

# Start eating for the stomach's sake

GOOD LIVING

BY SOLOMON KARANJA

Human beings can eat just about anything—from mammary secretions to mineral crystals (common salt), fruits, flowers, seed, stalks, leaves, roots, seaweeds, fungi, eggs, fish and birds or the dead bodies of some animals.

Hot or cold, tough or soft, sweet or bitter our mouths partake of the tastes. Think of the effects the type of food you eat has on the first sections of the digestive system, which come into contact with it throughout your lifetime. Sugars promote dental caries, carcinogenic substances in foods and drinks foster cancer of the mouth, oesophagus and stomach; tough foods must be chewed vigorously otherwise they will irritate the oesophagus and the stomach and very hot and cold foods irritate the digestive mucus (lining) and hot foods can literally burn your tongue, lips and throat.

Mouth sores are painful ulcerations that appear in the oral mucosa and are white in the centre with red border. They have many causes but nutritional deficiency especially of B vitamins, an allergy to some often-unknown food, a depressed immune system and viral infections are common causes. The need to maintain the digestive tract by maintaining proper eating habits cannot be overstated.

The stomach receives solid and liquid food in various conditions and reduces it further to pulpy liquid by mixing it with gastric juice. Sometimes, some food contents are absorbed before passing into intestines. It is important to give the stomach some resting periods between meals to help it recover. The size of the stomach varies and can shrink to a pear size or enlarge after a heavy meal to the size of the pelvis. Filling it to maximum can change its functioning and cause obesity. Complete fullness may not be necessary. Do not eat continuously. This happens for example with some housewives who work in the home or at home office with snacks, cakes and sandwiches. It is possible to live on

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two main meals and a light dinner.

Suggested meals for an over-drinking stomach include an avocado shake and cherimoya for breakfast with crème of pumpkin for lunch and a potato and pumpkin with fruit salad for dinner.

Ulcerative stomach patients need to try mangoes with honey for breakfast with a lunch of a crème of onions with baked potatoes and skimmed yoghurt and whole bread and a supper of cabbage soup with baked apples.

Those with slow digestion can try pineapple water with paw paw and oatmeal for breakfast; a lunch of carrot and tomato juice with whole bread and potatoes, peas and crunchy onions and a supper of sweet corn and muthokoi (or ugali) with grape juice.

Red cabbage owes its peculiar colour to

pigments called anthocyanins and has anti-carcinogenic properties. It also has a sharp essence of cabbage, which acts as a natural regulator for intestinal flora. It has colitis and is low in sodium, which is good for the heart. It is recommended for those who want to maintain healthy stomachs.

Pineapple water is prepared by washing the rind of the pineapple well, cutting it into pieces and putting it into a pot with two litres of cold water. Boil the rind for 30 minutes. Remove the pineapple rind and allow the liquid to cool. It's served cold. It contains minerals and trace elements like manganese, copper and iron and helps digestion and its mild diuretic action cleanses the kidneys. It is served half an hour before meals, and can be sweetened with honey.

Next time you have a feast, take care of the stomach and eat moderately.