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Key Symptoms

Sallow complexion, pale lips, dizziness, poor memory, numbness, blurred vision, insomnia, amenorrhea or scanty periods, depression, anxiety or lack of spirit or initiative. Other symptoms may be constipation, dysmenorrhoea, headaches and tiredness.

A diagnosis of Blood Deficiency essentially means that the blood does not contain enough nutrients or there is physically not enough blood, or red blood cells circulating in a particular area at any one time. This condition arises as a result of a weakness in the organs which help produce blood (or store) blood.

These are:

1. **Spleen** (first stage in blood production),
2. **Kidney** (houses essence which contributes to blood production) and
3. **Liver** (which stores and releases blood).

1. Spleen (Qi Deficiency)

Contributing Factors

A diet that is lacking in nutrition, irregular eating habits, excessive consumption of raw cold and raw foods, stress, excessive thinking, or long-term illness.

Key Symptoms

If the Spleen is weak, you would experience fullness and distention in the epigastrium and abdomen, (especially after eating) abdominal pain which is relieved by pressure, lack of appetite, fatigue and weakness of the arms and legs, nausea and loose stools.

Treatment Principle

Tonify the Spleen

Dietary Suggestions

Avoid raw or cold foods, refrigerated or frozen liquids, eat small meals often rather than three large meals. Chew food well. Eat 80% of your capacity (don't eat until you feel full). Do not eat 2 hours before bed.

Foods to eat:

Complex Carbohydrates: well cooked rice (congee), oats, sweet rice, pounded rice (mochi).

Meat: small amounts of chicken, turkey, mutton (preferably in vegetable broths), anchovies, mackerel and tuna.

Vegetables: winter squash, carrot, parsnip, turnip, leek, garbanzo beans, black beans, peas, sweet potato, onions, yam and pumpkin.

Spices: black pepper, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg, saffron.

Other: blackstrap molasses,

Foods to avoid:

Spinach, tofu, tomato, citrus fruit and juice, dairy product (clarified butter is OK), tea and coffee (the tannins inhibit iron absorption),



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2. Kidney (Essence) Deficiency

Key Symptoms:

Softening of the bones, weakness of the knees/legs, poor memory, loose teeth, falling or premature greying of hair, weakness of sexual activity, impotence, soreness of the lower back, dizziness, ringing in the ears

Contributing Factors

Poor constitution, old age, excessive sexual activity (especially at puberty), stress, fear, insecurity and overwork. Women bearing too many children,

Treatment Principle

Nourish Essence

Foods to eat:

Grains and Legumes: Lentils, Aduki Beans, Black beans, corn, millet, wheat, black soybeans, .

Meat/fish: Chicken or lamb liver, lamb kidney, brain, chicken, mussel, trout and carp.

Vegetables: micro-algae (chlorella, spirulina and wild blue-green), cereal grasses, sweet potato, green string beans, celery.

Spices: chive, caraway, cinnamon bark, and clove.

Other: almonds, walnuts, milk, clarified butter, nettles, black sesame seeds, chestnuts,

Foods to avoid:

Coffee, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, excessive sweet flavoured foods and too much dairy product (clarified butter is OK).

3. Liver (Blood) Deficiency

Key Symptoms:

Dizziness, numbness of limbs, insomnia, blurred vision, 'floaters' in eyes, scanty menstruation or amenorrhoea, dull-pale complexion, muscular weakness, muscle spasms, cramps, withered and brittle nails, depression, nervous tension, irritability.

Contributing Factors

A diet poor in nourishment or lacking protein can weaken the Spleen thereby preventing production of enough blood, A serious haemorrhage, such as during childbirth (or trauma), a Kidney Qi or Essence deficiency,

Treatment Principle

Tonify Liver, nourish blood

Foods to eat:

Grains and Legumes: mung beans, millet.

Meat/fish: Same as for Kidney Essence & Spleen deficiency.

Vegetables/Fruits: Same as for Kidney Essence and Spleen deficiency plus chlorophyll-rich foods, mung sprouts, cucumber, dark grapes, blackberries, raspberries, watercress.

Spices: Same as for Kidney Essence and Spleen deficiency

Other: blackstrap molasses, spirulina, tofu, evening primrose, fresh cold-pressed flax oil.

Foods to avoid:

Coffee, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, excessive sweet flavoured foods and too much dairy product (clarified butter is OK).

Dietary Suggestions

Avoid raw or cold foods, refrigerated or frozen liquids, sweet, spicy, rich and fatty foods. Eat small meals often rather than three large meals. Chew food well. Eat 80% of your capacity (don't eat until you feel full). Do not eat 2 hours before bed.



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GENERAL FOODS FOR BUILDING BLOOD.

Beef, duck, grapes, honey, lamb, liver, milk, mugwort, nori, oyster, red and black dates, shiitake mushrooms, Chinese black fermented soybeans, spinach, strawberry, sweet-rice, chicken livers, kidney organ meats, chicken egg, beef, cuttlefish,

RECIPES FOR BLOOD DEFICIENCY

Mix 3 large spoonfuls honey in boiling water. Drink it in the morning and in the evening. (also good for insomnia, headache, and constipation).

Crush 500g fresh grapes (dark are best), add 500g rice wine and mix thoroughly. Strain to make wine. Eat 30g of the soaked raisins or drink 30g grape wine in the morning and evening. (this is also a good tone-up after illness)

Boil 15g black dates with 9g logans and 30g brown sugar. Eat the stewed fruit at meals on a long-term basis to treat anaemia

Mochi

This is widely used in Japan as a medicinal food. Mochi is easy to digest and is used for convalescence, anaemia, breast-feeding mothers, and strengthening deficient type conditions.

Mochi is made by pounding 'sweet' or 'glutinous' rice in an unbreakable bowl (eg. stainless steel) with a large wooden pestle.

3 cups sweet rice
5 cups water
1/2 teaspoon sea salt

- Simmer rice in salted water for 2-3 hours, or pressure cook for 20 minutes (until very soft).
- Place in a large sturdy bowl and pound until all grains are broken (paste form).
- Sprinkle the rice mass and bottom of pestle with cold water occasionally to prevent sticking.
- With moistened hands, shape dough into balls, patties or squares.
- Serve fresh or pan roasted. Makes one pound.

Note: refrigerate or dry to store. Mochi will harden in about 12 hours, at which point try baking, toasting, frying or boiling into soups before eating.

Variations: add fresh or dried mugwort leaves for the last 5-10 minutes of cooking the sweet rice. Fresh or dried nettle may be substituted.

Suggestions: Top with grated daikon or shoyu. Wrap mochi squares with nori.

Mugwort is a herb valued as an organic source of iron. Mugwort mochi build bloods and is an outstanding source of nourishment for pregnant women.

Congee

Congee is eaten throughout China as a breakfast food. It is a thin porridge traditionally made by simmering 1 cup of (short grain white) rice in five or six cups of water for four to six hours on low heat.

It is better to use too much water than too little and it is said that the longer the congee cooks, the more powerful it becomes.

Today however I think the 4-6 hours is impractical and I find simmering for half an hour to an hour is more realistic. I often cook up a large pot of the congee on the weekend and re-heat sufficient amount for the family in the morning. Jasmine rice is also suitable and it gives a more pleasant flavour.

This simple rice soup is easily digested and assimilated, it tonifies the Blood and Qi energy, and harmonises the digestion.

Other therapeutic properties may be added to the congee by cooking appropriate vegetables, grains, herbs and meats.

Suggestions:

Chestnut:	Tonifies the Kidneys, strengthens the knees and loin.
Fennel:	Harmonises Stomach (good for morning sickness), expels gas.
Ginger:	Warming and antiseptic to the viscera; used for deficient-cold digestive weakness, diarrhoea, vomiting, and indigestion (also good for morning sickness).
Kidney:	Strengthen Kidney, benefits knees and lower back, treats impotence. (use organic kidney)
Taro Root:	Nutritious, aids the Stomach, builds blood.
Chinese Red Dates:	(with fresh ginger and honey) Red dates calm the spirit, and strengthen digestion. Ginger promotes circulation of Qi and Blood. Honey nourishes the Heart, calms the spirit and lubricates the Intestines.

Reference: Healing With Whole Foods (Paul Pitchford)
Chinese System of Food Cures (Henry C Lu)
Between Heaven and Earth (Harriet Beinfield)
Prince Wen Hui's Cook (Bob Flaws and Honora Wolfe)
Back to Balance (Dylana Accolla with Peter Yates)