

CHINESE MEDICINE PREGNANCY DIET



DR. MARYAM'S PREGNANCY PROGRAM
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Chinese medicine gynecologists & obstetricians have been giving time-tested recommendations to pregnant mothers for thousands of years. For pregnant mothers, it can be very challenging to know if they're making the right diet and lifestyle choices for themselves. For many mothers, they may suffer from nausea, poor appetite, fatigue and weak digestion which can really impact their quality of life and the food choices they make. What every mother wants is to give their miracle baby the best they can and nourishing themselves properly can make all the difference.

What Not To Eat

You probably are already familiar with these well known dietary restrictions during pregnancy but lets review shall we? Here are the foods to be absolutely avoided and/or limited during pregnancy.

- **Raw meat:** This includes uncooked beef, poultry and fish because the risk is contamination with coliform bacteria, salmonella and toxoplasmosis.
- **Deli meat:** because of the risk of listeria - can cross the placenta and may infect the baby

- **Fish with high mercury levels:** Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tile fish are examples. Canned, chunk light tuna generally has a lower amount of mercury than other tuna, but still should only be eaten in moderation. Mercury consumed during pregnancy has been linked to developmental delays and brain damage.
- **Smoked Seafood** –Refrigerated, smoked seafood often labeled as lox, nova style, kippered, or jerky should be avoided because it could be contaminated with listeria. Canned or shelf-safe smoked seafood is usually fine to eat.
- **Raw Shellfish:** This includes oysters, clams, and mussels.
- **Raw Eggs:** Raw eggs or any foods that contain raw eggs should be avoided because of the potential exposure to salmonella. Some examples of foods that may contain raw eggs are homemade Caesar dressings, mayonnaise, homemade ice cream or custards, and Hollandaise sauce. Commercially manufactured ice cream, dressings, and eggnog is made with pasteurized eggs and do not increase the risk of salmonella. Restaurants should be using pasteurized eggs in any recipe that is made with raw eggs, such as Hollandaise sauce or dressings.
- **Unpasteurized Milk:** Unpasteurized milk may contain listeria. Make sure that any milk you drink is pasteurized.

- **Soft Cheeses:** Soft cheeses may contain listeria. Avoid soft cheeses such as brie, Camembert, Roquefort, feta, Gorgonzola, and Mexican style cheeses, unless they clearly state that they are made from pasteurized milk. All soft non-imported cheeses made with pasteurized milk are safe to eat.
- **Unwashed Vegetables:** make sure that vegetables are washed to avoid potential exposure to toxoplasmosis, which could have contaminated the soil where the vegetables were grown. Toxoplasmosis is a rare but serious blood infection caused by a parasite.
- **Caffeine:** As a general rule, I tell my patients to try to have no more than one cup of coffee per day or to switch to decaf coffee. Caffeine is a diuretic, helping to eliminate fluids from the body which can result in water and calcium loss. It's important that you're drinking plenty of fluids rather than caffeinated beverages. Some research shows that large amounts of caffeine are associated with miscarriage, premature birth, low birth weight, and withdrawal symptoms in infants. The safest thing is to try to limit or simply avoid caffeine consumption.
- **Alcohol:** Alcohol should absolutely be avoided during pregnancy and should continue to be avoided during breastfeeding.

Pregnancy from a Chinese Medicine point of view

During pregnancy, the mother's energy & blood is diverted and gathers to nourish the fetus which can be quite depleting for the mother. In some cases where the mother is already deficient in energy and blood prior to pregnancy, her deficiencies can become even more accentuated during pregnancy. However, the fact that menstruation has stopped means that at least the mother is not losing blood every month and that can really help.

Because of this depletion of energy and blood, the mother has to try her best to eat a diet of nourishing foods. In Chinese medicine, there's a saying **Food is the Best Medicine**. A nourishing healthy diet is one of the best ways to nourish the mother which will in turn nourish the growing baby. You're growing a little human...you need all the help you can get! :)

Importance of Proper Digestion

The Stomach is the Cooking Pot

According to Chinese medicine, consumed food & fluids is initially processed by the stomach which is referred to as the COOKING POT. The cooking pot needs steady heat in order to do its duty of breaking down food into its useful (pure) & waste (impure) parts. Digestion is interrupted when there is not enough fire.

Eating warm cooked foods and avoiding cold raw foods helps to keep the digestion working properly which in turn will help to keep the uterus warm.

Also, try not to drink liquids during a meal as the liquid will put out the digestive fire. Drink liquids before and/or after your meals.

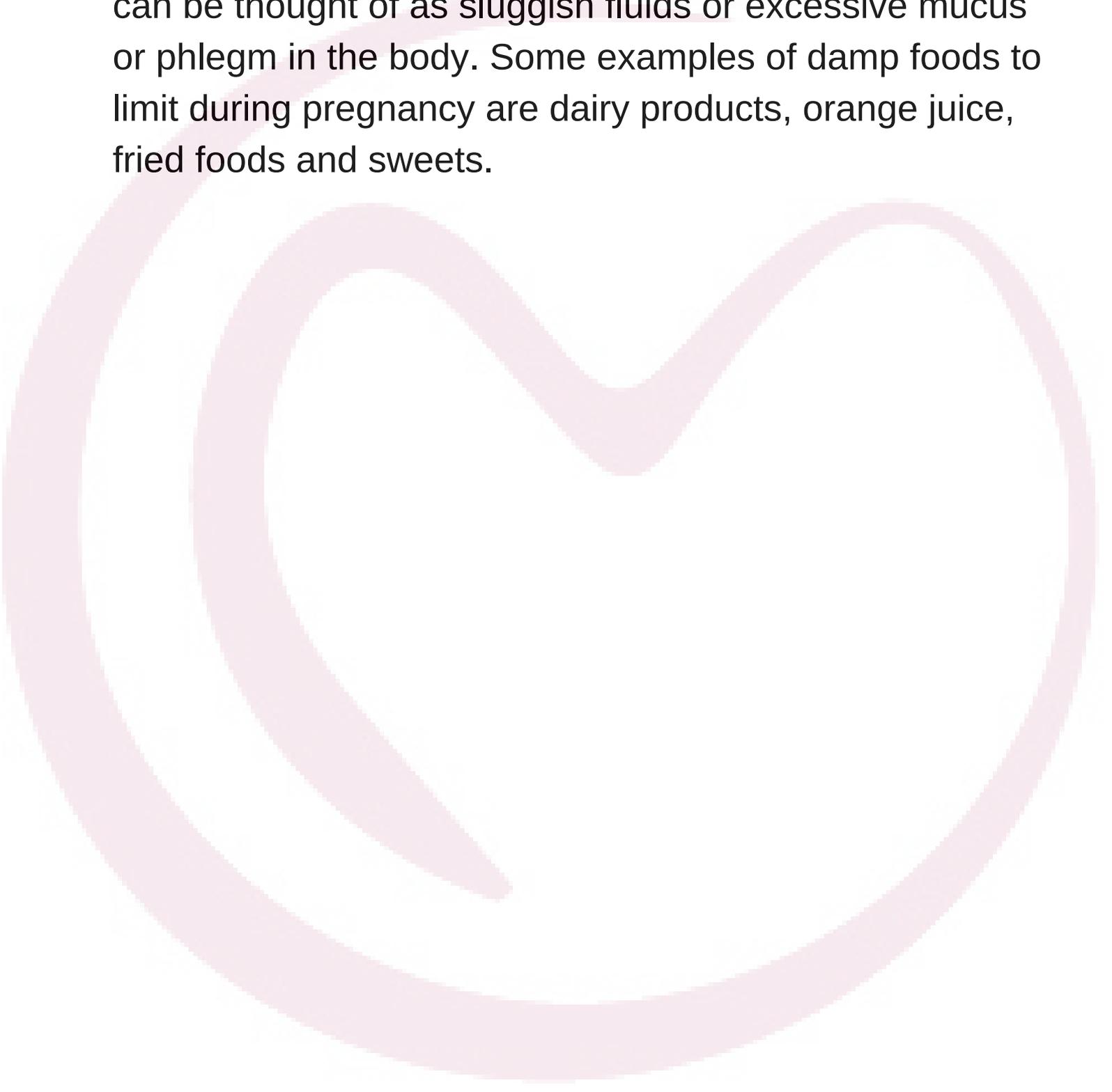
A Healthy Spleen produces Blood

The pure components of food are directed to the SPLEEN system. The Spleen then transforms and transports these nutrients in order to produce Qi (loosely translated as energy) and Blood. This energy and blood then nourishes the pregnant woman & her baby.

Top Foods for Pregnancy

- As discussed already, **eat a diet mainly of cooked easy to digest foods. Avoid cold food & drinks.** This is the single most important recommendation I have for all my pregnant mothers!
- Try to eat **protein** with most of your meals
- **Bone Broth** - chicken/beef. This is excellent in nourishing blood, benefiting digestion & the immune system.
- Eat **meat, fish** (my personal favorite is salmon), **poultry, lamb and eggs.** If you're vegetarian, consider adding some kind of animal protein in your diet such as bone broth or fish oil (comes in capsules).
- **Avacados, dark green leafy vegetables, carrots, nuts (especially walnuts), spinach**
- **Congee** - nourishes the spleen. Is a great breakfast meal but can be also eaten all day long in small amounts to keep the mother staying nourished through the entire day. There are tons of delicious recipes online!
- **Sweet potatoes and yams**
- **Goji Berries**

- Eat a **warm breakfast** - High in Protein & Low in Sugar
- **Radishes** - high in folic acid & help prevent anemia
- **Sesame seeds & black sesame seeds**
- Pregnant mothers are more prone to "Dampness" which can be thought of as sluggish fluids or excessive mucus or phlegm in the body. Some examples of damp foods to limit during pregnancy are dairy products, orange juice, fried foods and sweets.



Bone Broth

Bone broth is an excellent nourishing food for pregnant mothers. It's rich in minerals like calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and also in collagen, gelatin and protein. It benefits the gut lining which will in turn strongly benefit the immune system. It also benefits brain function. If you're struggling with nausea and finding it difficult to keep your meals down, bone broth is the perfect way to get in your nutrients in a calm and soothing way.



How to make Bone Broth

Ingredients:

1 organic chicken carcass trimmed of excess fat
A few stalks of celery in large chunks or left whole

1 or 2 carrots roughly chopped

1 onion quartered with or without the peel
garlic cloves

1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar (helps break down the bones & extract the precious nutrients)

parsley (if you have it on hand)

Crock Pot Method

Place all ingredients in a crock pot & fill with enough water to cover the bones. Place on low setting and let cook for 10 hours or more.

Strain out all the ingredients with a fine mesh sieve, saving just the broth and discarding bones and

vegetables. Store in mason jars, leaving an inch or two at the top for expansion and freeze.

Stove Top method

Place all ingredients in a pot on the stove, fill & cover with water. Bring to a boil, & turn down to simmer for at least 10 hours. Strain.

Other Tips for Pregnancy Support

- Keep your lower back, lower abdomen and soles of feet warm
- Get plenty of sleep
- Avoid excessive exercise in the first trimester, especially if you have miscarried in the past. Avoid excessive sweating.
- Try to be happy, joyful and stress-free as much as you can during your pregnancy

Wishing you the very best in this exciting and precious journey ahead.

With Love and Support,

Dr. Maryam

For more information, please visit chinesemedicineclinic.com