Food Combing for Better Digestion
**THE THEORY**

The food combining diet is based on the theory that different food groups are digested optimally when eaten in the following combinations:

- Proteins (beans, nuts, seeds, meat, fish, poultry) and starches (grains, pasta, breads, cereal, rice, carrots, etc.) should be eaten at separate meals. Proteins can be eaten with vegetables and starches can be combined with vegetables.
- Fruits should be eaten alone.

Starches are best absorbed best when they are eaten alone or with vegetables, because the pH of the digestive tract is alkaline. The digestion of proteins, however, requires stomach acid and if proteins and starches are combined, the digestive environment is neither acid or alkaline enough for either group to be absorbed well. Many proponents of the food combining diet believe that this can lead to health problems such as poor digestion.

**WHY FOOD COMBINING MATTERS**

Dr. Wayne Pickering is probably best known for promoting the importance of food combining. If the food you eat is not digesting properly, not only can painful gas, heart burn, acid reflux and other stomach problems arise, but your body will also be deprived of critical nutrients.

The short definition of digestion is: you put food or liquid into your mouth, swallow it, and then your body breaks these molecules down into a size it can absorb. What your body doesn't use is excreted as waste. These are the four processes:

- **digestion**
- **absorption**
- **assimilation**
- **elimination**

But food is actually broken down in a number of different areas, including in your mouth, stomach, and the first and middle sections of your small intestine, called the duodenum and jejunum respectively. Furthermore, you have two kinds of digestion:

- Mechanical (chewing and churning) digestion
- Chemical digestion

**THE IMPORTANCE OF HYDROCHLORIC ACID AND PEPsin**

Food combination takes into account the area and complexity of digestion of each food, to ensure it goes through your entire digestive system with ease. Dr. Pickering explains:

> “There’s only one food that chemically breaks down in the stomach and that’s protein. Proteins require pepsin, a very highly acidic [enzyme] in conjunction with hydrochloric acid. But the hydrochloric acid doesn’t have the ability to break the food down. It just sets the medium for the concentration of the amount of pepsin that’s poured into the stomach to digest whatever food that’s in there. The intelligence of this human body is phenomenal.”.
MIXING ACID WITH ALKALINE = NEUTRAL

There are three primary categories of food: proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. Proteins, again, begin their digestion chemically in your stomach. Carbohydrates are divided into two categories: fruits and starches. While fruits pass through your digestive system with relative ease, starches require three levels of breakdown; the very first stage is in your mouth. That’s why it’s crucial to carefully chew starchy foods.

According to the rules of food combination, you do not want to mix proteins and starches in the same meal. This means, no bun with your hamburger, no meatballs if you have pasta, no potatoes with your meat... Why is that? Dr. Pickering explains:

“Starches require an alkaline digestive medium to digest. If you put your fist in your stomach while it’s digesting steaks and all that, chances are, you wouldn’t have a hand anymore. The acid is intense... When you mix them both together – an acid-type of food and an alkaline – basic chemistry shows that they don’t digest. They neutralize. Then what happens? If the food is not digesting... it’s going through your body [undigested], throwing it into all kinds of turmoil.”

THE THREE COMMANDMENTS OF FOOD COMBINATION

Dr. Pickering lays out three basic commandments of eating that he recommends you not deviate from:

1. No proteins and starches at the same meal, as they neutralize each other and prevent proper digestion of either food. To ensure proper digestion of each food, wait two hours after eating a starch before eating protein. And wait three hours after eating protein before eating a starch.

2. No fruits and vegetables at the same meal. Fruits are either a single or double sugar, whereas the starches are a triple sugar. Fruits mechanically break down in your stomach, but chemically, they don’t break down until they reach the third and fourth stage of your digestive system, which are in your small intestine. Starches, again, are broken down in three different stages, starting in your mouth.

According to Dr. Pickering, this is also why it’s crucial to not eat dessert after a meal. When you do, it gets trapped in your stomach with all that other food, where it starts to rot as it’s not being chemically digested there. Therefore, eat fruit 30-60 minutes before dinner. The same applies if you want to eat another piece of fruit. Acidic fruits, such as lemons for example, also do not combine well with starches. Lemon and banana is but one example of a combination that is sure to lead to gastrointestinal upset...

Many people consider tomatoes a fruit, yet it’s commonly added to salad. Dr. Pickering classifies tomatoes as a “fruit-vegetable,” because even though they don’t have the sugar like most fruits, they’re still an acidic fruit-vegetable. As such they’re okay to combine with other vegetables. He suggests the following recipe for an excellent salad:

“Any kind of vegetable that has seed in it; for example summer squash, zucchini, eggplant, cucumbers, bell peppers, and okra—those are all fruit-vegetables. Your tomatoes go well with those. And since lettuce and celery have a neutral effect, as far as the breakdown of food, the celery and the lettuce combine very well with all of that. You can also add avocados.”

3. “Eat melon alone, or leave it alone, or your stomach will moan.” In short, melons do not digest well with other foods and will frequently cause problems unless consumed by itself.
THE WHEN AND WHAT OF EATING

Your body is, by design, programmed for health, and disease is just as much a matter of eliminating toxins as it is about eating proper foods. Elimination, however, is dependent on a healthy digestive system, and by combining foods in a certain way, you can help your body digest all the foods you eat with ease.

According to Dr. Pickering, the amount and sequencing of the foods you eat can also make a difference. He recommends the following eating schedule:

• **Morning meal**: The least concentrated foods, in the greatest amount. Ideal food choice: fruits
• **Middle of the day**: More complex foods, but in a smaller amount than your first meal. Ideal food choice: starchy carbs
• **Evening**: The most concentrated foods, but in the least abundant amount. Ideal food choice: protein

You can further promote healthy digestion by paying attention to the amount and distribution of protein and carbohydrates in each meal. Again, the greatest amounts of the least dense foods, i.e. fruits, are best eaten early in the day. Then, for lunch, eat a smaller amount of denser, more complex carbs, followed by a small amount of protein—the densest meal—in the evening.

FOOD COMBINING FOR BETTER DIGESTION CHART

The next page is a great chart you can print that summarizes the concepts we discussed above.
# Food Combining for Better Digestion

**Proteins**
- Fish:
  - Crab
  - Lobster
  - Shrimp
  - Clam
  - Oyster
  - Scallop
  - Anchovy
  - Bass
  - Catfish
  - Codfish
  - Haddock
  - Perch / Mackerel
  - Red Snapper
  - Salmon/Lox
  - Sardine
  - Shark
  - Sole / Flounder / Halibut
  - Swordfish
  - Trout
  - Tuna
  - Turbot / Whitefish
- Eggs:
  - Egg White
  - Egg Yolk
- Fowl:
  - Chicken
  - Goose / Duck
  - Turkey
- Meats:
  - Beef / Veal
  - Lamb / Mutton
  - Pork / Bacon / Ham
  - Deer / Venison
  - Rabbit
  - Coconut
  - Bean Curd: Tofu
- Raw Nuts and Seeds:
  - Alfalfa
  - Almond
  - Anise Seed
  - Brazil
  - Cashew
  - Chestnut
  - Hazelnut / Filbert
- Milk:
  - Casein
  - Cow
  - Goat
  - Yogurt
  - Sprouts
- Cheese:
  - Brick
  - Cottage
  - Hard / Parmesan
  - Processed
  - Soft
  - Romano

**Starches**
- Wheat:
  - Amaranth
  - Barley
  - Brown Rice
  - White Rice
  - Buckwheat
  - Millet
  - Oats
  - Pasta, Bread
  - Lima Beans
  - Triticale
- **Dry Beans / Peas**:
  - Black-eyed Peas
  - Carob
  - Garbanzo
  - Kidney
  - Navy / Ninja
  - Pinto
  - Potatoes
  - Yam, Corn
  - Hubbard Squash
  - Pumpkin, Acorn

**Vegetables**
- **Leafy Green**:
  - Sprouts: Alfalfa
  - Mung, Lentil, etc.
  - Chicory
  - Escarole
  - Beet Tops
  - Celery Greens
  - Swiss Chard
  - Dandelion Greens
  - Collard Greens
  - Turnip Greens
  - Endive
  - Kale
  - All Lettuces
- **Non-starchy**:
  - Asparagus, Tomatoes
  - Bamboo Shoots, Okra
  - Green Beans
  - Broccoli, Bell Peppers
  - Brussels Sprouts
  - Cabbage, Turnips
  - Celery Stalk, Chili Peppers
  - Cucumber, Beet Sugar
  - Eggplant, Corn Sugar
  - Spinach, Mushroom
  - Zucchini Squash
  - Crocknut Squash
  - Parsnips, Radish
- **Mildly Starchy**:
  - Artichokes
  - Beets
  - Carrots
  - Cauliflower
  - Chives
  - Ginger
  - Garlic
  - Jicama
  - Leeks
  - Onion
  - Rutabaga
  - Shallots
  - Scallions
  - Peas
  - Water Chestnuts

**Acid/Sub-Acid Fruit**
- Lemon, Lime, Orange
- Tangerine, Grapefruit
- All Other Citrus, Kiwi
- Plum, Pineapple, Mango
- Papaya, All Berries, Nectarine
- Apple, Cherry, Grape, Pear
- Apricot, Peach

**Sweet Fruit**
- Bananas
- Currents
- Figs, Persimmons
- Dates
- Raisins, Prunes
- Dried Fruits
- Grapes (Thompson, Muscat)

**Melons**
- Banana Melon
- Musk Melon
- Cantaloupe
- Casaba
- Persian
- Crenshaw
- Honeydew

*Do not eat fruit with any other food*

*It's good to eat sweet fruit after other foods.*

*Nuts are OK with these fruits.*

*Melons should be eaten alone.*


**The Pancreas**

In humans the pancreas weighs approximately 80 grams, has roughly the configuration of an inverted smoker’s pipe, and is situated in the upper abdomen. The head of the pancreas (equivalent to the bowl of the pipe) is immediately adjacent to the duodenum, while its body and tail extend across the midline nearly to the spleen. The bulk of pancreatic tissue is devoted to its exocrine function, the elaboration of digestive enzymes that are secreted via the pancreatic ducts into the duodenum.

**146 Reasons Why Sugar Is Ruining Your Health**


If you are eating a lot of refined sugar, perhaps this lengthy list of why you should not will convince you to change. Very easy to read.

**Fructose is No Answer For a Sweetener**


The consumption of fructose (corn syrup) has risen considerably in the general population within recent years. In 1980 the average person ate 39 pounds of fructose and 84 pounds of sucrose. In 1994 the average person ate 66 pounds of sucrose and 83 pounds of fructose. This 149 pounds is approximately 19% of the average person's diet.

**The Glycemic Index**

http://www.becomehealthynow.com/article/carbs/8/

The glycemic index of food is a ranking of foods based on their immediate effect on blood glucose (blood sugar) levels.

**What is Refined Sugar?**

http://www.becomehealthynow.com/article/carbs/1082/

Sugar refining is the process of extracting out the sugar (sucrose) from the plant materials and then removing other unwanted materials from the extracted raw sugar.

**White Flour Is Like Sugar**

http://www.becomehealthynow.com/article/carbs/144/

As far as your body is concerned, eating white flour is almost the same as eating sugar.

For more information about the digestive process and food combination, check out the following two web sites:

- **CombineWhenYouDine.com** has a 20” x 24” custom-laminated full-color guide for Healthy Eating that classifies fruits, vegetables and proteins to show the most compatible combinations for proper digestion.
- **MangoManDiet.com** offers a 27-day long course on food combining, as well as 400 recipes, nearly 140 articles, and several hours’ worth of audio programs on nutrition.
Absorption in the Small Intestine

This figure depicts just how much activity occurs in the digestive tract. Everything we eat and digest eventually makes its way to the liver for further processing.

Figure 1 — The digestion and absorption of various vitamins and nutrients in the digestive system.
Test Your Understanding

Purpose of this Quiz

• they can causatively deal with their physical condition, and
• as a result they follow their treatment recommendations

After you’ve read this document, you should be able to answer the following questions. Your on-line doctor will be reviewing this questionnaire with you. If you are unable to answer the question, refer to the referenced section so you can answer the question. All of the answers to these questions can be found in this document. There are no “trick questions”.

1. In what organ are proteins down? What important enzyme must be present for hydrochloric acid to be produced? See “The Importance of Hydrochloric Acid and Pepsin” on page 1
   Proteins are broken down in the: ________________________
   The enzyme that must be present is: ________________________

2. Why is it that you should not mix proteins and starches when you eat? See “Mixing Acid with Alkaline = Neutral” on page 2

3. What are “The Three Commandments of Food Combination” See “The Three Commandments of Food Combination” on page 2.
   1. ______________________________________________________________________
   2. ______________________________________________________________________
   3. ______________________________________________________________________

4. According to Dr. Pickering, what type of foods should you have during these times of the day? See “The When and What of Eating” on page 3.
   Morning: ____________________________________________________________________
   Middle of the day: ____________________________________________________________________
   Evening: ____________________________________________________________________

5. Refer to the Food Combing for Better Digestion chart on page 4. Based on what you have read, are you following the rules you have learned? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. How will reading this article help you achieve a better state of digestion and health?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
7. Write down any additional questions you want to ask your doctor:

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