

The Chi-Full Diet

BY CHARLES SHAHAR

Food is an important energy source, and this fact is well understood by biologists, who can describe the mechanism by which food is converted into energy and used by the body's cells. But food is also a source of a much more subtle energy. Certain foods are rich in chi, and when they are ingested, they help vitalize and energize the system from the level of cells, to the organs and larger structures.

The very fact of eating foods high in chi also has important purifying and healing implications. Scientists are discovering how certain substances in foods can prevent major illnesses from occurring. But they fail to take it one step further, by understanding how chi prevents degenerative forces from advancing in the body.

What is amazing is to compare a 60-year-old who has been negligent about their food intake with one who has maintained a diet rich in chi and other refined elements. The latter will have more energy, will be mentally sharper, and physically much more able and healthy. The whole process of degeneration due to the natural aging of the body will be slowed drastically if good dietary patterns are maintained throughout one's life.

In fact, the bloated or distorted looking bodies of some people in their older years, and often sooner than that, reflect nutritional habits that have taken a heavy physical toll. Years of poor nutrition, eating heavy foods, hard to digest foods, overeating, cigarette smoking, and alcohol dependency, can all have profoundly detrimental consequences on the subtle energy balance in the body.

FOODS WITH ENHANCED CHI

There are a number of foods rich in chi. Live foods, such as sprouts, have substantial chi content. As a testimony to their richness, I have seen freshly grown alfalfa sprouts literally glow,

bathed in a greenish aura. Eating live foods is about as close as one can come to ingesting pure chi, and their directly vitalizing properties are what make them so beneficial. However, as part of a balanced and complete diet, they should also be combined with other raw and properly cooked foods.

Fresh honey is another food that glows with vital energy. When I visited India several years ago, I tasted fresh milk that came straight from a cow, and it had an effervescence that was unmistakable.¹ The cow roamed freely and was respected and nurtured faithfully. In short, the animal was healthy, happy, and radiating with chi, and its milk reflected that fact. I have also noticed that organic kefir (fermented yogurt) seems to be high in vital energy.

Vegetables and fruits are high in chi, particularly if they are organically produced. However, one must still be alert when buying produce in terms of their freshness. For instance, there is a noticeable decline in the quality of vegetables if they have been refrigerated or in transit for a long while, and have begun to grow slightly dull or rotten as a result. Compare these to the same vegetables freshly picked and with their stalks still attached.

How can one tell whether an item has much chi? The colour often gives it away. The more vivid or vibrant the colour, the greater the chi content, and the higher its nutritional value. This rule can be violated if artificial means are used to enhance the colour, or to make the product appear shiny or fresh. A mild example of this are apples that are waxed to give them artificial lustre.

Another way of noticing whether a product has much chi is by the taste. There is a

¹ I don't necessarily recommend drinking unpasteurized milk. Although the process does compromise the chi to some extent, there are other health risks involved when drinking milk that has not undergone this process.

difference in the taste of food which has less chi, often because the process of decay has set in. It may taste more bitter or sour, depending on the item, whereas the chi-filled food generally has a more pleasing flavour. The same goes for smell; the aroma of foods rich in chi is usually more vibrant; foods which lack a smell or smell rancid often have less chi.

Any fresh produce will carry chi. A peak chi period happens for fruits and vegetables when they reach maximum ripeness. At that point, their colour is most vibrant, and their taste and smell are most pleasing. If you are vigilant, you can even see a kind of effervescence that surrounds them, a sheen that makes them particularly attractive and worthy of our consumption.

After peak ripeness is reached, the life energy of fruits and vegetables then begins to withdraw, and the bacteria responsible for the degenerative forces will take over. Bruises and moulds are simply signs that the fruit has passed its maximum vitality, and that the process of decay has begun. The eating of decayed foods should be avoided, because this not only introduces unhealthy microorganisms into the body, it interferes with the proper absorption of chi in your system.

One of the most accurate ways of knowing when fruits or vegetables are chi-deficient is if they begin to decay even before they ripen. This type of produce will never reach a peak chi period, and I don't recommend eating them as a result. This sometimes happens with the poorer grades of fruits and vegetables. It is worthwhile spending more money on higher quality, chi-filled foods.

Any item which is refrigerated for a long period of time will tend to lose much of its chi content, and the same pertains to cooked food. Overly cooked food usually means the chi has been drained almost entirely. I have seen people boil their vegetables until the contents turned white. It would have been better to drink the juices as a soup, and then at least some of the vital nutrients would have been ingested.

If vegetables are to be cooked, this should be done lightly, so their vibrancy can be maintained. People who boil the life out of their vegetables are eating dead food. A steamer is a nice addition to a kitchen, or even a pressure cooker, as long as the foods are not

overly cooked. Microwaved foods actually seem to retain chi if not overdone, but the concern is more with the radiation these gadgets emit.

Aside from length of cooking, foods such as leftovers are often chi-deficient, simply because they have been refrigerated or re-cooked to the point where their vitality has been compromised. A food will also lose chi if it has been cooked and there is a significant lapse before it is eaten. A refrigerated or storage area should always be kept clean, free from spoiled foods and their odour.

Any vegetable which is organically grown usually has more chi than one which is not. The taste, colour and smell of the food is usually a testament to their higher chi content. Such produce will often stay ripe longer, that is, have a longer peak chi period.

It is interesting that all processed foods lack significant chi. This includes white sugar, flour, most breads, pastas, cheeses and cereals. The vitality of these foods gets lost in the processing, which is why natural foods are always recommended. Items stored in tin cans are also usually chi-deficient, as are frozen foods and pre-cooked meals which have to be re-heated.

The foods low in chi are generally heavy, tasteless, and nutritionally deficient. Chi-deficient foods have a tendency to weigh down the organism, to clog up the digestive tract, and to promote the formation of bodily toxins and excess fat.

Of all the foods, meats have the least chi. The moment life withdraws from the body of an animal, the chi dissolves as well, and the remains begin to decompose. Eating meat is equivalent to ingesting food which is not only in the process of rotting, but for all purposes is completely dead! The dullness in the colour of meat, its odour and texture, are all signs of the lifelessness it represents, and the type of vibrations one takes into their system by eating it.

TUNING INTO THE CHI

I often say a prayer or briefly close my eyes and meditate before a meal. You cannot adequately absorb the subtle chi in food if you are feeling weary, irritable or distracted. A calm pause has the effect of raising the vibration of

your vital body² – meaning that not only are the physical processes related to digestion given a chance to function optimally, but the more subtle process of how efficiently you absorb the chi in food is also maximized.

If you are in a rush and eat hurriedly, very little of the vital elements in the food will be absorbed effectively. If you are engaged in an argument while you are eating, this will likewise compromise your ability to efficiently absorb chi. Even much talking during a meal will compromise the absorption of vital elements. Eating is actually an internal process that requires a focusing or centring of one's mental and emotional faculties.

The absorption of chi in food is done through the solar plexus chakra, which is located in the upper abdomen, just above the belly button. If you are experiencing some discomfort there due to emotional turmoil, this will have implications for how efficiently the chakra will be able to assimilate the chi in food. If you regularly eat heavy or dull foods that clog up the digestive tract, the chakra itself will get congested or obstructed and your chi absorption will be compromised.

While comfort foods, such as ice cream or pasta, may help you feel more grounded — or feel more “full” emotionally if you are feeling empty or lonely — they are also usually heavy and promote a clogging of chi. Sometimes, we overeat because we intuitively believe that more food will provide more fuel and therefore more energy. But overeating often has an opposite result: weighing down the person, clogging the system, and promoting lethargy and inertia.

The bottom line is that it is possible to be sensitive to the flow of chi in the body and to sense when it is being compromised; whether by the food we ingest, or how and where we eat it. One way to do this is to pause before a meal and to create calm conditions while the meal is progressing.

THE CHI IN RESTAURANTS

The food provided in a restaurant is permeated by the vital energies projected into it by the cooking staff, and by the general atmosphere of the establishment. When you ingest food, subtle changes happen in your aura, and how effectively you absorb the energy (chi) within the food will reflect how much you resonate with the ambiance of a restaurant and how comfortable you feel there.

I am often sensitive to the subtle energy projected by the servers. They will deposit their positive or negative energy into the food. When they bring a menu, take your order, address any needs you have, and bring a meal, they will leave energetic residues on everything they handle and around their vicinity as well. These residues will have an impact on your vital body and the way it absorbs the subtle energy of food.

An amiable waiter will generally inject much chi and positive emotional energy into the food simply by handling the dishes and cutlery. It is amazing to see this process. There are literally currents of energy running from their hands into the food. They do it unconsciously. The food is actually much more charged as a result.

In contrast, a tired or lethargic waiter will draw some of the chi out of the food, and will leave a mass of stagnant vibrations, known in feng shui practise as ‘si chi’. A very upset or irritable waiter will not only withdraw chi, but will inject everything they touch with nervous energy, called ‘sha chi’. This represents “food poisoning” on a different level than what is commonly understood regarding this term.

The cook's vibration is a particularly important element related to the energy of food. A vegan restaurant I frequented before it became mainstream was located at the end of an alley, wedged between two buildings. The ambience was not terrific; it had a kind of punk-grunge feel to it. However, the cook was amazing. When he took brief breaks he played the Pan Flute, he often smoked marijuana, and he had a wonderfully sweet disposition. He put much care and love into his food, which was brimming with chi. People would wait in line for long periods because they loved the food.

Contrast this energy with that of temperamental chefs who terrorize their

² *All living beings have an energy field surrounding them, which is labelled here as the vital body. The quality and texture of this vital sheath depends on a person's health, their robustness, and their general vigour.*

kitchen staff; or cooks that have a grudge with management; or those that put their own coarse vibrations into the food at a greasy diner. In all these cases, the food is permeated with their negative chi. When you ingest their food, you also internalize these vibrations, which have an impact on your vital body.

It is difficult to say what that impact will be. It may result in feelings of lethargy or anger that seem to arise right after the meal for no apparent reason. If you are feeling depressed or worried for the rest of the evening, it may have something to do with such unwanted elements in the food. Or you may simply feel enervated by the food, and tired enough to want to go to bed early.

In fact, sometimes when you get an upset stomach after eating at a restaurant it may not simply be an issue with the type or quality of the food, but the subtle vibrations injected into it by the kitchen staff. Any food that is manipulated by hand is susceptible to this type of vibrational transference. I sometimes used to leave a restaurant wondering why the meal did not agree with me. I now know that my solar plexus chakra was literally churning trying to deal with the negative energies permeating the food.

I have become quite adept at putting my

hand just above the chakra and drawing out the offending energy. I also do the same with negatively charged food just before I eat it, or I charge it with chi if I feel it needs it.

Finally, restaurants have various levels of chi depending on the type of food they serve, their atmosphere, and the dispositions of their staff. The most chi-full establishment I have frequented was a vegetarian restaurant run by the Sri Chinmoy spiritual group. The vegan restaurant I patronize likewise has a wonderful effervescence about it. I feel charged just by walking in there.

The most inimical vibrations I have witnessed were at a steak and ribs restaurant, where the air was permeated by a brown fog. The chi was literally choked from the atmosphere. Restaurants such as greasy diners and steakhouses are pervaded by si chi or stagnant vibrations. At the opposite extreme, most fast food restaurants are chi-compromised, since this subtle energy doesn't have a chance to settle and the food itself is largely devoid of vital elements. The bright artificial lighting also promotes sha chi, or overcharged energy, that burns out the vital body.

