
SAHAJA YOGA

INSIGHT COURSE

LIVER DIET

Sahaja Yoga: Liver Diet

The body depends on the liver to perform a number of vital functions which can be divided into the following basic categories -

i) Cleansing blood:

- * metabolising alcohol, drugs and chemicals
- * neutralizing and destroying poisonous substances

ii) Regulating the supply of body fuel:

- * producing, storing and supplying quick energy (glucose) to keep the mind alert and the body active
- * producing, storing and exporting fat

iii) Manufacturing many essential body proteins involved in:

- * transporting substances in the blood
- * clotting of blood
- * providing resistance to infection

iv) Producing bile which eliminates toxic substances from the body and aids digestion

v) Regulating the balance of many hormones:

- * sex hormones
- * thyroid hormones
- * cortisone and other adrenal hormones

vi) Regulating body cholesterol by producing it, excreting it, and converting it to other essential substances.

vii) Regulating the supply of essential vitamins and minerals such as iron and copper

viii) Performing literally hundreds of other specific functions!

In fact just about everything that we swallow that is absorbed into the bloodstream ends up passing through this essential organ. As well as being the largest organ in the body it is also the only one which is capable of self regeneration.

Whilst there is still much that is unknown about the full functionality of the liver it is probably fair to say that it is central to the body's metabolism, or the process by which living matter is produced, destroyed or maintained.

Traditional Medicine.

With the obvious importance of this organ to our overall physical well-being it is no accident that the ancient practices of Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine have endowed the liver with such importance in both our Spiritual and material makeup. Because so much of the liver's activity is concerned with keeping the body and brain free of harmful toxins and the hormonal flow in balance, most ancient medicinal practice sees the liver as an important part of the functioning of the whole being.

Oscillating mood swings caused by fluctuations in blood sugar levels or hormonal imbalance, the relationship of bile to proper digestion and therefore overall energy levels and the detoxifying function of the liver offer obvious mind-body correlations.

There is one area, however, where modern Western medicine deviates from ancient lore and that is in relation to the significance of heat in the liver. Both Indian and Chinese medical practice acknowledge the effect of a 'hot' liver on the individual, and in fact offer specific remedies with which to 'cool' down this important organ. One such herb, gardeniae jasminoidis (zhi zi) - otherwise known as the 'happiness herb' - is renowned, for instance, for its effectiveness in removing the internal 'heat' which can cause irritability, restlessness and insomnia.

Sahaja Yoga also acknowledges the importance of the liver in the overall subtle system, both in terms of affecting our meditations and in helping us to achieve a continuing sense of balance in our lives. For this reason Shri Mataji long ago formulated a diet specifically designed to cool the liver.

The Liver Diet

Introduction

It should be noted that having a liver which is in need of treatment does not necessarily indicate wrong doing. We are all constantly bombarded with an environment which may cause the liver to go out of balance. Fast food, a stressful job and even things like planning complex holidays can add to the work the liver has to do. The key is in recognising the signs and taking remedial action so that we stay in balance overall and our meditations do not suffer.

A very good test if you feel that your meditations are not all that they might be, is to meditate one day with an ice pack placed over the liver location (right hand side of the body, bottom of the rib cage). If the meditation is improved, this is an indication that the source of the problem may be the liver.

If the problem persists or becomes more severe, then is the time to consider using the diet to correct things. Try it for seven to ten days, at the end of that time you should be able to notice a marked difference in your meditations and overall state of balance.

The Diet

a) **Cooling** for the liver, and recommended for intake:

* Sugar. Shri Mataji has said that sugar is the food of the liver. This is cane sugar, not beet. Tate & Lyle sugar, for example, is cane, the others are almost always beet. There is also a type of sugar known as sugar candy or rock sugar, which is available from most Indian shops - its use is described under Black Kokum below.

* White Rice. White rice is very cooling for the liver.

* Yoghurt. This is probably the most effective coolant. However it should not be eaten in a cold climate or time of year such as winter/spring.

* Ginger. Ginger in almost any form is good for the liver. In particular we can take some in the morning in a spoon mixed with sugar and followed by a glass of water!

* Crystallised ginger is also very good. This mixture should not, however, be taken in hot climates or hot times of the year such as summer.

* Fruit. Generally most fruit is good for the Nabhi Chakra. In particular grapes are good, and grape juice in its pure form is also very beneficial.

* Vegetables & Salads etc. All are good in general. Radishes in particular (and their leaves) can be taken and boiled with sugar candy and drunk as a beverage, very good for the liver.

* Chana. Known also as chick peas. Can be made into dhal or soup. These chick peas are very good for the whole Nabhi Chakra.

* Black Kokum. This is a type of fruit which can be bought from most Indian stores. They look like prunes but be warned, they are not sweet! The best way to use them is to make a drink out of them by pouring boiling water over a small handful in a jug, with about the same quantity of sugar candy. The mixture should then be left overnight and drunk the next day as a normal beverage in place of tea or coffee.

b) **Harmful** for a suffering liver and to be avoided:

* Alcohol.

* Fried, fatty or oily foods..

* Heavy (e.g. red) meat.

* Butter and cream/ice cream. Also chocolate!

* Very spicy foods.

* Fish

* Processed white bread

* Non China teas and coffee (especially if strong)

c) **Not advisable** (try to avoid or in moderation):

* Cheese and most dairy products.

* Too much milk

* Too much salt.

d) OK in small amounts:

* Chicken.

A typical meal using this special liver diet then could be a simple chicken and white rice dish (without any rich sauces or spices), with salad and fruit or yoghurt to follow. In general it is simply advisable to cut out all the harmful foods during the diet period and try and eat the beneficial foods whilst paying special attention to our liver in our meditations.