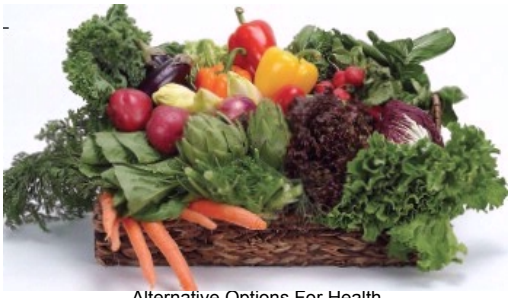
Macrobiotics

The Yin and Yang Food Plan



Alternative Options For Health

The macrobiotic diet originated in Japan and combines the ideals of Zen Buddhism with Western-style vegetarianism. This low-fat, high fiber eating plan focuses on organic foods and balancing food choices to achieve a yin and yang (harmonious balance of opposing, yet complementary forces in nature).

Originating from the Greek, macrobiotic means “long life” or “great life.” A macrobiotic diet provides a healthy way of eating that combines natural foods, spirituality and environmental awareness and health.

Macrobiotic Hallmarks

The macrobiotic diet encourages the use of locally grown, seasonal, organic, natural foods that are plant-based or “close to the earth.” Food preparation is also natural — usually baking, boiling, or steaming. In addition, eating is slow, stress-free, and food is chewed thoroughly.

Macrobiotic Basics

Macrobiotic diet proponents do not view the program as a diet or list of foods to eat, but rather as a way of life. A typical macrobiotic diet includes:

• Whole Grains (50 to 60 percent) — Brown rice, barley, rye, corn, millet, buckwheat and other whole grains.

• Vegetables and seaweed (25 to 30 percent) — Vegetables can be steamed, boiled, baked and sautéed. Typically, at least one-third of the vegetables are eaten raw.

• Beans (5 to 10 percent) — Cooked beans or bean products, such as tofu.

• Fish, nuts, seeds, fruits, miso soup (5 to 20 percent) — Fish or seafood, a couple of times a week, and prepared with ginger, mustard, or horseradish for balance. Lightly roasted seeds and nuts with sea salt can be consumed in moderation. Fruits, such as apples, apricots, grapes, berries, melons and pears, can be enjoyed several times a week.

• Soup (made from above ingredients, 1 to 2 cups daily) — Miso and shoyu (a type of soy sauce) soups are common in the macrobiotic diet.

The macrobiotic diet is high in foods that are often lacking in the Western diet, such as fiber-rich whole grains, vegetables and beans. The diet is also low in saturated fat and high in phytoestrogens, which may help balance female hormones. With a macrobiotic diet, it is also important to get sufficient amounts of protein, vitamin B12, magnesium and calcium.

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