne, rashes, eczema, boils, and psoriasis. It may lead to acidic pH in the body and cause burning in the stomach, throat, chest, heart, bladder, and urethra. Excess sour can also lead to diarrhea, dysentery, edema, damp lungs, and can worsen congestive disorders.

Examples: sour cream, yogurt, vinegar, cheese, citrus fruits such as lemon and grapefruit, unripe mango, green grapes and fermented foods.

Psychological effects of sour

Sour in moderation brings comprehension, appreciation, recognition, and discrimination; sharp, alert mind, good attention span.

Excess sour: judgmental, criticism, jealousy, and hat; agitate mind, hyperactive. When a relationship ends, there is often a sour taste in the mouth, which is a sign of judgment and rejection.

Ayurvedic Salty Taste

Salty is called lavana. Water and fire are the predominant elements. Salty relieves vata but increases kapha and pitta.

Qualities of salty: heating, heavy, oily, hydrophilic (water loving); laxative (water element), antispasmodic (fire element); anabolic. Just a little bit of salt enhances the flavor of food, but any more than a little nullifies the effect of other tastes. Salty stimulates salivation, aids digestion, absorption, and assimilation; helps elimination of waste; anti-flatulent. In moderation it promotes growth, fires energy, maintains the

water electrolyte balance: helps equalize blood pressure and enhance energy; muscle strength. Needed more in climates where people sweat.

Excess salt: sodium retention; thick and viscous blood causing narrowing of blood vessels and high blood pressure; water retention, edema and swelling; heat sensations, fainting, wrinkles, ulcers, bleeding disorders, hyperacidity; worsens skin conditions; hair loss; vomit inducing.

Examples: table salt, sea salt, rock salt, sesame salt, seaweed, tamari. Sodium chloride (common table salt) is the most common salt.

Psychological effects of salt

In moderation: enhances spirit, confidence, courage, enthusiasm, and interest; inquiring, probing mind; improves the flavor in a relationship.

Excess salt: create temptation, addiction, attachment, greed, possessiveness, irritability.

Ayurvedic Pungent Taste

Pungent is called katu and it contains fire and air elements. It is light, drying and heating in nature. It pacifies kapha but excites pitta and vata.

Qualities of pungent: improves digestion and absorption; cleans the mouth; clears the sinuses by stimulating nasal secretions and obesity (kapha); aids in circulation; breaks up clots; removes fat from the body; helps with elimination of waste products. Most pungent substances are blood thinners, antispasmodic, anti-parasitic and anathematic (de-wormers).

Excess pungent: kills sperm and ova, causing sexual debility in both sexes; induce burning, choking, fainting, hiccoughs, and fatigue with thirst; diarrhea, heartburn, and nausea; giddiness, tremors, insomnia, muscle pain; peptic ulcers, colitis, skin conditions; inflammation, irritation. Anything that is a strong irritant is potentially carcinogenic. Patients of cancer should stay away from extremely hot, pungent food.

Examples: cayenne pepper, chili pepper, black pepper, mustard, ginger, and asafetida, onion, radish and garlic.

Psychological effects of pungent

Pungent in moderation: enthusiasm, vitality and vigor; removes obstructions and brings clarity of perception; taste is hot, sharp and penetrating to help the mind probe, investigate, explore and concentrate; mind sharp focused, attentive and determined.

Pungent in excess: anger, violence, irritability, envy, jealousy, aggressive and competitive. If angry eat sweet which is cooling and soothing.

Ayurvedic Astringent Taste

Astringent taste, which is kashaya, is derived from the air and earth elements. It is cooling, drying and heavy in nature. It reduces both pitta and kapha, but increases vata. If you eat something astringent it creates a dry, choking sensation in the throat.

Qualities of astringent: improves absorption and creates binding of the stool. So, whenever a person has diarrhea or dysentery, use an astringent herb like kutaja or arrowroot, or an astringent fruit such as cooked apple pulp or cooked, unripe banana. If you eat these it will bind the stool and correct the diarrhea. Astringent taste is also anti-inflammatory and decongestant. It aids in healing ulcers and it does lekhana, the scraping of fat. Stops bleeding by promoting clotting and constricting the blood vessels.

Astringent excess: creates spasms, griping sensations in the intestines, and constipation. Extreme astringency creates coagulation and clotting. (If a person has blood clots astringent herbs are not good.); absorbs water and causes dryness of mouth and difficulty of speech. Frequent use of astringent foods may cause choking, absolute constipation, distention, cardiac spasm, and stagnation of circulation. It may affect sex drive and lead to depletion of sperm. It can give rise to emaciation, confusions, Bell's palsy, stroke paralysis, and other neuromuscular vata disorders.

Examples: unripe banana, pomegranate, chickpeas, green beans, yellow split peas, okra, goldenseal, turmeric, lotus seed, alfalfa sprouts, mango seed, arjuna, alum, and most raw vegetables are all examples of astringent taste.

Psychological effects of astringent

Astringent in moderation: supportive, grounding (earth element); brings things together, collected and organized mind; putting everything in its right place.

Astringent in excess: scattered mind; disorganized person; insomnia, fear, anxiety, nervousness; fixation; rigidity; harshness; emotional stagnation; depression; person holds onto emotions and becomes depressed.

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