



In Traditional Asian Medicine, the concept of Blood Deficiency is not the same thing as a biomedical (Western) diagnosis of anemia. It has more to do with patients who lack Yin in the body. Blood is the manifestation of Yin in the physiological sense and Blood Deficiency leads to the more chronic and serious diagnosis of Yin Deficiency if not addressed over the long-term.

Signs of Blood Deficiency can include vertigo; blurred vision or spots before the eyes ('floaters'); fatigue and lassitude; insomnia; poor muscle tone; muscle tightness and cramping; numbness in the extremities; pallor; pale tongue, lips, or nail beds; dry skin and hair; poor memory; PMS; scanty, painful, or absent menstrual periods; a persistent feeling of cold; heart palpitations; and anxiety or nervousness. Not all of these symptoms need to be present for the diagnosis of Blood Deficiency to be made; often, groups of these symptoms will appear simultaneously.

As with all things in Asian Medicine, the important thing is balance. This means that more is NOT necessarily better. So please do not consume more than the recommended doses of these Blood Builders as you can cause yourself to become Damp.

Here are some ways to build your Blood with food:

1. Red foods

Fruit: red cherries, red and purple grapes, plums, berries

Veggies: red beets, red cabbage

Seeds: black sesame, sunflowers

Iron rich, vegetable-based foods:

cooked spinach	lentils
soy beans & products	potatoes
sunflower seeds	strawberries
sun-dried tomatoes	bok choy
black beans	peas
dark chocolate	collard greens
kale	broccoli

2. Da Zao (Chinese Date/Jujube fruit)

Herbal Category: Qi Tonic

Functions:

1. Tonifies Spleen and Stomach Qi.
2. Nourishes the Blood, calms the Shen (spirit mind).
3. Harmonizes and sweetens herbal formulas.

Dose: 3-12 pieces a day

It is OK to eat up to 3 at a time. If you eat more, spread out the “dose” throughout the day.

3. Gou Qi Zi (Goji Berries)

Herbal Category: Blood Tonic

Functions:

1. Nourishes Blood and Yin of the Liver and Kidney
2. Tonifies Essence and brightens the eyes
3. Nourishes and moistens the Lung Yin

Qi tonics can build Blood because Qi and Blood depend on each other: just like Yin and Yang are interdependent and transform into each other. By building Qi, you are also building Blood.

5-10 berries a day

Nibble on them like raisins, or use them in a fruity herbal tea. If you use them in a tea or as a tea, allow them to seep, drink the tea, and then eat the berries.

4. Blackstrap molasses

Molasses is a by-product of sugar production and is formed after the sugar cane is boiled to remove the sugar crystals. It has a bitter-sweet taste and is thick and syrupy. Blackstrap molasses contains high levels of iron, calcium, copper and potassium and lower levels of magnesium, selenium, vitamin B6, and niacin. It is low in calories and doesn't contain fat.

1-2 Tbsp a day

Yummy in warm almond, coconut, or cashew milk!

Reference:

Miller, Lawrence, L.Ac. "Foods That Tonify Blood Deficiency."--Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine. N.p., 2009. Web. 02 Jan. 2014.



Foods to build Blood include:

- Grains: barley, corn, oats, rice, sweet rice, wheat, bran
- Vegetables: alfalfa sprout, artichoke, beetroot, button mushroom, cabbage, celery, dandelion leaf, dark leafy greens, kelp, shiitake mushroom, spinach, watercress, wheatgrass
- Fruit: apple, apricot, avocado, date, fig, grape, longan, mulberry
- Beans: adzuki, black soya, kidney
- Nuts and seeds: almonds, black sesame
- Fish: mussel, octopus, oyster, sardine, tuna
- Meat: all red meat especially bone marrow and liver (beef, pork, sheep)
- Dairy: chicken egg,
- Herbs, spices: nettle, parsley
- Oils, condiments: amasake, molasses
- Beverages: soy milk

Common supplements: algae, Dang Gui, pollen

Examples of every day western foods that can be used to build Blood include:

- Rice porridges with soy milk, apricots and almonds
- Dark leafy green salads with avocado and grated beetroot
- Scrambled eggs with parsley
- Mussel chowder with calamari
- Snacks of dried apricots and almonds
- Kidney bean and mushroom lasagna with a spinach salad

Foods to tonify Yin include:

- Grains: barley, millet
- Vegetables: alfalfa sprout, artichoke, asparagus, kelp, mung bean sprout, pea, potato, seaweed, string bean, sweet potato, tomato, water chestnut, yam, zucchini
- Fruit: apple, apricot, avocado, banana, lemon, lime, mango, mulberry, pear, persimmon, pineapple, pomegranate, watermelon
- Beans: adzuki, black beans, black soya, kidney, lima, mung
- Bean Products: tofu
- Nuts and seeds: coconut milk, sesame seed, black sesame seed, walnut
- Fish: fish in general but especially clam, fresh water clam, crab, cuttlefish, oyster, octopus, sardine
- Meat: beef, duck, goose, pork, pork kidney, rabbit
- Dairy: cheese, chicken egg, cow’s milk, duck egg
- Herbs and spices: marjoram, nettle
- Oils and condiments: honey, malt

Common supplements: American ginseng, royal jelly

Examples of every day western foods that can be used to build yin, include:

- Fruit smoothies with honey and banana or a fruit salad
- Fish dishes with coconut milk
- Omelettes with cheese
- Asparagus and egg salads with sesame seeds
- Tacos made with Kidney beans and topped with a small amount of cheese
- Baked Potato stuffed with tofu with soya sauce and sesame seeds.
- Pork and apple dishes
- Miso soup with tofu and seaweed

Foods to avoid:

- Stimulating foods such as the following will only further deplete yin: caffeine, alcohol, sugar and strongly heating, pungent spices.

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