

A Proposal for New Meal Services to Support People Who Eat Alone

Today, eating is not only for getting nutrition. It is also an important time to talk with family and friends.

However, in modern Japan, more people eat alone. This is called “solo eating.”

The number of single-person households is increasing, especially in big cities.

In the future, almost half of all households may have only one person.

Because of this change, many people do not have someone to eat with every day.

Another reason is the change in lifestyle. Many people work long hours or have different schedules from their family members.

Some people work from home, and others work at night.

Because of these different schedules, it is difficult to eat together.

As a result, even people who live with their family sometimes eat alone.

At the same time, food delivery services have grown quickly.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people stayed at home and ordered food online.

Food delivery became very popular because it is easy and convenient.

People can order many kinds of food with a smartphone.

However, when people eat alone and choose food only for convenience, they may not think about nutrition.

There are two main problems with solo eating.

First, nutrition may become unbalanced.

People who eat alone often choose instant food or fast food because it is quick and simple.

These foods often contain too much salt, sugar, and fat.

If people continue this habit, they may develop lifestyle-related diseases in the future.

Some studies show that people who eat alone are less careful about healthy eating.

Second, solo eating can reduce communication.

When people eat together, they talk and share their feelings.

Eating together can prevent social isolation.

However, people who often eat alone have fewer chances to talk with others.

Research shows that solo eating may increase the risk of depression and other mental health problems,

especially among older people.

In Japan, there are some programs to solve this problem.

For example, children's cafeterias and community salons provide meals for children and older people.

These programs help people eat together and feel connected.

However, there are some problems.

The number of participants is limited, and many programs are held only once a month.

In addition, working adults do not have enough support.

Therefore, this paper proposes new meal services for all generations.

First, "Puzzle Meal" is a new style of meal sold at convenience stores or supermarkets.

Each food item is divided by nutrition type, such as vegetables, protein, and grains.

Customers choose pieces and put them on a tray like a puzzle.

If the tray is filled with a balanced combination, they receive a discount.

This system helps people choose healthy meals easily, even when they eat alone.

Second, food delivery services can provide healthy lunch boxes regularly.

The service can record what people eat and suggest better meals based on their health and preferences.

There can also be a subscription service that delivers ingredients to homes.

This can encourage people to cook by themselves.

Third, a meal management app can give points to users who record their meals and exercise.

When they collect points, they can receive small rewards.

This system can help people continue healthy habits.

In conclusion, eating is an important daily activity.

Even if people cannot always eat together, they should have access to healthy meals.

By improving meal services, it is possible to support both physical and mental health in modern society