

Cooking for the Gerson Therapy

The cooking methods for Gerson meals are unusual. By most other standards, Gerson meals are considered overcooked. Dr. Gerson strongly believed that foods should be tender, easy to chew and digest, to help the weakened digestive system get the greatest amount of nutrition in the most accessible form (particularly minerals, proteins, and carbohydrates) from the food consumed. The soft cooked foods also help to provide a buffer for the considerable volume of juices and raw foods ingested.

All food must be prepared fresh; canned, bottled, or frozen foods may inhibit restoration of the body. Absolutely no salt, soy sauces, or other sodium sources (see above) should be added to any consumed foods, and prepared foods containing salt, such as most breads, should be eliminated.

A patient on the Gerson Therapy receives the nutritional equivalent of *fifteen pounds* of fresh, raw produce in his daily consumption of 104 ounces of juice. The cooked food is intended for ease of digestion, to provide bulk and carbohydrates, to supplement mineral intake, and to serve as a buffer for the juices.

Some patients tire of eating foods of the same soft consistency for every meal. In the early stages of the therapy, we encourage patients to eat large quantities of foods, and to cook them thoroughly. Since the Gerson Therapy considers food to be medication, any changes in the patient's diet or cooking technique should be discussed with his/her Gerson physician.

In the initial 6-12 weeks on the Gerson Therapy, potatoes, oatmeal and carrots are the primary source of protein. The protein molecule is less damaged due to the slow cooking of vegetables. This process shortens the long carbohydrate chains and makes digestion easier. Thus, vegetables generally taste sweeter in their cooked state. Cooking at low temperatures also ensures maximum breakdown of indigestible fibers, maintains the integrity of the enzymes as well as the conversion of starches to easily digestible sugars.

The patient should consume a variety of foods every day. Over the course of a given week, the patient should make an effort to include as many different fruits and vegetables as possible, as each different food will contain different vitamin, mineral and phytochemical combinations that are important for healing.

Cooking Method

All vegetables, except those listed as prohibited, should be used. Vegetables can be cooked with a minimum of water or soup stock (1 tablespoonful) slowly on low heat -just below boiling- until *well done*.

Fruits and vegetables typically are cooked over low heat 180-200°F with *very little* water, for 1 hour to 1 hour and fifteen minutes. Dishes can also be baked in the oven for 45 to 60 minutes at 250° to 300°F. Either gas or electric ranges can be used, and convection ovens are fine, as long as the food is cooked slowly and evenly.

To prevent burning, place a metal mat, or flame tamer, between the burner and pot to help distribute the heat evenly.

Vegetables can also be cooked in an oven, where the heat is more even and burning is less likely. A tight-fitting lid should always be used to help retain moisture in foods.

Helpful tips

- *Onions, tomatoes and squash* contain a lot of water, so they generally don't need any added liquid for cooking, and can also add flavor to the cooked foods. Celery is also good for flavoring.
- If a recipe calls for a little bit of water, always use distilled water.
- *Beets and potatoes* can be boiled whole (without peeling) in distilled water and peeled when done. The majority of a vegetable's nutrients are contained in and right underneath the skin, so they should always be cooked with the skin intact.
- *Potatoes* can also be baked, scalloped, mashed, made into potato salad, or prepared in a variety of different ways. The potato is a main staple of the Gerson diet.
- *Spinach* should not be eaten raw on the Gerson Therapy, because in its raw form, it contains oxalic acid, which inhibits nutrient absorption. It is perfectly fine when cooked, but keep in mind that spinach releases a relatively large amount of water and oxalic acid when cooked. For this reason, the water left after cooking is bitter and should be discarded.
- *Corn* can be boiled in distilled water or eaten raw.
- Most *spices* are prohibited from the Gerson diet; however, you are encouraged to use fresh or dried organic herbs to enhance the flavor of a dish. Consult the list of forbidden and permitted foods to see what spices and herbs are allowed on the Gerson diet.
- As any top chef will tell you, presentation is everything! If you find yourself growing bored with the foods on the diet, come up with creative ways to make the dishes more visually appealing.

Use of Water

All water consumed internally (i.e., used in cooking, soups, teas, enemas, etc.) must be purified and distilled. If fluoride is not added to local water supplies, reverse osmosis combined with carbon filtration may be used. If local water contains fluoride, water must be distilled and carbon filtered. Spring and well water can be used in some cases, but we have seen numerous analyses of some such water showing significantly high levels of certain minerals and even chemical residues. We recommend having your own analysis done on a regular basis.¹

Appliances and cookware to avoid

- ***Microwave Ovens.*** Studies indicate that microwave ovens may affect chemical changes in the foods they cook, making them more difficult to assimilate. The radiation breaks down the cell structures of the food, and cause significant nutrient loss. Microwaving food in plastic containers is particularly dangerous, as the heat causes the plastic to emanate xenoestrogens and carcinogens into the foods. There is also evidence that some microwave ovens do not effectively contain the

¹ Filters on reverse osmosis units must be checked and frequently changed. Studies from Canada show bacterial growth very hazardous to the cancer/immune-compromised patient.

radiation within the oven, and emit significant amounts of radiation into the kitchen , “cooking the cook” along with the food.

- **Teflon and non-stick cookware.** Like microwave ovens, there is a high price to pay for the convenience of non-stick pots and pans, as they are highly toxic and environmentally hazardous. When the chemical coating on non-stick cookware is heated, it releases toxic fumes and carcinogens into the air and into the food.
- **Aluminum cookware.** Do not use any pots, pans or other cookware that contain aluminum, which has been linked to Alzheimer’s, neurological disorders, kidney disease, and a number of other health problems. Stainless steel or glass cookware is recommended.
- **Pressure cookers.** Pressure cookers are not recommended for several reasons. First: they are frequently made of aluminum. More importantly, pressure cookers are designed to cook at high temperature, and Dr. Gerson believed that the high heat damages the colloidal structure of foods and, consequently, the proteins essential for rebuilding the body. Foods on the Gerson diet must be slow-cooked over low heat.