# Eating for Kapha

Foods to generally favor and go easy on, by food group

Ayurveda describes Kapha, the dosha of earth and water, as heavy, cool, moist and steady. The traditional answer is lighter, warmer, drier food with plenty of spice, in moderate portions. Pungent, bitter and astringent tastes are favored, though no food is strictly off limits.

| FOOD GROUP | GENERALLY FAVOR | GO EASY ON |
|---|---|---|
| **Grains** | Barley, millet, buckwheat, corn, rye, quinoa. Rice in smaller portions. | Big servings of wheat bread, pasta or white rice. Pastries and other sweets. |
| **Vegetables** | Nearly all, and plenty of them: leafy and bitter greens, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, radish, celery, asparagus, eggplant. Lightly cooked with spices. | Fried vegetables, and vegetables in cream or cheese sauces. |
| **Fruit** | Apples, pears, berries, pomegranate, cranberries, apricots. | Bananas, dates, melons and mangoes in large amounts. |
| **Beans and lentils** | A mainstay: lentils of every kind, chickpeas, black beans, split peas, mung beans. | Beans cooked in a lot of oil or topped with cheese. |
| **Dairy** | Small amounts: low-fat milk warmed with ginger or turmeric, thin spiced buttermilk. | Cheese, ice cream, cream, thick yogurt, big glasses of cold milk. |
| **Nuts, seeds, oils** | Pumpkin and sunflower seeds. A little mustard, sunflower or olive oil. | Generous handfuls of nuts, nut butters, and fried or oily food. |
| **Animal foods** if you eat them | Chicken, turkey, eggs, baked or grilled fish. | Fried meat and fish, and fatty cuts. |
| **Spices** | Nearly all: ginger, black pepper, mustard seed, turmeric, cumin, fenugreek, chili, cloves. | Heavy salt and salty snacks. |
| **Drinks** | Hot water, ginger tea, a spiced digestive tea. | Iced drinks, sodas and other sweetened drinks. |

## Eating habits that help

1. **Keep portions moderate,** and make lunch the main meal of the day.
2. **Eat an early, light dinner.** A large late dinner is the first habit to change.
3. **Skip snacks between meals** when you can.
4. **Take a short walk** after lunch and dinner.

## Keep in mind

- **Starting points, not rules.** These lists come from Ayurvedic tradition, have not been tested in clinical trials, and are not a diagnosis.
- **"Go easy on" means less often,** not never. Go by how a food actually suits you.
- **Have a medical condition,** are pregnant or take medicines? Discuss changes with your practitioner first, and do not cut out whole food groups.
- **Eating less dairy?** Get calcium and vitamin D from other foods, such as leafy greens, tofu or fortified foods.



*This handout is general information. It is not a substitute for medical advice from your own doctor or practitioner.*