

Color Your Congee: **Increasing Vitality and Immunity with Three Treasure Foods.** **By Karen Taylor, L.Ac., Founder of Breakfast Cure**

Learning about the benefits of eating congee is exciting and opens the door to so many options for adding healthy nutrients to your daily diet. Here are a few suggestions to allow you to tailor your meals to your personal needs, making your congee even better for you and helping you with your specific wellness goals.

These simple guidelines will make it easier for you to make these determinations on your own. Unlike herbal medicine, no professional wisdom is required. These foods and even food grade herbs can be very therapeutic without risk. For use in high doses, it's best to use caution and consult an herbalist..

Fortunately, if you are choosing from a variety of foods that are healthy and using them to increase vitality and longevity, you really can't go wrong. Trust your instincts and use this guide for inspiration in creating optimal health.

Chinese medicine teaches us about the Three Treasures of the Human Being: Qi, Jing, and Shen. Cultivating, preserving and balancing the three treasures builds lifeforce, longevity, and a balanced state of mind and heart.

Using food as medicine adds specific nourishing foods into our daily meals. Breakfast is an incredible opportunity to up the ante on one of the main meals of the day, by boosting the level of nutrients with a few of the right Three Treasure foods.

A beautiful teaching from Chinese medicine, literally, is the importance of color in choosing what to eat. We find that modern science often validates this ancient wisdom.

Nourishing Qi with Yellow Foods

Yellow is the color of the Earth element and is associated with the Spleen and Stomach, the major organs of digestion. Breath, combined with the energy created by the Spleen from the foods we eat, produces the Qi energy that animates our body. By building plenty of Qi energy, all the organs and tissues are protected from getting depleted from all the activity of the day.

The great news is that congee in general supports the Spleen and Stomach, aids digestion, and soothes and gently cleanses the entire digestive system. Any recipe that includes rice also Builds Qi/Energy, Builds Spleen Qi, Boosts Spleen Yang, Benefits the Stomach, Harmonizes the Spleen and Stomach, Soothes Digestion and inflammation, Regulates Fluids, Generates Fluids and Nourishes fluids, especially for nursing mothers.

Examples of Yellow foods: brown rice, millet, oat groats, yam, squash, sweet potato, apples, yellow lentils, and carrots.

Nourishing Jing with Black Foods

Jing is an amazing concept and a wonderful way to think about health and wellness.

There is another idea in Chinese medicine that we have two souls in the body, one that is only of the body and also an ethereal aspect of the soul that is connected to the universal and transcends the life of this body.

Jing is similarly understood as having two aspects. You are born into the world with the first part of your “essence” which is finite and specific, kind of like DNA. This part gets used up over the course of a lifetime. It can be preserved but not cultivated.

The other part of your Jing surrounds and protects this precious part of your life force. You can increase and replenish postnatal Jing with foods and practices such as meditation, Qi Gong, and Yoga. The stronger this aspect of your Jing is, the less you dip into the precious, limited Jing you were born with or inherited.

Herbal medicine, acupuncture, and medicinal foods that are healthy and whole also offer ways to preserve and build Jing.

Examples of Black foods: black rice, chia seeds, poppy seeds, black sesame seeds, muscles, and black seaweeds like nori..

Building Blood to Calm Shen with Red Foods

In order to support the final treasure, Shen, building blood is a good choice. In fact many herbs and foods that nourish blood also calm Shen, which can be translated as the Heart-Mind or Spirit.

Blood or Xue in Chinese medicine is mainly responsible for nourishing and moistening the body. Xue circulates to the organs, skin, tissue, muscles and bones. Each organ has its own relationship with Xue/Blood. Plenty of Liver Blood supports healthy eyes and clear vision, especially night vision. Ample blood in the Heart is critical for supporting a quick, clear mind and healthy spirit.

When Heart blood is deficient, it is unable to house the mind at night which is what allows the Heart/Mind to fully rest. The result is anxiety, restlessness, poor memory and insomnia.

Red foods and herbs are often used to build Xue/blood which does correspond to red blood cells. Red foods are often rich in iron, one of the necessary nutrients for building red blood cells.

Examples of red foods: red rice, cherries, goji berries, blackberries, cranberries, aduki beans, and beets.

Examples of Foods to balance Shen: rice, chia seeds, oat groats, butter, and lemon.

[Breakfast Cure Flavors as examples:](#)

How to color your congee and increase longevity and vitality with Three Treasure foods.

Strengthen Qi energy: [Karen's Kitchari](#) builds Spleen Qi and promotes digestion and elimination. Golden lentils benefit the Spleen and Stomach and Build Qi. Brown basmati rice Benefits the Spleen and Stomach, aids digestion, Builds Spleen Qi, soothes digestion and inflammation, regulates fluids, generates fluids and nourishes fluids. Ginger and Turmeric build Qi and Yang and benefit digestion, circulate lung qi, boost immunity, and reduce inflammation.

Strengthen Jing essence: [Mega Omega](#): Black rice and Chia seeds builds Jing, Chia seeds and brown rice calm shen, rice and fennel build Spleen Qi, Chia seed nourish Yin and fluids, Coconut Nourishes Heart Yin. Ample fluids are one of the keys to vitality and longevity. This is a Three Treasure Breakfast Cure flavor.

Calm Shen: [Red Mushroom Medley](#): Wuyi mushrooms are a special blood tonic that grows wild only on Wuyi Mountain in China. Da Zao, or red dates, nourishes Blood, calms Shen, benefits the Spleen, builds Qi, and harmonizes the other ingredients. Long Yan Rou, or Longan fruit, benefits the Heart and Spleen, nourishes Blood, and calms Shen. Aduki beans, a very easy to digest, Yang bean strengthen and nourish Blood.

Have fun, relax, and enjoy your Breakfast Cure congee mornings. Welcome to the wisdom of warm! Learn more at breakfastcure.com

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