



Separate Nutrition in Older Adult: Positive Experience

Sergei V. Jargin

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN), 117198 Moscow, Russia

Letter to the Editor

*Corresponding Author: Sergei V. Jargin

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Abstract

The concept of separate nutrition and food combining is based on the known fact that the composition of digestive juices depends on the food consumed. Critics have noted that combinations of products proposed or rejected within the framework of this concept are not always scientifically founded. This preprint does not propose combinations, but the consumption of only one product at a time. This is the kind of nutrition by some persons working from home. Simple meals are prepared according to a momentary preference. Only one product is often consumed. As experience shows, with such a diet, dyspepsia does not appear. Aged people have lower calorie requirements but similar or even elevated nutrient needs compared to younger adults. Importance of the diet quality increases at an old age. Nutrient-dense options with relatively smaller portion sizes are advisable. Examples of dishes, makeable at home or available at restaurants, are discussed and illustrated here.

Keywords: separate nutrition; diet; geriatric

Introduction

The concept of separate nutrition and food combining is based on the known fact that composition of digestive juices depends on the food consumed [1]. Critics have noted that combinations of products proposed or rejected within the framework of this concept are not always scientifically founded. This letter does not propose combinations, but consumption of only one product at a time. Reasonable exceptions are allowed: sauces and seasonings to stimulate appetite and peristalsis; vegetable oil can be added to various dishes to prevent constipation. Fiber-rich foods may be effective against constipation and overweight; however, the tolerance should be checked individually. The food must be variegated; but intervals between consumption of different products are recommendable. There is nothing unusual about it: this is the kind of

nutrition by some persons working mainly from home, including the author [2]. Eating is an afterthought to a busy schedule [3]. There is no time to prepare complex dishes. Simple meals are prepared according to a momentary preference. Only one product is often consumed. In aged individuals, diversity is additionally limited due to missing teeth. Examples of dishes: various pureed soups from one type of vegetable, crushed in a blender, with the addition of flour (zatyrukha or liquid mash); mashed raw vegetables or fruits; canned fish (herring and other fish sold in Russia is sometimes not fresh), minced meat heated in a microwave or boiled (meatballs). Given the obscurity of ingredients of the minced meat on sale, it is advisable to prepare it by one's own hand or just to cut the meat into small pieces. This mode of nutrition stimulates the secretion of digestive juices that are

optimal for the given product. As experience shows, with such a diet, dyspepsia does not appear.

Older individuals have lower calorie requirements but similar or even elevated nutrient needs compared to younger adults [4]. Importance of the diet quality increases at old age. Nutrient-dense options with smaller portions are advisable. Systematic reviews [5,6] could not draw conclusions about relationships between frequency of meals and the energy intake and alignment with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans [4]. A balanced diet that integrates variety of nutrients and foods can be effective in preventing dementia [7], also if consumed separately. From early to late old age, it is necessary to avoid undernutrition. When cognitive functions decline, the intake may decrease [7]; therefore, the quantities of food should be given more attention. As far as reasonably possible, the intake of added sugar, saturated fats, sodium and alcohol should be limited [4].

Food should be ingested when hunger is felt, not necessarily at a certain time of the day. For those working from home, the order of the day may be shifted, daytime being confused with nighttime. However, it is better to limit food intake at night, since the functioning of the digestive system is subject to biorhythms [8,9]. In addition, at night there is an increased risk of falling asleep with a full stomach, which can have adverse consequences: eructation with aspiration of gastric contents. It is necessary to recognize a false sense of hunger and not to eat when one has stress or neurotic symptoms. Biological signals should not be confused with emotional ones [10].

If not thirsty, it is advisable to separate food intake from soft drinks, so as not to dilute the gastric juice. On the contrary, some bitter and/or beer seem to improve appetite and digestion; it can be taken with an appropriate snack. Meat, fish dishes or fruits can be

accompanied by a moderate amount of wine. Milk is recommended to be taken separately from other products. Of note, milk is effective against high acidity with stomach irritation, heartburn, and gastritis symptoms. For the same purpose, baking soda can be added to milk; everyone develops their own doses experimentally. Finally, an adequately applied method of separate nutrition can help to reduce body weight.

Some busy pensioners, consciously or unconsciously, eat separately. They do not prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner, but consume just one product at a time, when they perceive the need. Here the concept of separate nutrition is partly overlapping with that of “Intuitive eating” [10], which steers away from rigid dietary recommendations. The intuitive diet is personalized as each individual has different needs and preferences at different times. Professional literature confirmed that intuitive eaters have lower obesity rates [3].

The author stopped using catering services when he still went to work. Lunch at a canteen or restaurant (appetizer, first course, second course, dessert) is too voluminous for some aged persons and contains various ingredients poorly combining with each other or physiologically superfluous. The quantity and formula should be determined individually based on appetite, taking into account personal experience and medical considerations: somebody is apprehensive of constipation, another one will have a stomach ache from acidic foods; certain products may cause allergy. However, the principle of separate nutrition can be observed in canteens and restaurants; menu examples: varied fish dishes with beer; bitter and meat hors d'oeuvres (e.g. bacon or ham with a pickle) plus a cutlet; port wine with fruit or cake (Fig. 1-5) [11]. Alcohol is optional: it is preferable to consume less than more [4].



Fig. 1. Refectory in the 3rd floor of the GUM (Upper Trading Rows) in Moscow has always fresh hors d'oeuvres and drinks of standard quality. It is not always the case in other places [11]. Some dishes are compatible with the concept of separate nutrition.



Fig. 2. Fish and caviar.



Fig. 3. Port wine with cake.



Fig. 4. Fasting menu.



Fig. 5. Russian Easter bread (Kulich).

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