General Principles Regarding Diet

General Guidelines

1. Eat in a quiet and settled atmosphere with a settled mind. Do not work, or watch television during meals. Be aware of eating during meals. Always sit to eat.

2. Eat to about 3/4 of your capacity or until you feel satisfied but light.

3. Avoid taking a meal before the previous meal has been digested; allow approximately 3 to 6 hours between meals. Eat at approximately the same time each day.

4. Sip water and other beverages according to thirst during meals. The temperature should be according to preference but not below room temperature. Avoid large amounts of liquids within 1 to 2 hours before or after meals.

5. Do not drink milk with meals having mixed tastes (tastes other than purely sweet, like vegetable dishes or salty food). Milk can be drunk with toast, cereals, or other sweet tasting food, or separate from a meal. Do not drink milk with sour things (e.g. sour fruits, yoghurt, cheese), radish, garlic, or salt.

6. Include all six tastes in one’s daily diet. (Constitutional factors and particular physiological needs may have to be considered.)

7. Eat what’s wholesome and appealing according to spontaneous desire. Desire is the body’s way of expressing what it needs to achieve balance at a given moment. (Non-lifesupporting desires may arise due to some habitual pattern of imbalance in the physiology.

8. Lunch should be the main meal of the day. Breakfast and dinner should be lighter in both quantity and quality.

9. Honey should not be heated in any way, such as by cooking, baking, or adding it to hot beverages. Avoid breads and cereals, including granolas, that have been cooked with honey.

10. Take a few minutes to sit quietly after eating and before returning to your activity.

11. Do not eat right before going to bed. If you feel hungry, drink a glass of warm milk.

12. Chew well; the digestive process begins in the mouth.

13. Avoid large amounts of raw food, such as raw vegetables and uncooked rolled oat flakes. Naturally grown, properly ripened fruits are good.

14. A lacto-vegetarian* diet is preferable to maintain health and prevent serious chronic disorders. Scientific research has shown a lacto-vegetarian diet to be nutritionally complete. Changes in dietary habits should be made gradually.
15. Favor organically grown food—ideally Vedic Organic—and less processed food.(see the educational section of the web site of Maharishi Vedic Organic Agriculture www.mvoai.org)

16. Genetically modified food should be avoided.

**Proper Food Preparation**

1. Food prepared in a pleasant environment by a person who is happy and settled will have the best influence.

2. Food should always be delicious and pleasing to the senses.

3. Food is best if warm and well-cooked (i.e., not overcooked, undercooked, or burned). Cook food more slowly or at lower heat to cook thoroughly while minimizing nutrient loss.

4. Food should always be fresh and of the best possible quality. Avoid left-over, reheated, frozen and processed food.

**Breakfast**

- Digestion is not as strong early in the morning. Breakfast should be light and according to hunger.

- Meat and eggs are best avoided.

  Favor fresh and stewed fruit, juice, cereals, milk and soaked nuts.

**Lunch**

- Lunch should be the main meal of the day(digestion is strongest at mid-day.) The ideal timing of lunch is 12:00-1:00 P.M.

- Lunch should be a warm cooked meal containing all 6 tastes.

- Ideally, take at least half an hour for lunch including 5-10 minutes of sitting comfortably after eating.

**Dinner**

- Dinner should be started by 6:30 P.M. Eat very lightly if dinner is after 7:30 P.M. The later dinner is served, the lighter you should eat.

- Avoid heavy foods like cheese, yogurt, meats and oily and fried foods at dinner. If eaten at this time, when digestion is slow, improper digestion and ama formation is likely. These foods are best consumed at lunch.