



Integrative Health Link

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## Nutrition – Basic Guidelines

### *Basic Guidelines to Maintain Good Health and Reduce Food Allergens*

In Oriental Medicine, almost any imbalance or disease begins in the digestion. Thus, the importance of diet is profoundly important to health. The Nutritional outlines within are designed to maintain health, for weight loss if desired, reduce food allergens and overall digestive balance.

The guidelines are designed as a base. Think of these guidelines as a center of a wheel and all other diet habits according to lifestyle, culture, fun etc. are the 'spokes'. Thus, the center is always the basic diet you can come back to for good digestive health. Children and adults may use these guidelines.

## General Guidelines

- Always have breakfast (see breakfast suggestions)
- Always use butter, never margarine
- Avoid overeating or eating when not hungry
- Avoid foods claimed as 'low fat' or food substitutes, i.e. Eggs, sweeteners
- Small amounts of quality nutrient packed foods is better than quantity of low nutrient foods
- Organic foods or foods without pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, or genetic modification is preferred
- Reduce refined foods and sugars in your diet as much as possible, remember *the more processed a food is, the more difficult for digestion and higher risk of food allergen it has.*
- Try to maintain a *warm digestion* (discussed in 'keeping your digestion warm section'), especially in fall, winter and season transitions.
- Vegetarianism is a personal choice, however, in Oriental Nutrition, vegetarianism is best when practiced for limited periods and for specific issues. Thus, this guideline is based on non-vegetarian diets from a health perspective. If you are vegetarian, substitute meat proteins for your preferred choice of proteins when referring to this handout. Consider supplements with amino acids, ie. Whey proteins or amino acid supplements.
- Home-cooked meals preferred over eating out (much more easy to regulate what you are eating)
- Avoid/reduce foods containing too much sugar or caffeine, saturated fats (fried foods), additives, preservatives, and sodas.
- Alcohol in moderation
- Slow Down, Chew Your Food, and try not to multi-task when eating (watching TV, walking around, reading, etc.)
- Enjoy your food! A happy digestion is a healthy digestion.

# Food Combining

Food combining can aid digestion and reduce symptoms of digestive upset. Most common symptoms are gas, bloating and slow digestion (in oriental nutrition, this is called food stagnation). If you are experiencing these symptoms, follow these guidelines until your digestion improves.

## **Proteins:**

- Avoid combining meat proteins with dairy proteins (i.e. Meat and cheese)
- Generally, protein is best combined with vegetables and grains.
- Avoid combining proteins with fruits, especially meat proteins. Dairy proteins are less reactive with fruits. Keep in mind that dairy and fruits are both cool energetically and should be eaten in moderation

## **Sweets:**

- Sugar or deserts at the end of a big meal will slow digestion
- Sweets in moderation generally

Life happens, so if you have mixed foods together that have caused digestive upset, usually digestive enzymes can help to relieve the food stagnation.

## Breakfast

Seasonal: Warm breakfasts in Fall and winter and during season transitions can help protect against illness. Fruit for breakfast is best during summer or in warmer climates.

## **Specific Food Suggestions:**

- Oatmeal – regulates blood sugar, provides fiber, reduces phlegm and congestion, and reduces cholesterol.
- Hot grain cereals: millet (protects digestion, reduces nausea, a good wheat alternative to wheat sensitivities), amaranth, Quinoa (good source of protein), rice, buckwheat, barley (especially good for weight loss)

- Sprouted grain breads as toast (more easily digested and less allergenic)
- Yogurt (use sparingly if dairy allergen – organic is best)
- Meats such as: sausage, bacon, etc. no more than 2 times a week
- Eggs no more than 2 times a week
- Nut and seed butters such as: almond, tahini, cashew, pumpkin
- Fruit in summertime. Preferred fruits: grapefruit, apples, berries
- Beverages: green tea preferred over coffee (coffee may dehydrates the body as it is a diuretic), juice: lemon, grapefruit (avoid orange).
- Soups may be used for breakfast too.
- Soy products no more than 2 times a week. If your digestion is cold, avoid altogether.
- Cold cereal in moderation, especially if you have an allergen to milk: substitutes may be almond milk, oat milk, or rice milk. Try to avoid Soy as it is cold energetically.

## Lunch & Dinner

Lunch and Dinner can vary greatly. Thus, below are general guidelines. Lunch and Dinner should comprise mostly of protein, vegetables, and whole grains.

### **Proteins:**

*If your digestion is weak, obtaining protein from grains and legumes is more difficult. Lean meats can be more easily digested.*

- Lean meats of all types (Organic, hormone free preferred)
- Dairy – sparingly
- Nuts – avoid peanuts/peanut butter
- Tofu – no more than 1-2 times a week (energetically cold, thus sauté with ginger, garlic and sesame oil to warm)
- Meat substitutes – use sparingly (especially if sensitive to wheat or have food allergies)

### **Vegetables:**

- All
- Nightshades sparingly if you have internal heat, prone to mouth sores or sensitive to yeast causing foods

- Veggies should be cooked for the most part, a lot of raw veggies can cool the digestion. Most preferred cooking method is steamed or baked.

### **Grains:**

- White Rice: Jasmine or Basmati
- Brown Rice: always toast before cooking
- Amaranth, millet, quinoa
- Lentils, corn, - use more sparingly
- Sprouted grain breads

### **Oils:**

*Oils are an important part of the diet and essential for the body*

- Olive, flaxseed, sesame, grapeseed, etc.
- Avoid peanut oil, lard, oil substitutes

# Keeping a Warm Digestion

In Oriental Nutrition, a warm digestion is key to digestive health. All foods have energetic temperatures on the scale from cold to hot. Loosely correlated to a western idea, one would think of a warm digestion as a good metabolism.

## **Some Signs of cold or cool digestion:**

- Slow digestion with or without gas, bloating, abdominal distention
- Fatigue after eating
- Many food allergies, or very reactive to more than a few foods
- White tongue coating, pale tongue, teeth marks on the side of tongue
- Weight gain or loss irrelevant to amount of food consumed
- Frequent and recurrent colds and illnesses, running nose/congestion
- Irregular bowel movements

## **Generally:**

- Eat cooked foods in cooler/cold weather
- Generally, lean meats and cooked veggies keep digestion warm
- Only eat significant amounts of frozen foods, fruits, raw veggies (this includes salads) in warm/hot weather, avoid if digestion is cold
- Substitutes for milk from warmest to coolest: oat, almond, rice, soy (coldest).
- Avoid left-overs, especially right out of the refrigerator without warming
- Eat Soy products in moderation as they are cold energetically
- If digestion is cool, reduce processed carbohydrates which will congest digestion
- Avoid eating when not hungry

## **Remedies to warm digestion:**

- Fresh ginger: in cooking, and as tea (4-5 slices in boiling water, then simmer for 20 min., add lemon juice and honey to taste)
- Chamomile tea
- Cook with Oregano, fennel, cardamom, cinnamon, black pepper

# Snacks

Snacks are such a personal choice. Here are a few healthy snack suggestions. Always drink a beverage first, i.e. Water, tea, diluted juice (with water) to make sure you are hydrated and not just hungry.

## **Snacks:**

- Nuts (avoid peanuts as mentioned before), Almonds best
- Apple, grapefruit, berries (avoid bananas, citrus if sugar/yeast sensitive)
- Sandwich with protein (consider almond butter, tahini, sunflower butter, pumpkin butter, cashew butter)
- Corn chips with salsa or guacamole
- Protein bars (try to avoid those with peanuts or too much sugar)
- Protein in general
- If chocolate is desired, choose dark chocolate over milk chocolate
- Be creative, using whole foods (less processed the better)
- Add your own here:

# Food Remedies

Below are a few kitchen remedies for maladies – food as medicine and medicine as food!

## **First signs of a common cold (wind-invasion)**

4-5 slices of fresh ginger, bring to boil in 2-3 cups water, then simmer for 20 min. add lemon juice and honey to taste.

## **Congested liver/gallbladder (copious mucous, slow bowels)**

1 Tsp of olive oil, 1 tsp of lemon juice, mix with bit of warm water. Take first thing in morning, before food.

## **Balance pH:**

Lemon juice in water throughout day and with meals

## **Feeling blue**

Cook with basil, like pesto

## **Receive a heart-felt shock**

Cook with cinnamon, cardamom, black pepper (Chai Tea has these ingredients)

## **PMS**

Green tea, oolong tea, evening primrose oil or flaxseed oil (taken at night before bed), add pinch cayenne to the congested liver remedy above. Exercise!





NOTES: