

Nutritional Habit 4 – Food Combining

The correct balance of macronutrients provides the foundation of any successful eating plan; however, depending on the symptoms an individual is experiencing, additional dietary changes may be necessary for the number on the scale to go down. If a lot of digestive symptoms are being experienced, such as gas, bloating, belching and indigestion, food combining can be extremely helpful in eliminating most, if not all, of the symptoms.

What is Food Combining?

Food Combining Involves eating foods in certain combinations to make digestion easier and more efficient.

Basic Food Combining Principles

1. Eat fruit alone
2. Do not combine starches with protein

Excellent Combinations			
High Starch Foods/Grains and Non-starchy Vegetables	High Protein Foods and Non-starchy Vegetables	Oils and All Types of Vegetables	Fruit
Good Combination High-starch foods and Oils			
Poor Combinations			
High Protein Foods and High Starch Foods	High Protein Foods and Fruit	High Starch Foods and Fruit	Melons with other types of Fruit

Examples of Poor Combinations

- Meat sandwiches, hamburgers, hot dogs
- Spaghetti and meatballs
- Eggs and toast
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- Sweet potato with chicken

Examples of Excellent Combinations

- Salad with various salad greens and a portion of protein such as poultry or fish
- Quinoa with veggies or meat with steamed green veggies
- Sweet potato with broccoli and green beans
- Fruit eaten on its own, wait 20-30 minutes and then eat the rest of your meal

Why Food Combine?

Although food combining is excellent for improving overall health, individuals mainly choose to eat this way to improve digestion, which in turn:

- Decreases bloating and gas
- Increases energy
- Strengthens the immune system
- Reduces the risk of disease and/or slows the progression of disease

Approximate Digestion Times

Note: These times are extremely speculative as many factors affect digestion.

- Fruit – 1 hour
- Vegetables and Grains – 2 hours
- Vegetable Protein – 3-4 hours
- Animal Protein – 4-6 hours

The sweeter and more refined the carbohydrate (e.g. white sugar), the more it inhibits the digestion of protein.

The heavier the protein (e.g. red meat), the longer it takes to digest and the more its digestion can be inhibited by carbohydrates.

If you are not sure if food combining would be helpful for you, try it for 1-2 weeks and see how you feel. If you feel lighter and your stomach feels flatter, you will likely find you have more energy in general and it will be easier to lose weight if you continue to eat this way most, or all, of the time.

The above material is for informational purposes only and is not meant to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

References:

1. Haas, Elson M. (1992). *Staying Healthy with Nutrition*. Berkeley, California: Celestial Arts Publishing