

## HEALTH

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## TCM

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## Chewing the fat

In western medicine, excess weight despite decreasing food intake and increased exercise may be attributed to a genetic predisposition or metabolic disorders. Similarly, TCM concludes it can be caused by constitutional influences.

In TCM, there are five different types of physical constitutions: neutral, yin and cold, yang and hot, phlegm and dampness, and dry.

Fat or adipose tissue is mostly caused by phlegm and dampness evils. The spleen is said to be the root of all phlegm production and is involved in the metabolism of body fluids and foods. If the spleen becomes damaged, it will transform waste

fluids and foods. These wastes will transform into dampness evils. If these evils endure over time, they congeal into turbid phlegm and become fat tissue.

Spleen weakness isn't the only source of obesity. The kidneys' warming and propelling activities manage spleen functioning. When these functions fail, turbid phlegm and dampness build and result in excess weight.

Obese people may look flabby or bloated. Their metabolic rates are slow and, when combined with lack of exercise, they tend to put on weight. This condition is defined as a yang deficiency of the spleen and kidney.

Stimulating the spleen and kidneys is needed. Fortifying Spleen Drink (*Shi Pi Yin*) is a classic formula for this case, in which ginger and monkshood are the main ingredients.

TCM also recommends eating according to your constitution. Inappropriate foods disturb the yin-yang balance. Foods benefiting the spleen include



Indian bread, Chinese yam, apple and rabbit meat. Foods benefiting the kidneys include mutton, loaches, walnuts (above), leeks, black beans and pork.

A soup with these nutrients helps the spleen and kidneys. Simmer 200g chicken meat, 10g pilose Asia bell root, 10g astragalus with 1,000ml water, for 30 minutes. Add 1kg unpeeled watermelon and 15ml rice wine and salt to taste. Serve hot.

*Before taking any medicine, consult your medical or TCM practitioner*