

Feeding your child's health



By Tania Grasseschi
Practitioner of Chinese Medicine
specialising in Women and Children's health

How you can strengthen your child's digestive system to help fight off those dreaded childhood illnesses

In many ways children's bodies are quite immature. For example, their digestive systems will not become mature until they are about 7 - 8 years old. Before this time children are prone to many common ailments such as regular coughs and colds, glue ear and tummy upsets. Chinese Medicine attributes the susceptibility to various illnesses as a result of an immature or weakened digestive system. As their digestive systems

7 - 8 years old rather than rich adult food.

What this basically means is:

- Feed them primarily cooked & easily digestible foods
- Boring and bland for as long as possible, children don't need lots of spices.
- Organic is better but not necessary.
- Children have likes and dislikes so try to hide some foods in soups or cakes.



- A treat is an occasional food, not a daily food. Remember that an 80g chocolate bar for a 15kg child is equivalent to a 370g chocolate bar for an adult
- Find rewards other than food to motivate your children
- Digestion is nourished by movement of the limbs so make sure your child gets plenty of exercise and fresh air.

Raw foods have more vitamins and enzymes than cooked foods, however, as the nutrients are held within the cell walls of the food, these

become more robust, many of these childhood ailments simply disappear. So, how can we easily and effectively treat and help prevent many of these common childhood ailments in a way that is ultimately strengthening to their immune system? Chinese Medicine has an answer: strengthen the child's digestive system – this can be done with a gentle treatment of acupuncture, safe Chinese herbal medicine and simple dietary changes. As their digestive system is so immature, children need “children's food” until they are around

cells must be broken down by chewing well and the digestive process. As young children do not tend to chew efficiently and their digestive processes are inherently weak (note how undigested carrots look in a nappy), they are not as able to break down these cells as adults are. Cooking is another way we can break down the cells that surround these vital nutrients. Although cooking may destroy some of these nutrients, what is left is more easily absorbed and so children can better benefit from them.

Chinese Medicine also recognises a link between digestion and lung problems. It tends to be a weakened digestive system that is the source of phlegm, which then collects in the lungs. Phlegm is seen to be the by-product of poorly digested food and drink. You may already be aware of the benefits of avoiding certain foods when you are particularly sniffly. The reason for this is that certain foods have a tendency to exacerbate phlegm production. This then aggravates or sometimes triggers the onset of respiratory tract ailments such as stuffy or runny noses, sneezing, coughing and even, at times, asthma.

When your child is full of phlegm it is best to avoid some foods, such as peanuts, dairy foods, excess sugar, bananas, oranges, and artificial sweeteners ('sugar free' food such as Diet Coke) until they are well and you can slowly reintroduce these foods. Nuts other than peanuts in small amounts don't usually cause any problems unless there are specific allergies.

Try non-dairy milks like rice milk, almond milk or oat milk while your child is phlegmy. One piece of seasonal fruit per day is often enough and home made stewed fruits are great. Avoid cold and raw food, especially in winter, for the reasons given above.

Children don't really need any spices and flavourings, or too much salt and sugar or any deep fried greasy foods. A little good quality Celtic or Himalayan sea salt, however, when cooking grains will help make grains more digestible and will bring out the natural sweetness of many fruits and vegetables.

To facilitate the process of restoring your children to good health seek the counsel of a Chinese Medicine practitioner who uses a gentle Acupuncture technique, especially modified for children and babies. This therapy can be combined with the use of Chinese Herbal granules that can be mixed with honey or apple sauce for ease of administration.

Although children are easily susceptible to illnesses, they also bounce back to health quickly and easily so it usually takes only a few treatments when appropriate dietary modifications are also made within the home.



Tania specialises in children's health using acupressure and gentle specially modified needling techniques. Her upcoming seminar **Food as Medicine**, all about nourishing your family, weight loss and detoxing is on Sunday March 15, 10am-4pm. Tania is offering a 20% discount to readers of Kids in the East if both parents or a mother's group want to attend her workshop (usually \$150 each) contact her directly for this special offer. Book your place here!

Find Tania online at **Oriental Wisdom & Wholistic Natural Medicine Clinic**
Ph: (02) 9662 4634