



<https://iin.edlumina.com/navigation/reset>

# Five Element Theory

The Five Element Theory was introduced by ancient Chinese philosophers known as Taoists. Based on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the five elements are wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. Each element corresponds with a food group. Ancient doctors studied nature to create the five element chart and determine universal principals that help predict and understand health. The chart helps determine how a person's mind and body interact with one another and the environment.

The primary goal of this theory is to reach harmony with the earth and universe by finding balance with nature and the elements. Each element corresponds to different organs within the body, and all elements work in tandem to balance one another. Organs embody the energetic qualities of their corresponding element. For example, the heart represents fire and is a hot spot for strong emotions.

Each of the five elements are also associated with different times of the year: Fire with summer, earth with late summer, metal with fall, water with winter, and wood with spring. By eating in accordance with the elements, you can promote balance and harmony, physically and mentally.

Wood represents sour tastes and is connected to the liver and gallbladder, fire is linked to bitter tastes and is connected to the heart and small intestine, earth corresponds with sweet tastes, the spleen, and the stomach; metal goes with pungent tastes, the lungs, and large intestine; while water represents salty tastes, the bladder, and the kidneys.

This theory believes that when the tastes (and therefore organs and elements) are in balance, optimal health is achieved.

## **Foods to include:**

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains
- Beans
- Nuts and seeds
- Healthy oils

## **Foods to avoid:**

- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Eggs
- Dairy
- Refined grains
- Sugar
- Trans fats
- Processed food
- Fried food
- Alcohol

## **Pros:**

- Uses nature as a model
- Can be a lifestyle rather than a diet
- May improve heart health
- Considers primary food

## **Cons:**

- The chart is complex and may be difficult to understand
- Very restrictive

- Some thrive on animal protein

**Sources:**

*What is Five Element Theory?* [\\_\(http://www.acupuncturetoday.com\)\\_](http://www.acupuncturetoday.com)

*Five Element Theory Diet* [\\_\(http://www.holistichealthlibrary.com\)\\_](http://www.holistichealthlibrary.com)

*TCM Nutrition – Five Element Theory* [\\_\(http://www.yingyanghouse.com\)\\_](http://www.yingyanghouse.com)