Scientific Reasons to Avoid Food at Night

Jainism rituals are said to be based on Science. One such ritual is Chauviyar (have dinner for Sunset). Let's understand the Scientific reason behind avoiding food at night.

Consuming food, water, etc. at night is strictly prohibited in Jain Dharma. There are many reasons for this prohibition. The germs and microbes that disappear when there is sunlight do not really get destroyed; they take shelter in shadowy places and after the sunset, they enter and pervade the atmosphere. These microbes are invisible to the naked eye, get into our food. Consuming this kind of food will lead to the killing of these germs and bacterias which in turn will lead to our ill health.

Our biological clock is set according to the sunrise-sunset. When the sun is right above us, our digestive fire performs at its peak. The food eaten at night time does not get properly digested since the digestive system becomes inactive during the night owing to the absence of sunlight and we face the problem of indigestion. The metabolism rate slows down during these hours as we do not indulge in any physical activity which helps indigestion. Hence, due to these reasons, the food taken during night times does not get digested; and its putrefaction in the body is harmful to health. This leads to an increase in weight as the undigested food gets stored in the form of fats. It also leads to foul smell in the breath, putrefaction of teeth, constipation, pain in knee joints, and several diseases of the throat.

Indian Science of health has formulated a rule that after having taken food, one should drink little-little water many times. Eating food before sunset allows this practice naturally. Some scientists also say that you should avoid food at least 3-4 hours before sleeping so that the food gets digested properly before sleeping. Recent research in Hong Kong proves that people eating food by early evening are less prone to heart diseases.

Other scientific reasons to avoid food at night:

1. Fluctuations in Sleep Cycle:
   Another important reason why you may want to avoid eating late is due to the effect it can have on your sleep cycle. Research has found that the digestive process can have serious implications on your sleep cycle, causing you to wake up more often, and have a harder time falling asleep in the first place.

2. Increased Urination and Excretion Needs:
Drinking water and eating food late at night would lead to an increase in the number of times that you may need to get up to use the restroom during the night. Also, it will result in food being digested during your sleeping hours—and because of this, you may need to wake up to eliminate the waste products.

Specific food and their consequences if eaten at night:

1. **High-Fat food**: Oily, cheese, french fries, pizzas with extra cheese, greasy food, etc. all fall into the category of high-fat food which on consuming late in the night gets stored in the digestive tract.

2. **Spicy snacks**: Not only does eating spicy food is the worst to eat at night, but also spicy food can disrupt your sleep patterns. In addition, makes it more difficult to sleep because of the invasion of endorphins, spicy foods can also make you feel physically uncomfortable. Spicy foods can cause heartburn, stomach problems, and exacerbate existing ones.

3. **Caffeine**: Many people already understand this to avoid caffeine at night, unless you really intend to stay awake until late at night. Most of you probably know better to avoid caffeinated coffee or tea at night, but the thing is, many foods also contain caffeine.

4. **Red Meat**: Red meat is one type of food that takes a very long time to digest because of the number of protein and fat found in most types of red meat. As a result, consuming red meat at night will produce endorphins which makes it more difficult for you to fall asleep.

5. **Nuts**: You must be thinking, aren’t nuts a very healthy food? Of course, it’s true – beans have lots of fiber, which is undoubtedly very good for your body. Unfortunately, the fibers made of beans as the worst food to eat at night. Nuts can make digestion become uncomfortable, and again can cause stomach problems at night.