

HEALTH

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TCM

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Cool properties

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), the Chinese white pear is taken for its therapeutic and nutritional value. It has a pale yellow skin and a white, crisp and succulent flesh.

In TCM practice, it's recommended for the likes of a cough, constipation, difficulty in swallowing and urinating, and indigestion.

It's particularly good for a cough caused by "excessive heat" in the body, with symptoms including an intense thirst, a desire for cold drinks, a red face, yellow urine, constipation and thick, yellow coat on the tongue.

The TCM practitioner may also detect a rapid pulse.

According to TCM theory, the Chinese white pear has a "cool" nature; produces fluid; eliminates mucus and helps

regulate lung and stomach functions. A cough that occurs mainly at night with colourless phlegm indicates a cool state, so Chinese white pear isn't recommended for this.

The history of the pear's therapeutic properties comes from a story about a Chinese farmer whose son had a serious lung disease.

A doctor tried unsuccessfully to cure the boy and he was sent back to tend his father's pear garden, even though the doctor thought the work would kill him.

A strong wind that year meant most of the pears that had dropped from the trees weren't fit to be sold, so the farmer fed the fruit to his family and sold their rice supplies instead. When the doctor visited the boy again he was surprised to see he had improved and asked what medicine he'd been given.

The farmer said he'd been eating mainly pears. Pears spoil easily so the doctor made a pear jam instead and prescribed it to patients with similar symptoms.

While it's difficult to verify this story, pear jam is still a recipe

used to treat a heat-excess cough or dryness.

The recipe is as follows: Peel and remove the core of 500g of Chinese white pear; crush the pears and mix with 250g of dried Chinese lily bulb and 250g white sugar; double boil the mixture until it becomes a jam-like consistency and store in a sealed container.

For people on the go, drinking freshly prepared pear juice in the morning and evening is an alternative. But avoid ice in the juice as the cold could worsen the cough, regardless of the pear's cool properties.

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