

DIGESTIVE HEALTH & WELLNESS

**CARING FOR YOUR GUT HEALTH
DOESN'T HAVE TO BE DIFFICULT!**



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Disclaimer

We hope you enjoy reading this publication, however we do suggest you read our disclaimer. All the material written in this document is provided for informational purposes only and is general in nature.

Every person is a unique individual and what has worked for some or even many may not work for you. Any information perceived as advice by must be considered in light of your own particular set of circumstances.

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Every attempt has been made to provide well researched and up to date content at the time of writing. Now all the legalities have been taken care of, please enjoy the content.

Introduction

Over the last decade or so we have witnessed a profound turnaround in attitudes of health professionals and the general public regarding the reasons underlying good health, vitality and longevity versus those of ill-health, disease and mortality.

Although many so-called ‘alternative’ methodologies have always believed otherwise, the western world has had a pre-occupation with externalizing the causes of their ill-health.

Believing that the causes for their conditions and diseases came from without meant they could relinquish, with clear conscience, the power to heal to external sources also.

Recent studies are rediscovering what some have always known – that a major cause of ill-health is the state of the body. That is, when the internal environment is in a state of imbalance, it provides the conditions for unwanted pathogens to thrive, setting off further imbalances that result in the various conditions and diseases.

Further, ancient wisdom and current research agree that the key to health (or otherwise) are more impacted by diet than any other factor, with exercise, sleep and other ‘lifestyle’ influences also playing a big part.

Realizing the huge role that diet plays in our health, it should be obvious that the first place to seek improvement should be the digestive system. If our gut is not healthy, we can hardly expect it to provide the sustenance our body needs to carry out its vital functions so that we can live as we should.

This eBook provides very practical advice on improving and restoring gut health through natural means, as well as explanations on factors other than diet that can affect digestive wellbeing, such as stress.

How to Improve Your Digestive Health

Many people are conscious about their 'visible' excess weight and 'visible' signs of aging, yet are totally unaware of what matters the most, and that is their internal health, which they can't see.



What many people don't realize, is that once they have a healthy digestive system, their main issues with weight and aging will be reduced.

If you want to look good, then start with good gut care. You can start caring for your digestive system as outlined below.

Include Probiotic and Prebiotic Food Sources In Your Diet

Probiotics - Probiotics are the beneficial bacteria lining the gut. They guard the gut against disease causing pathogens while also stimulating the immune system.

Probiotics help in nutrient absorption and improve the overall health of the digestive system. One way to obtain probiotics is by eating ‘fermented’ foods. Examples of these are homemade kefir, kombucha, pickles, kimchi and sauerkraut.

Prebiotics - As probiotics are living organisms they need food to grow and flourish. If they do grow and thrive, you are assured of having healthy gut bacteria for fighting off the bad bacteria.

This is why you need prebiotics. Food sources of prebiotics include raw garlic, raw onion, raw Jerusalem artichoke, dandelion greens and leeks. Prebiotics have other gut health benefits including:

- Enabling regular bowel movements
- Maximizing the absorption of magnesium and calcium
- Strengthening the immune system
- Promoting better weight and appetite control.

Change Your Eating Habits If Necessary

- *Chew Your Food*

You may need to tweak your eating habits if your digestive health is suffering. Start by chewing your food well. How much you chew your food greatly impacts your entire digestive system.

The more you chew your food, the easier it is for your system to digest it. The smaller the food particles are, the easier it is for the food to pass through your esophagus.

The process of chewing also triggers the production of saliva, which in turn stimulates the stomach production of necessary acid and enzymes. These are required for the digestive process.

- *Don't Eat When Stressed or Upset*

Do not eat when you're emotionally upset or in a bad mood. Your digestive tract and brain are interconnected, so eating while in a bad mood can adversely affect the efficiency of the digestive process.

Experts who have studied the 'brain-gut connection' have revealed that eating while stressed can cause the digestive process to literally shut down. This results in problems such as constipation.

Stress can also cause the food to move too fast through your digestive system. If the food moves too fast, there isn't enough time for healthy nutrient absorption. If this is regular occurrence, the body can suffer from nutrient deficiencies.

Give Your Stomach Time To Produce Enough Acid

Many people mistakenly believe that too much stomach acid causes heartburn. However, it's the other way around. If you always eat quickly, your stomach may not be able to produce enough acid to carry out the digestive process.

As a consequence, the food may remain in your stomach longer, so that it can be digested. This causes the food to ferment in your stomach which can lead to gas, bloating and heartburn.

To help increase stomach acids, you can drink water with freshly squeezed lemon juice in between meals. You can also mix one to two teaspoons of raw apple cider vinegar with just a small amount of water. Drink it before your meals.

Include Bone Broth In Your Diet

Bone broth is an excellent source of gut-soothing gelatin. The colloidal properties of gelatin have been found helpful in digesting foods that usually cause a “sour stomach”. It can also reduce food sensitivities.

This is because gelatin has been found to improve the digestibility of milk, milk products and beans. It also assists in increasing protein utilization in barley, wheat and oats.

Be More Active If You’re Not

The components of your digestive system can become sluggish if subjected to a poor diet and sedentary lifestyle.

Body movement, accompanied by gravity, is important in allowing the food to travel to and through your digestive system. So, if you want your digestive system to function more efficiently, get up and move as often as you can.

If you exercise regularly, you are also helping your body absorb nutrients more easily.

Exercise will help improve your blood circulation which is important to healthy digestion. Your digestive tract will be less affected by constipation, cramps, bloating and other symptoms of a sluggish digestive system. Simple physical activities such as walking can greatly improve the function of the digestive system.

Increase Your Magnesium Levels

Your body cannot properly digest food without the help of magnesium. Magnesium also aids in muscle function. This explains the direct link between a magnesium deficiency and constipation.

If your body is getting sufficient magnesium your intestines will also contain more water, which is crucial for initiating peristalsis. Peristalsis refers to the wavelike motion that enables the movement of fecal matter through the intestines. It is also the process of peristalsis that allows the food to be moved from the esophagus to the stomach.

The mineral magnesium is also vital in the process of protein synthesis. It also plays a role in activating the enzymes that help the body in absorbing carbohydrates and fats.

It also plays a role in releasing enzymes that help catalyze many of the chemical reactions in the body. This leads to better digestion of food and improved efficiency of converting food into fuel for the body to use.

Drink Plenty of Water

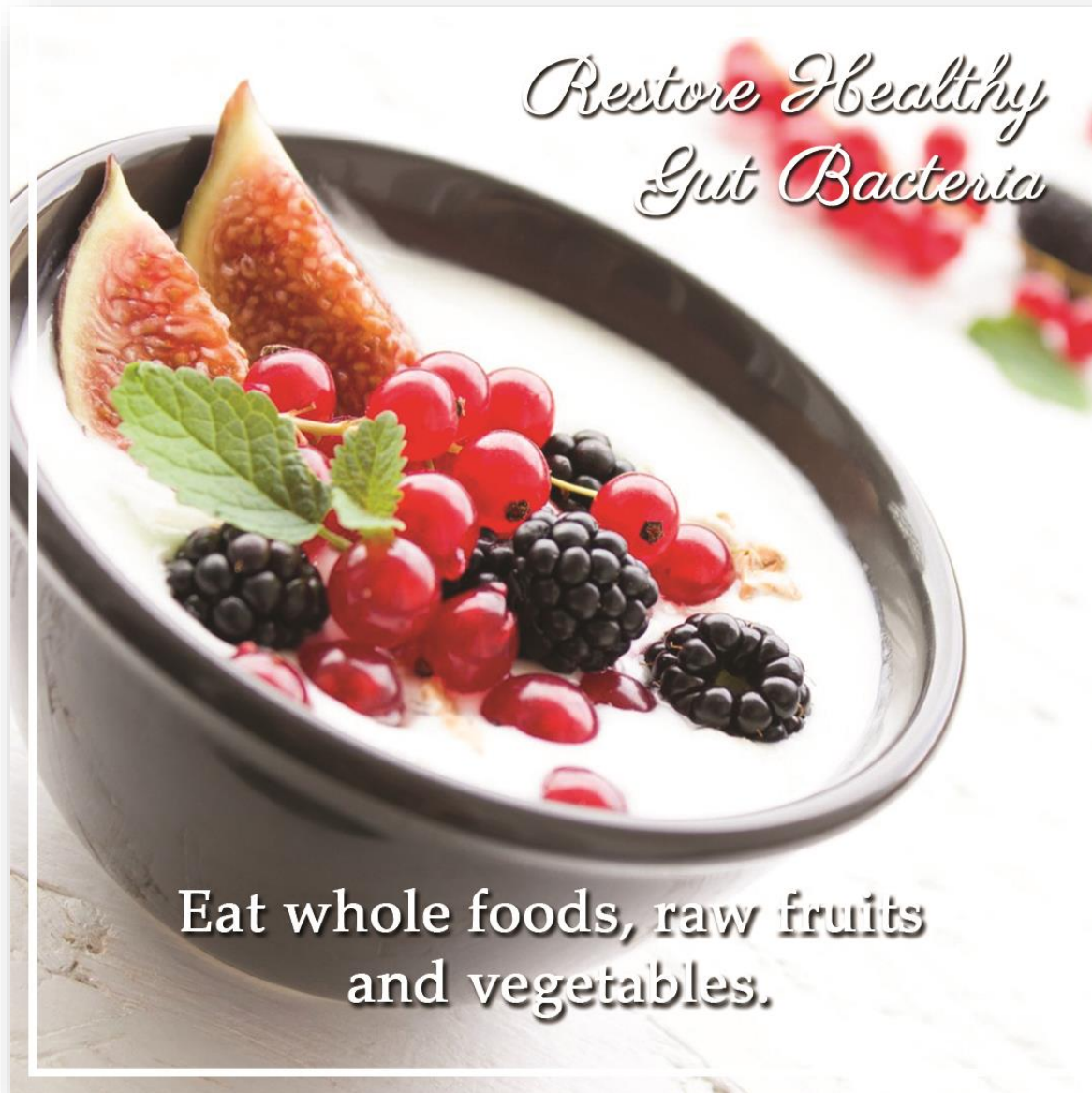
The importance of water for digestion cannot be overemphasized. Water is needed to break down solid foods. It is also needed for proper absorption of nutrients into the body.

A lack of water decreases the performance of the digestive system. This may result in constipation and other digestive problems.

It is better to drink water in between meals, rather than with meals or soon after eating. This is to avoid diluting the stomach acids that are necessary for optimal digestion.

How to Restore Healthy Gut Bacteria

Did you know the majority of your immune system is located in your gut? It's true.



While your immunity is a very complex system comprised of many internal processes, organs and functions, a great deal of your natural defense against illness, infection and disease has to do with your gut and digestive health.

This is exciting news, because it is relatively easy to regulate what is going on in your gut.

Why You Need to Keep Your Gut Healthy

Hippocrates is known as the father of modern Western medicine. Way back in the 5th and 6th centuries BC, he stated that an unhealthy gut was the cause of all human disease. Simply put, he knew thousands of years ago what modern digestive health experts will tell you ... keep your gut healthy and you will be healthy as well.

Think about the phrases "gut instinct" and "go with your gut feeling". The idea with those terms is that your gut somehow acts as a second brain, telling you what you should and should not do in certain situations.

In the early 21st century health researchers are understanding that not only should the gut be considered a driver of behavior in addition to the brain you have in your head, but it is actually not secondary to your head-centered brain in many ways.

After all, your gut contains trillions of bacterial organisms which form what is called a microbiome. This is a complex community of bacteria which control digestive processes and help manage your overall metabolism.

Since the metabolic process is linked to how your entire body works, and many of these processes are influenced by your gut, you can see how important this second brain is to overall health and wellness.

Your microbiome is home to both good (beneficial) and bad bacteria. When your gut health is managed properly, you don't do away with all the unhealthy bacteria in your microbiome. Some of it is still there, and always will be.

When you achieve and maintain proper gut health, you so dramatically improve the amount of good bacteria in your system that it keeps the bad bacteria in check. The end result of good gut health is a balanced ecosystem, where the different bacterial populations exist in healthy ratios.

The problem is, due to negative environmental influences, the move toward a more sedentary lifestyle and poor eating habits, most human beings have significantly damaged their gut health.

Simple Steps to Take to Restore Gut Health

Have you ever heard someone complain about not having enough time? A lot of people do this. In many cases, that is not an entirely factual statement. There is almost always more than enough time in the day to do the things you need to do, but sometimes people prioritize their activities and tasks incorrectly.

They spend a lot of time doing things they shouldn't be doing, so this gives them a time crunch when it comes to what should be high-priority activities.

This is true of your gut health.

You may think you don't have enough time to make your gut healthy, or for other health-boosting considerations. The good news is that repairing and restoring your gut and digestive system to a naturally healthy level does not take a lot of time.

You probably already eat, at least once or twice a day. All you have to do is change what you eat, not how much time you spend eating, and you can improve your gut health.

Eat more raw fruits and vegetables, whole foods, and unprocessed foods. Whole grains, nuts, berries and seeds should take the place of processed grains, sweets, baked goods and high levels of white flour, salt and refined sugar.

Drink water and herbal tea instead of sodas and processed drinks. These simple dietary changes can improve the health of your microbiome in no time.

Get up and Get Moving

Exercise is a proven mood and health promoter. If you consider exercise a dirty word, don't think about it in the traditional sense. All you have to do is stay active, on your feet and moving more than you are sitting and sedentary. This gets your

digestive juices moving, your blood is pumping properly through your body, and your kidneys and liver are better enabled to promote a healthy gut.

Minimize Environmental Stressors and Pollutants

Breathing in the exhaust from automobiles can be just as negatively influential to your gut health as dealing with a cranky coworker on a daily basis. When you consciously avoid environmental and physical toxins and stressors, you make it easier for your gut to do its job properly.

This is because stress of any kind increases the presence of cortisol and other hormones which promote physical stress and inflammation, two conditions which are at the basis of most human disease and illness.

Gut Repair Action Steps

Avoid processed food as much as you can for just 14 days. Instead, eat a plant-based diet, where your food is as close to its natural state as possible, meaning it is minimally processed and cooked. Drink lots of water and herbal teas, and fewer sodas.

When you notice you have been sitting and sedentary for 30 or 45 minutes, get up and get moving, even if for just a few minutes. Consciously look for ways to put yourself in less stressful situations and limit your exposure to environmental toxins.

Do this for just 2 weeks, and you will see your mental and physical health profiles improve dramatically. This is because those easy to execute practices have been proven to improve the ratio of good to bad bacteria in your gut, which supports overall health.

Is Your Diet Causing Digestive Problems?

Today, almost everyone is aware that the food we eat can be either beneficial or a burden to our health, although many choose not to act on this knowledge. This is especially true of our gut health, where dietary impacts will be first experienced.



So, setting aside the influences on general body health, an unhealthy diet can cause digestive discomfort and ill-health. Sometimes, over-indulgence in specific inputs that are perceived as being ‘healthy’ can have unwanted effects on our gut health.

Let’s take a look to see whether your diet is causing you some digestive problems and if you can relate to any, it may be time for you to make some serious changes.

Are You Eating Too Many ‘Healthy’ Probiotics?

Probiotics are excellent for digestive health, however, too much of a good thing is no help at all. Foods that serve as sources of probiotics such as yogurt, sauerkraut and other fermented foods must be eaten in moderation.

If you eat too many probiotic foods, the population of bacteria in your gut can become unbalanced.

This will then result in digestive problems. Make it a habit to eat them in small quantities. Monitor your body’s response, as everyone is different. If you are experiencing unexplained bloating and diarrhea, try cutting back on intake.

Do You Drink When Eating?

Drinking plenty of water is definitely beneficial to your health, there’s no denying that. However, don’t drink with your meals. If you do you may cause bloating and gas.

Drinking water while eating leads to the dilution of hydrochloric acid and digestive enzymes, which causes inefficient digestion.

Do You Eat Bran To Stop Constipation Problems?

There are times when doctors recommend bran to people who have constipation. The bran is an insoluble fiber that fills the stomach and stimulates bowel movement.

However, this advice may not work for everyone, especially people with slow transit constipation or STC. This condition is characterized by the slow passage of waste through their large intestine.

A person with STC is more likely to suffer from excessive gas and bloating if they consume bran. This is because if they eat insoluble fiber such as bran, their digestive system will have to work harder. This causes more stress on their digestive system.

As a consequence the gut becomes more irritated as it works harder to get rid of the bulking agent, the bran.

Research shows that a significant number of people suffering from IBS or Irritable Bowel Syndrome have been found to be hyper-reactive to anything that irritates the gut, such as bran and other types of insoluble fiber.

Other Foods that Can Cause Digestive Problems

- *Legumes*

Legumes contain compounds that have been found to irritate the digestive system. For example, peanuts contain aflatoxin and lectins, while soy has phytoestrogens.

If you are having issues with your gut health reduce all kinds of legumes for a while.

- *Dairy*

There are some dairy products that are considered healthy for the gut, and others that aren't, so if you are having digestive issues your dairy consumption could be the culprit.

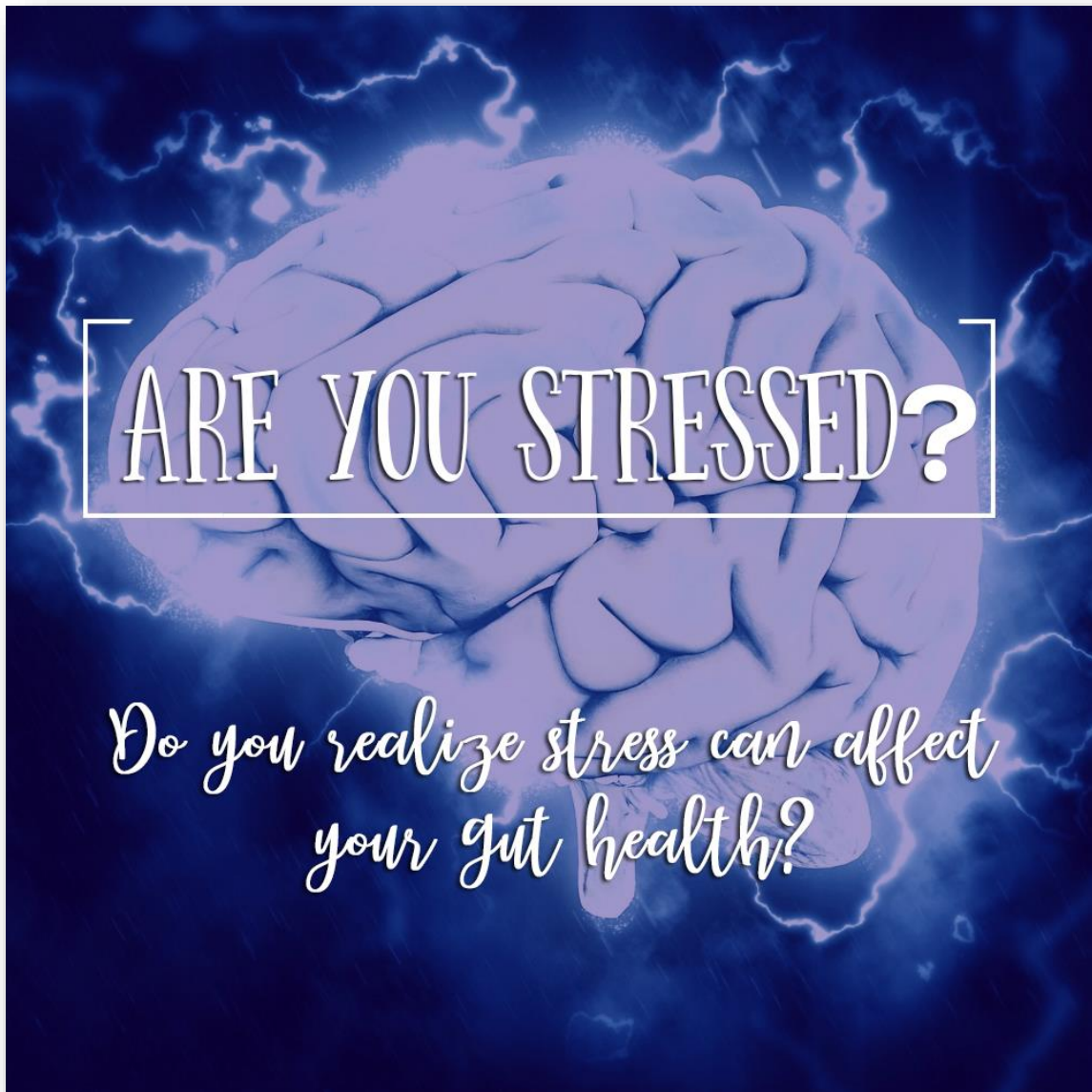
Start choosing fermented dairy, such as grass-fed kefir and acidophilus yogurt. Reduce milk consumption.

- *Sugar*

Sugar consumption provides a conducive environment for bad bacteria to multiply in your gut. This can adversely impact your metabolism and immune responses. An overgrowth of bad bacteria also promotes inflammation. If left unabated, this may lead to symptoms of an autoimmune-inflammatory response.

How Stress Affects Gut Health

The food you eat is not the only thing that affects your digestive system. Stress is another major factor. Unfortunately, the part of our brain that responds to potential danger can't tell the difference between a physically harmful threat or an agitating, emotional circumstance.



Therefore, any stressful situation can trigger a fight or flight response. Once the brain detects any form of perceived threat, it releases stress hormones which go straight to your gut.

This sets off a complex sequence of events in the body. The main goal is to channel resources to body functions that enhance our ability to physically respond to a threat, such as fighting or running.

This means shutting down or reducing activity in functions that usually consume high amounts of energy, but occur automatically in the background. One of these functions is the digestive process. When a stress response is triggered, the digestive process is severely disrupted.

To facilitate this, the sensory nerves respond by adjusting acid secretion. As a result, the process of digestion, as well as appetite can shut down. This can result in a stomach ache or painful gastrointestinal distress.

Since the gut is an integral part of the entire nervous system, the brain in turn affects gut functioning. So, although it starts with the brain, stress can impact the physiological functions of a person's gut.

There is plenty of evidence to show that our gut is vulnerable to the effects of both acute (immediate) and chronic (long-term) stress. It certainly makes perfect sense, as both our physical and mental health is often, and usually, affected by too much stress!

Some of the main changes that stress can inflict in the gut is made possible through actions relating to the intestinal mucosa. It can be penetrated by a network of neuron cell bodies and fibers that are influenced by the signals released from the brain.

Stress Increases Risk of Gut Permeability

The changes that take place in the body in times of stress can have an immediate effect on gut function. This is due to a group of peptides known as Corticotrophin

Releasing Factors - CRF – which play a role in the coordination of the body's response to stress. The effects of these CRFs have been found by experts to increase gut permeability and visceral hypersensitivity.

Stress Increases Risk of Intestinal Diseases

Studies have shown that stress can significantly lead to some changes of the digestive microbiota composition. Laboratory research demonstrates the link between stress and the overgrowth of bacteria in the gut, and how such changes can reduce microbial diversity inside the large intestine.

These adverse changes in the microbiota may increase a person's risk of being affected by enteric pathogens which are groups of bacteria that can cause disease in the intestines.

Stress Slows Down Movement in the Small Intestine

Experimental studies have also demonstrated that psychological stress can slow down the transit time in the small intestines resulting in the overgrowth of bad bacteria. This occurrence can then compromise the intestinal barrier.

Simply put, chronic stress can significantly contribute to the emergence of leaky gut syndrome and small intestinal bacterial overgrowth.

Because our digestive system is the engine that drives us, any problems with our gut function will not be contained there. Other body systems will be affected, often in ways that make it difficult to isolate the real cause of the problem. One common area is the skin.

As stress-induced changes in the microbial flora increases the possibility of intestinal permeability, so too can the risk of systemic and local skin inflammation. If the integrity of the gut is compromised an individual may experience skin inflammations, such as acne and rosacea.

Maintaining Healthy Gut Flora Buffers the Effects of Stress

Having a healthy gut flora makes it easier to modulate leaky gut permeability and hypersensitivity, which may occur as a result of being chronically exposed to stress. In order to achieve healthy gut flora make sure you include plenty of probiotic foods in your diet.

An increased intake of fermentable fibers such as yam, sweet potato and yucca can also help keep the gut flora within healthy levels. Most of all, find ways to better manage your stress levels in order to avoid gut and digestive health problems, and other health problems too!

How to Overcome Heartburn

For the long term, the most effective way to treat heartburn is by discovering and avoiding your trigger foods and using simple home remedies. Monitor your reaction to particular foods and drinks.



Keep a food diary and take note of what and how much you ate prior to an attack. Look for correlations – it may not always be the same meal that causes it, but there may be ingredients common to every incidence of heartburn.

Regular Mealtimes and Portion Control

Making a point to limit your food portions and to schedule your meals appropriately can also make a world of difference. You may find that instances only happen when a certain food, drink or combination is consumed at certain times of the day, or more likely, night.

Generally, you would want to avoid spicy, acidic foods, as well as those that are very high in fat. Everyone is different and may have different trigger foods. An elimination diet can be an excellent diagnostic tool.

Remove all instances of a suspect food from your diet for at least two weeks and monitor your incidences of heartburn. Keep testing foods and food types until you find the culprits.

Greasy foods should be the first to go but you may need to eliminate foods like citrus fruits, chocolates, caffeinated beverages, alcohol, carbonated beverages, and tomato products.

Foods like these considerably increase your chances of suffering from symptoms of heartburn. Other heartburn triggers that you may not expect are lifestyle-oriented, such as smoking, taking certain pills (for example, ibuprofen), and suffering from high stress levels.

Physical Treatments for Heartburn

Treating the acute effects of heartburn, or preventing their occurrence, is not limited to consuming something else to overcome what you have already eaten. If you can employ some or all of the following suggestions, you may find relief without the need for medication. Most heartburn medications usually only treat the acute symptoms rather than prevent the problem.

Lying Down After a Meal

If a diet change isn't for you, there are other effective home remedies you can try. Avoiding lying down for an hour or so after you eat can be very effective in preventing heartburn. Standing or walking right after eating can be very helpful in allowing the gastric juices to flow down in the normal direction, and avoiding any reflux action.

Ideally, you should have a meal at least two to five hours before sleeping, which will provide you with sufficient time to clear some stomach content before bedtime.

If eating close to bed is unavoidable, or you still suffer symptoms while trying to sleep, try to prop your head up to sleep with both your head and chest elevated. Sleeping on an incline will prevent stomach acids from flowing into your esophagus as you try to sleep.

Watch Your Weight

The same excesses that lead to unwanted weight gain are most often the same ones that cause heartburn. A disadvantage of being overweight is that excess fats in the body can trigger the release of certain chemicals that may interfere with proper digestive functioning.

Research has proven that losing weight can significantly reduce the symptoms of heartburn and acid reflux. Maintaining a healthy weight can do wonders to prevent heartburn symptoms. Eating smaller meals and choosing healthy, nutrient-balanced meals will repair both issues concurrently.

If you have put on weight, try wearing clothes that are loose around the waist and stomach, as clothes that fit too tightly in those areas can also contribute to increased heartburn discomfort.

How to Prevent Stomach Bloating

Abdominal bloating and discomfort is a regular, sometimes daily, occurrence for many people. There are many reasons given for stomach bloating, but most often the cause can be traced back to diet.



While some may state (and their doctor may have even diagnosed) that they have a digestive ‘condition’, in most cases these conditions are either caused or made worse by incorrect diet.

What constitutes a proper diet, or otherwise will vary from person to person. This can be due in part to genetics, if your long-term ancestors have a history of existing on particular food types, these are unlikely to cause you or your family a problem.

If you suffer from stomach bloating, especially when you eat certain foods, such as beans or other gas-causing foods, you may find the following dietary and culinary notes helpful.

Dairy

Eating dairy products can cause stomach gas, therefore, choose your dairy products carefully and avoid pairing them with hard-to-digest foods. Those who are sensitive to lactose will find that cheeses and yogurt may be tolerated by their system, whereas milk is not.

Wheat Products

Sensitivity to wheat products is being recognized and diagnosed at a rapidly increasing rate. There are a couple of reasons for this. Firstly, the wheat we eat today is not the same as our forebears ate.

Wheat has been selectively bred for a number of factors, mostly relating to increase in production and ease of processing, at the expense of digestibility.

Secondly, wheat is an ingredient, often the major one, in many of our modern dietary staples. Unless you are living on a strict meat and vegetables diet, it can seem almost impossible to avoid wheat in some form or another. This excess consumption has caused allergy-like symptoms in many people.

Two favorites are bread and pasta – for many people it can seem inconceivable that there could even be reasonable substitutes for them. However, if regular bloating is a problem, both wheat and dairy should be your first elimination targets. Many people have found relief without deprivation by switching to gluten-free alternatives of their favorites.

Broccoli – Cook Gently Rather Than Eat Raw

These green little florets are no doubt delicious and very good for you. The problem is broccoli can cause your stomach to bloat. Broccoli is rich in fiber and can be difficult to digest when eaten raw.

To avoid that gassy feeling in your stomach, steam or sauté your broccoli before eating. The same applies to other vegetables that are hard to digest, such as cauliflower, cabbage, collard greens and kale.

Beans – Rinse Soaked Beans Well Before Using

Beans are loaded with proteins, complex carbohydrates, fiber and are low in fat content. Unfortunately, many people have a problem when they eat beans!

So what can you do to prevent a bloating belly and uncomfortable gas build-up in the stomach? Well, people usually soak their beans before cooking, and there is nothing wrong with this process. However, the problem starts when the water being used to soak the beans is used in the cooking.

In order to avoid that uncomfortable feeling caused by gas in the stomach, it is best to tip the water used to soak the beans out, rinse the beans, then use fresh water to cook the beans in. The reason it is best to throw the water you used for soaking away, is because it contains gas-producing enzymes.

Eat these beans with quinoa and other foods that are easy to digest. Avoid pairing your bean recipes with dairy products or spicy foods. This is a surefire way of making your stomach bloat and causing you pain or discomfort as a result.

Pears

Pears have more fiber content than apples and also can cause a gassy stomach. If you really like to eat pears but your digestive system is not so cooperative, try making baked pears. The cooking process helps your stomach to digest it more comfortably.

Adjust, or Avoid

Apply these dietary or cooking tips whenever you want to eat any of the above-mentioned foods, or other foods that cause you a problem. Hopefully, you won't have to deprive yourself of the foods you like and the nutrients they provide.

However, if you continue to have digestive problems or your stomach gas persists, try eliminating the major culprits listed above, or any others that you suspect. A food diary can be the best diagnostic tool. If symptoms continue after that, visit your doctor for a full diagnosis of what is causing your digestive discomfort.

Foods to Improve a Leaky Gut

If you suffer with a leaky gut the most important thing to do is to avoid the foods that exacerbate your symptoms. While this seems obvious and simplistic, most people look for a 'cure' and overlook the most obvious and healthy solution.



Healing a leaky gut may take six months to two years, sometimes even longer, depending on the severity of the damage.

If you want to renew your gut's health, avoid eating dairy products, grains and legumes. Most of all, make sure your gut gets the nutrients it needs to completely heal.

One way to do this is to eat food that not only heals, but also improves the health of your gut. Here's an example of the foods you should include in your diet.

Bone Broth

Bone broth is usually at the top of the list of foods that promotes gut health. This is due to the excellent sources of gelatin and collagen peptides - substances that are hardly found in other foods.

These substances are loaded with amino acids that make up our gut lining, skin and joints. These gelatin and collagen peptides help strengthen the gut lining while also reducing inflammation in the body.

Most of all, these peptides work wonders in improving digestive function. Just choose bones that come from grass-fed beef when making your bone broth.

Ginger

Ginger contains antibacterial, antiparasitic, antiviral and antifungal properties. It prevents the formation of cancer cells while it also revs up the immune system functioning.

Ginger does not only work to provide relief from stomach upsets and nausea. It also plays a role in the production of digestive juices such as pancreatic enzymes, bile and stomach acids. A healthy production of digestive juices is crucial for people who are afflicted with leaky gut syndrome as it works to reduce any gut-related inflammation.

Pineapple

Pineapple is touted as a super food for gut health. It is rich in compounds that are beneficial for maintaining balance in the digestive system. It has a very dense mineral profile that works to heal any damage present in the intestinal lining. Some of these are zinc, potassium, iron, copper and manganese.

One kilogram of pineapple contains approximately 1,328mg of potassium, while it also has 66 mg of magnesium, 91 mg of manganese and 41 mg calcium.

The stem of the pineapple is rich in the mineral bromelain. Bromelain has been found to reduce the damaging effects of inflammation in the intestinal tract.

Organic Meat

Where possible, select organic, pasture-raised or grass-fed animal sources of meat. This meat contains a good source of omega-3 fatty acids that are important for reducing gut irritation.

Studies have shown that omega 3 fatty acids are helpful in reducing inflammation. These omega 3 fatty acids work in two ways.

- They inhibit the formation of eicosanoids which are compounds found to be pro-inflammatory.
- Secondly, these omega 3s also work to form anti-inflammatory compounds that help reduce inflammation.

Therefore, omega 3s work to prevent the onset of inflammation, while also reducing the existing inflammation.

Coconut

Coconut food products are excellent sources of MCFAs or medium-chain fatty acids. MCFAs are easier to digest than any other types of fats. This is why it serves

as a healthy addition to a person's diet, especially to people who have problems with their digestive health.

Plus, if you choose to eat coconut kefir you will be able to obtain the additional health benefits of probiotics. Coconut is known to help reduce inflammation and improve nutrient absorption. It is also found to be helpful in sealing inflamed digestive tract linings. This makes it very beneficial for people suffering from leaky gut syndrome.

Dark Leafy Greens

Findings from an Australian study revealed that a special type of immune cell can be regulated through the regular consumption of dark green leafy vegetables.

These immune cells are called ILCs or Innate Lymphoid Cells. These cells play a role in protecting the body against any bad bacteria that may enter the intestine.

This then protects the body against infections that may form in the digestive system. In addition to its protective role, these ILCs also promote the growth of good bacteria and help in the process of healing small wounds that are present in the gut tissues.

Researchers found that to assist the growth of ILCs people should increase their consumption of dark green leafy vegetables. Good examples are arugula, Chinese broccoli, brussels, cabbage, collard greens and kale.

Boost Digestion with Digestive Enzyme Supplements

In order for your body to feel energetic and revitalized, it is essential that you are able to absorb all of the nutrients from the food you eat. Proper digestion is a crucial part of this equation. Even though our bodies produce natural digestive enzymes, many people benefit from incorporating digestive enzyme supplements into their diet.



Boost Your
Digestive Enzymes
with Natural Supplements

In our stomach, it is the digestive enzymes that have the task of ensuring that the food we consume is properly digested, and this process is vital for our survival.

Once the minerals and nutrients are extracted from our food, they can be broken down and absorbed into our bloodstream, to then be used as needed to fuel our essential processes.

Supplementation Benefit

Taking digestive enzyme supplements can help your body break down proteins, lactose and other sugars as well as complex carbohydrates. These supplements can help some individuals complete their digestive process more efficiently.

Typically, the more abundant your enzymes, the better your body will be able to break down the food. There is however, a limit to how many enzymes your body can naturally produce and this is where some people find supplementing with digestive enzymes helpful.

Some people also have a hard time digesting dairy products, certain proteins from legumes or particular meats and fats. They may find they feel “less full” and experience less bloating or flatulence if they take digestive enzymes with their meals.

Eat Raw Foods In Your Diet

Eating healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables is another great way to increase your enzymes since they are abundant in these types of foods. However, in order to fully reap the benefits, you have to make sure that you eat them as raw as possible.

Unfortunately, once vegetables and fruits undergo the cooking process, especially if they are heated to a temperature of 118 degrees Fahrenheit, they are practically devoid of all enzymes.

The majority of us have grown accustomed to cooking our foods and have strayed from eating a raw food diet. Regardless of whether we eat in restaurants or cook our food at home, we are not getting as many enzymes as we can from our foods.

This is one of the reasons why many people can greatly benefit from including the use of digestive enzymes in their daily routines.

Not only will these enzymes help boost the body's natural digestive processes, but they can also help to prevent a whole range of gastrointestinal problems.

Enzyme deficiencies have been linked to other problems including emotional and mental disorders and even some physical disabilities.

Of course the view of the medical community on the use of digestive enzymes is largely divided. There are some schools of thought who believe that over time the body may become overly dependent on these supplements, eventually stopping the production of natural enzymes.

Conversely, there are those who promote the use of enzyme supplements since no negative side effects have been found in any laboratory tests so far.

Bromelain and Papaya

Two popular digestive enzymes are Bromelain, which is derived from pineapple, and Papaya extract. Both of these can be found at your local health food store. If you are interested in adding digestive enzymes to your supplement regime, it is recommended that you consult your doctor first, especially if you are taking medication.

It is important to rule out that your digestive troubles are not the result of some other underlying medical problem. Pregnant or lactating women are advised to consult with their obstetricians, midwives or family doctors prior to taking any supplements.

Herbs and Spices For A Healthy Digestive System

Seventy percent of the body's immune cells exist in the digestive tract. Therefore, it makes sense to keep the digestive system healthy so that your body can perform its critical immune functions continuously.



One of the best things you can do is eat healthy foods, which can include a variety of different herbs and spices. There are many herbs and spices that are excellent for improving gut health, including the following.

Licorice Root

This is an adaptogenic herb which works in balancing the cortisol levels and in improving stomach acid production. Its ability to regulate cortisol levels is what makes this herb helpful for those people suffering from leaky gut symptoms, which can be triggered and exacerbated by stress.

Licorice root also helps maintain the mucosal lining in the stomach and duodenum. In addition this herb contains glycyrrhizic acid. This helps speed up the healing process of gastric ulcers.

Licorice root is also recommended by some health practitioners for easing the side effects of laxatives.

Ginger

The healing properties of ginger has been used for centuries and it is well-known by many for treating several digestive problems. It contains zingerones and gingerols which have anti-inflammatory properties.

If you are having issues with acne, eczema, psoriasis and any other skin problems, this can be a strong indication that you may have inflammation in your digestive tract.

Another benefit of ginger is that its fiber content functions as a prebiotic that encourages the growth of healthy bacteria in the gut.

Milk Thistle

Flatulence, constipation, bloating, stomach cramps and indigestion are just a few of the many digestive problems that can be relieved through the use of milk

thistle. However, keep in mind that milk thistle tea should only be consumed in prescribed quantities.

Milk thistle has earned quite a reputation for improving bile circulation, repairing damaged cells and reducing liver inflammation. All these benefits greatly contribute to the improvement of a person's overall digestive health.

In addition, milk thistle has demulcent properties that moisturize and soften mucous membranes. Thus, it calms the digestive system while also healing inflammation on the intestinal walls.

Peppermint

Some people swear by peppermint for digestive problems, whilst some health advocates do not recommend it.

Peppermint possesses antispasmodic and relaxant properties that have been found to help relieve gastrointestinal cramps and spasms. This muscle relaxation allows painful digestive gas to pass, giving relief from flatulence and bloating.

This herb has volatile oils that stimulate the gallbladder and enable it to release bile, which is needed for digesting fats.

The compounds present in peppermint tea have been found to improve the flow of bile to the liver. A moderate intake of peppermint tea also helps detoxify the liver. A healthy liver is crucial for keeping the digestive system functioning optimally.

However, as stated earlier, some do not recommend you take peppermint, especially if your problems are in the upper reaches of the digestive tract, such as with heartburn. Peppermint relaxes the sphincter muscle which closes off the stomach and allows acid to go back into the esophagus. Consequently, the symptoms of heartburn or GERD may worsen.

Yet you may have noticed, there are many OTC products that are designed to relieve heartburn and a major ingredient is peppermint. So, we'll let you decide what works for you.

Cardamom

Cardamom is another spice that works for easing heartburn, irritable bowel syndrome, and intestinal spasming. It is also found effective in providing relief from constipation and intestinal gas.

Its strong aroma activates the taste and other sensory elements, increasing salivation and making for easier digestion. It improves the efficiency of enzyme secretion, further improving digestion. Cardamom is helpful if you consume it after having a heavy meal, although your gut will thank you more if you don't overload it in the first place!

Coriander Seed

Coriander seeds possess aromatic flavors, brought about by its essential volatile oils and fatty acids. Dried coriander seeds have important fatty acids such as linoleic, petroselinic, palmitic and oleic acids. Together, these essential oils provide anti-flatulent and carminative effects that are beneficial for digestive health.

Coriander is also a good source of dietary fiber. A hundred grams of coriander seeds contain 41.9 grams of fiber. This dietary fiber adds bulk to the food by absorbing more water which leads to smoother bowel movements. The fiber composition of coriander also works together with flavonoid antioxidants to prevent the development of cancer in the colon mucosa.

Cumin Seed

Cumin contains a compound called thymol which is helpful in stimulating the glands for improved production of bile, acids and other enzymes. This results in

improved digestion, and because cumin seeds are high in fiber content they are beneficial for those suffering with hemorrhoids.

Cumin seeds also have the ability to prevent gas formation in the gastrointestinal tract and help combat the symptoms of flatulence.

These herbs and spices are often used in medications to help with digestive health problems, both pharmaceutical and alternative medicine. However, a more natural and holistic approach is simply to utilize them more regularly in home-prepared meals.

Super Foods for Gut Health

The human gut is home to trillions of micro-organisms, and the population of bacteria in the gut is ten times more than all the cells in the body combined.



Our gut flora plays a major role in our health and is responsible for regulating metabolism, protecting the body against infection and enhancing gastrointestinal functions.

Therefore, it's important to have healthy gut flora for a healthy digestive system. One way to achieve this is to eat the right foods.

Some of these foods are considered to be 'super foods' for gut health. Here are a few to include in your diet to improve and optimize your gut health.

Bone Broth

Bone broth contains immune-optimizing components which serve as building blocks for gut healing. This is especially beneficial for those suffering with a leaky gut. One particular component that makes bone broth helpful for gut healing is gelatin.

Gelatin is made up of hydrophilic colloid which attracts liquids, such as digestive juices. Gelatin also contains glucosamine, silicon, calcium and phosphorus which further promote a healthy gut.

Flax Seed Tea

Flax seeds contain soluble fiber, omega 3 fats and lignans. These components aid in lubricating and they also have an anti-inflammatory effect, making them beneficial for colon healing.

To make the tea, pour one tablespoon of flax seeds into 12 ounces of boiling water. Allow it to steep overnight and strain off the seeds before drinking.

Red Cabbage

Red cabbage contains L-glutamine amino acid which aids in healing the soft tissue lining of the intestines.

Red cabbage is beneficial for people suffering from leaky gut syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, celiac disease, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

Coconut Kefir

Coconut kefir contains beneficial bacteria that will recolonize your gut and promote hydration in your mucous membranes. It has beneficial yeasts that destroy pathogenic yeasts.

It also works to purify, strengthen and clean the intestinal walls and keep it strong and healthy against any disease-causing pathogens such as salmonella and E.coli.

Coconut kefir has been found helpful in assimilating the nutrients in the gut while also enhancing the usage of B vitamins and other trace minerals.

Moringa

The medicinal powers of moringa have been used for centuries in treating indigestion. Moringa is loaded with fiber which helps clean the intestines and also contains antibacterial components for killing off unwanted invaders that may adversely affect a healthy digestion.

Moringa is a powerhouse of isothiocyanates which serves as a natural antibiotic to help destroy H. pylori, which can cause stomach ulcers. By adding moringa to your diet, the less likely you are to suffer from gastritis and duodenal ulcers.

Oranges

Oranges are packed with soluble fiber, that when fermented by the gut bacteria, has several health benefits. The process of fermenting soluble fiber in the gut produces a byproduct called butyrate. This substance is known to act as an anti-inflammatory that helps the gut to work in a healthy manner.

The butyrate helps regulate the growth of cells in the gut lining. As a result, proper balance is achieved between the formation of new cells and the death of old cells in the lining of the gut.

Chia Seeds

Chia seeds are powerhouses of anti-inflammatory phytochemicals. They provide a soothing effect that is beneficial for sufferers of gastrointestinal distress. They are also gluten free which makes them ideal for those who have celiac disease and gluten intolerance.

In addition, chia seeds are high in dietary fiber which promotes bowel regularity. This fiber content also makes people feel full quicker. Once it reaches the stomach, it forms a gelatin-like substance that serves as a prebiotic for enhanced probiotic growth in the gut.

There are quite a few foods to choose from in the list above, so you can certainly add a few or all of these super foods to your diet without too much trouble. If you do, you'll boost your gut health!

Conclusion

Certainly, the pathogens which trigger many diseases can arrive from outside, but many also exist within us, and are no problem when their populations are kept in balance. The biggest factors in maintaining a healthy, balanced digestive system are diet and exercise.

This knowledge should provide great hope and encouragement to those who have attributed their ill-health to bad luck or any other external influence.

The human gut serves as a second brain, so it's no wonder we cannot deny the existence of the "gut instinct". Our brain and gut have a special connection. The connection is so great that any intense fear you feel directly impacts your digestive health.

This is because neurochemical productions not only occurs in the brain. They are also produced in the gut. In fact, 95% of serotonin is produced in the gut. Serotonin is a chemical that regulates several functions in the brain. These functions include mood and sleep.

This means that if your gut is having trouble, your whole body will know about it. For most people, changes that they can themselves to their diets and energy expenditure can have a massive and positive effect on their gut health, and by extension, to their overall health. You can be your own healer!