

Macrobiotic Diet



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Macrobiotic diet is a nutritional attempt to balance “complementary opposites”--*Yin* and *Yang* in Chinese philosophy.

The Chinese believe *yin* and *yang* must be in harmony for optimum health. *Yin* is expansive, cold, wet, slow, passive, sweet, loose and dark. *Yang* is contractile, hot, dry, fast, aggressive, salty, tight and light.

The most balanced food in the *yin/yang continuum* are brown rice and whole grains, which form the foundation of macrobiotic diet. Patients are put on macrobiotic diet based on needs and temperament.

It consists of:

- ◆ 50 to 60 percent whole grains --brown rice, barley, millet, oats, corn, rye, wheat and buckwheat.

- ◆ 25 to 30 per cent fresh vegetables, cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, and other green and yellow vegetables--organically grown and to be eaten after steaming with a little vegetable oil. Vegetables for frequent eating: Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, radish, turnips, orange squashes, pumpkin.

For occasional eating: Celery, lettuce, mushrooms, string beans.

Avoid: potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, asparagus, beetroot and avocado.

Five to 10 per cent of beans and soy-based products are allowed. This includes tofu (soy bean curd), agar-agar (a seaweed, and Irish moss).

Soups Permitted: Made from soya bean paste, vegetable soups, bean.

Occasional Treats: Seeds, nuts, fruits and fish thrice a week.

Benefits: A sense of well being, decrease in heart attacks; less risk of some forms of cancers; food allergies.

Side Effects: Vitamin and mineral deficiencies in extreme versions of this diet. Lactating mothers on macrobiotic diet had low levels of Vitamin B12, Calcium and Magnesium in their diets. Another study links macrobiotic diet to iron deficiency. The therapy should be stopped if there are signs of malnutrition, fatigue, muscle and joint pains, poor concentration, irritability and increased susceptibility to infections.

A macrobiotic diet helps prevent heart disease and may help to prevent colon cancer/ food allergies.

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