

HEALTH

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TCM

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Indigestion fixes

It can be difficult to resist the temptation to overeat during the Lunar New Year holiday.

Unfortunately, gorging on food can overload the digestive system, and many people will suffer from indigestion. There's also the threat

of heartburn, stomach upset, feeling bloated, belching, nausea and lack of appetite – as well as bowel problems. As a result, people may seek help from over-the-counter remedies such as antacids and laxatives, but Chinese medicine offers an alternative.

In TCM, indigestion from overeating can be grouped into two syndrome patterns.

Excessive food consumption initially damages the stomach and intestines, leading to heartburn, stomach upset, a greasy coating

on the tongue, acidic and foul breath, feeling overly full and bloated, nausea, lack of appetite and abdominal distention with occasional pain.

With the second syndrome – if excessive food consumption continues – the gastrointestinal tract is affected and heat evils are formed.

As a result, the entire digestive system is weakened and people suffer from stomach upset, bloating, a red tongue with a yellow greasy coating, poor appetite, fatigue, scant yellowish

urine and either diarrhoea or constipation.

There are patented TCM remedies to counter these problems. Preserve Harmony Pill (Baohe Wan) is a classic drug for soothing indigestion. It's said to harmonise the stomach and promote digestion to get rid of retained foods.

It contains a number of ingredients: hawthorn helps with the digestion of meat and greasy foods; germinated wheat and radish seeds assist in digesting grainy foods such as bread,

noodles or rice; *shen qu* (a fermented herbal mixture) relieves food and alcohol hangovers; tangerine peel and pinellia tuber smooth the *chi* flow in the stomach to stop vomiting and stomach upset; and poria boosts the ability of the spleen to ensure the whole digestion process.

This formula is balanced in quality and quantity, so it can accentuate restorative actions to your health while reducing the side effects of indigestion. The mild formula suits many kinds of indigestion and children can use

it. This pill is a staple in many Chinese household medicine kits.

Some of ingredients can be used separately. Hawthorn tea is good if you've eaten too much meat and greasy foods. Tangerine peel tea is good for nausea or stomach upset. Fresh radish (left) can be used for bloating and belching. And fresh juices such as radish, orange or sugar cane aid your recovery from hangovers.

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