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<http://interneka.com/affiliate/AIDLink.php?BID=11452&AID=39803>

FOOD COMBINING & DIGESTION

“To the doubter I say only: Give it trial and convince yourself. It has truly been said that condemnation without investigation is a bar to all knowledge. Do not cut yourself off from further knowledge and from better health by condemning, without a fair test.”

– Herbert Shelton, from Food Combining Made Easy

When I wrote about intelligent cleansing, I showed you that you don't need to do a “cleanse” or a “fast” to begin cleansing your body. You simply need to gradually transition to a healthier, lighter, diet with more raw juices and salads. The transition should be done slowly, so that you feel your best throughout the whole process without any typical “detox” symptoms (such as joint pain, fatigue, headaches, nausea, break outs, moodiness, etc.) that will only frustrate you and hinder your journey toward better health and emotional balance.

The easiest and most enjoyable way to begin your transition is to replace what you are currently eating with higher quality foods and eating them in good food combinations in addition to consuming fresh, raw vegetable juices and salads.

When I say high quality foods, I mean the highest quality possible for any particular type of food. The higher quality the food is, the easier it is for the body to recognize and digest. When the body can easily identify a food, it takes the nourishment that it needs from the food and quickly eliminates the fibrous roughage that does not supply the body with nutrition. When a food is not of high quality, it is much harder to digest. Since it's so difficult to digest, the food will sit in the stomach causing fermentation and leaving glue-like, acidic waste residue in your cells. This is what we want to avoid! I will give you specific examples of how you can change from low quality to high quality foods.

HIGH QUALITY FOODS

Grain and Grain Products

While I would never recommend eating white bread, you can certainly enjoy sprouted-grain breads such as the breads by Ezekiel, Manna, or Alvarado Street Bakery, which taste particularly similar to regular breads.

They are delicious! My husband loves their sprouted-wheat bagels toasted with a bit of raw honey. If you are suffering from severe digestive distress (such as IBS or colitis), then even the most high quality grains may not be ideal for you. But for most, sprouted grain bread products are an excellent transition food.

If you love pasta or have family members who love pasta, spelt, kamut, or quinoa pastas are the best choices to replace your white pastas. These grains are the most primitive grains, and therefore the easiest for the body to break down. Eden Foods makes spelt and kamut pasta, and also a kamut-quinoa mix. These are very good and it is difficult to taste the difference between these and regular pastas. If you find that the increased cost is too much (typically these range between \$3 and \$4 for a pound of pasta), whole wheat pasta - while it is not optimal - is OK for most people, especially in the early stages of transition. Make sure you read the labels to see if your pasta is 100% whole wheat.

Animal Foods

In the case of animal foods such as fish, chicken, eggs and the like, it is important to get organic and wild in the case of fish, and organic and free-range in the case of the eggs and chicken. The reason why this is so important is because animals today are injected with tons of hormones and antibiotics (especially chickens and their eggs). These hormones and antibiotics directly contribute to a yeast overgrowth that is especially common in women. Sticking with the most organic animal foods is optimal, but do the best you can in consideration of your situation. For example, if you are at a restaurant and there is no wild organic fish offered, having regular fish is fine as long as you are not doing this every day. Little slip-ups here and there are fine, but eating hormone-laden animal foods everyday will not serve you in any way! I cannot emphasize this enough. Many people, even after learning about the concept of alkaline foods versus acidic foods, and the nature of digestive health, still have the calories in versus calories out concept ingrained in their heads.

Please remember that just because a piece of chicken breast may be “lean” and “carb-free”, it does NOT mean that it is meant to be in the human body, and that the toxic hormones and antibiotics that have been injected into these animals (and therefore become a part of the biomass,

which means part of the chicken, which eventually becomes part of you) will have a negative impact on your body, especially if consumed regularly.

As far as dairy goes, the best type of dairy is sheep or goat cheese because it doesn't have casein in it, as cow milk cheeses do. Casein is very hard for the human body to digest because it is so incredibly dense. Since goat and sheep dairy do not have casein, it is much easier on the system. I use raw goat cheese regularly in my salads and with steamed vegetables. If you can get raw goat cheese, this is your best option. Since it is unpasteurized, this particular type of cheese also will provide enzymes to help facilitate digestion, leaving behind less acidic residue in your cells, leaving you feeling lighter. Shiloh Farms and Alta Dena are two brands of raw goat cheese that are a cheddar-style and can be grated. If you don't want to do the dairy thing because you are lactose intolerant (I know of a few who were lactose intolerant but raw goat cheese sits well with them) or are vegan, you can make delicious cheeses with nuts, lemon juice, and some nutritional yeast. These nut variations are really delicious, and if you use nutritional yeast they will have a shockingly similar flavor to real cheese. My personal preference is raw goat or sheep cheese. I don't eat cheese every day, but it is a nice treat to have some marinara sauce over steamed veggies with some cheese sprinkled on top. I especially love raw goat cheese in my salads with sun-dried tomatoes and basil or shredded beet.

The raw cheeses, avocados, and even organic butter are all fats, but they are less dense fats than oils, nuts and seeds, and therefore easier on the digestive system. Some people eat nuts and seeds on a regular basis with no drawbacks, but I personally find that they are very heavy and difficult to digest. You will find what works best for you.

Now we shall move onto food combining!

FOOD COMBINING BASICS

Here are the four groups that you never want to combine in the same meal with only a few small exceptions:

1. **Starches** - Breads, Pasta, Rice, Yams, Acorn Squash, Avocados, Potatoes

2. **Animal Foods** - Fish, Meat, Dairy, Eggs
3. **Dried Fruits/Nuts/Seeds** - Dates, Figs, Raisins, Currants, Dried Apricots, etc/Almonds, Pecans, Macadamias, Cashews, Walnuts/Sesame Seeds, Sunflower Seeds, Chia Seeds
4. **Fresh Fruits** - Melons, Apples, Pears, Oranges, Tangerines, Berries, Bananas, etc

- Fresh fruit should always be eaten on an empty stomach. This makes it an ideal breakfast. The only exception to this is bananas. They combine perfectly with avocados and with dried fruits, along with nuts and seeds due to their denser consistency. Certain fruits combine best with other fruits (such as apples and pears which are sub-acid fruits and combine well, but do not combine well with citrus fruits such as grapefruit and orange), but beginners do not typically have to worry about this type of combining. The only exception to this is melons, which move through the body faster than any other fruit.
- If you have a fruit salad, eat any type of melon first (cantaloupe, watermelon, honeydew). Wait at least thirty minutes after eating fruit to move onto another food group if you are still hungry, but up to an hour if you eat a large quantity.
- Although Avocados are technically a fruit, they combine as a starch. They also combine with bananas.

Raw vegetables combine with all groups, except for the fruits.

- Cooked non-starchy vegetables combine with all starches and animal foods. (Starchy vegetables are yams, potatoes and squashes- fantastic comfort foods)

Eating animal protein with starches is the most offensive combination.

Wait three to four hours before changing food groups (if your last meal had cooked starches or protein, try to wait four or five hours). This will ensure that your last meal has left your stomach before bringing new food into the stomach.

Condiments such as maple syrup, agave, Dijon mustard, olive oil, vinegar, lemon and lime juice, stevia, nut milks, and dark chocolate are neutral, which means that they combine with anything!

Ideally, you want to eat the highest quality of all of these foods in ideal combinations. This will result in optimal digestive health. You will feel the difference immediately! Since your body will not be putting as much work into digestion, you will have more energy throughout the day. You always will experience less gas and bloating, which will make you feel lighter and happier.

You will feel immediate results when you eat foods in these ideal combinations (especially when these are high-quality foods such as raw goat cheese instead of processed cheeses, and sprouted grain breads as opposed to refined white bread). They leave your stomach quickly and cause very little digestive distress. When you combine starch and protein, it sits in your stomach for up to twelve hours depending on what type of protein you had (fish leaves the body a bit quicker, while red meat takes much longer).

The reason this happens is because when there is both protein and starch in the stomach. There is an acid enzyme (for the protein) and an alkaline medium (for the starch) that your body uses to facilitate digestion. When these two types of food are present in the stomach at the same time, the acid enzyme and alkaline medium neutralize each other, and digestion slows down dramatically. Enzymes are critical for good digestion because they are the catalyst for digestion. Without them, food will take much longer to digest.

When food takes that long to digest, a lot of gas and fermentation occurs in the gut. Gas and fermentation cause constipation which causes weight gain, bloat, headaches, break outs, and backaches, and a myriad of other ailments. With that being said, if you want to miscombine a meal, try to do it at dinner after a big raw vegetable salad so that you have all night to allow the food to move through your system before you eat again.

Right now you may be thinking something like, "I eat fruit in my cereal with milk every morning. Why don't I feel any digestive discomfort?" The reason why you may not experience discomfort is because your body has

grown used to it. What feels perfectly fine for someone on a Standard American Diet can be debilitating to someone who eats according to the laws of nature.

With all that being said, I hope that now you feel comfortable with the basics of food combining. Remember that these are tools, not rules. Some things may not bother you if you are starting out, and that's the beauty of the transition. As your body shifts and you become emotionally ready to let go of certain things to embrace better health, you will feel your readiness for change. This will feel great. When you really embrace food combining and a whole foods diet, it becomes more about feeling balanced, happy, light, and free in your body as opposed to worrying about the number on the scale (although that will lessen as will all of your ailments).

It is important to never push yourself and always approach your diet and lifestyle changes gently - and with enthusiasm and optimism!

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