

Top Ten Tips for Better Digestion

It is estimated that up to 40% of the population suffers from some form of gastric distress. Impaired digestion can cause many symptoms including heartburn, acid reflux, gas, bloating, cramping, constipation, diarrhea, and irritable bowel disease.

Digestion is an essential part of our well-being. This vital system is designed to break down food and provide a means by which the nutrients can be absorbed in the body. Nutrients utilized in this process allow the body functions and systems to function properly.

The foods important to life are basically protein, carbohydrate and fat. But these nutrients are useless without the process of digestion. The digestive system is capable of breaking down most food; the only exceptions are overly refined, processed, chemicalized, altered or hydrogenated foods. The body can't use such "foods" and can't digest them normally. All it can do is break them down to some degree and try to get rid of them as quickly as possible. Because today's "Modern Diet" contains an overabundance of refined, non digestible food-like substances, with no nutritional value, digestive issues are increasingly common.

Despite the complexity of the digestive system, there are several natural approaches to improving and maintaining a regular and healthy system.

Eat Slower: Digestion begins in the mouth, where the teeth break up food and mix it with enzymes in the saliva. Chewing your food thoroughly allows these powerful enzymes to partially digest your food before it even hits your stomach. Avoid gulping and swallowing air as you eat. Excess air in the stomach can make you feel uncomfortable and cause burping and gas.

Eat More Live Foods: Raw and slightly cooked or steamed foods contain live enzymes. These "Live Foods" have an enormously higher nutrient value than foods that have been cooked. In general, the act of heating food over 116 degrees F destroys enzymes in food. Enzymes convert the food we eat into chemical structures that can pass through the membranes of the cells lining the digestive tract into the bloodstream. All overcooked and refined food is devoid of enzymes. Try juicing raw fruits and vegetables.

Get Checked and Treated for Food Allergies and Sensitivities: See a certified NAET (Nambudripad's Allergy Elimination Technique) practitioner to see if you have allergies. Your practitioner can determine what foods your body is not breaking down effectively, and do a simple acupressure treatment to correct the problem. Reacting to food in your diet can cause many unpleasant digestive symptoms including acid reflux, cramping, bloating and diarrhea. To locate a

certified practitioner in your area, visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.NAET.com"](http://www.NAET.com)

Check for and Treat Candida: Your intestinal tract has billions of micro organisms. These friendly bacteria are an essential part of breaking down nutrients and absorbing them into your system. They are also vital in fighting off unfriendly bacteria and keeping your immune system healthy. For various reasons (antibiotic use, a diet high in sugar, environmental toxins and stress among the few) many people have a lack of these beneficial bacteria and as a result, have an overgrowth of Candida or other harmful organisms. A good quality probiotic and some dietary changes may be necessary to bring your intestinal flora back into a healthy balance.

Eat More Fiber: Fiber promotes elimination and helps maintain a healthy colon. Soluble and insoluble fibers are both beneficial in preventing constipation, diarrhea and other bowel conditions. If your diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, dried beans nuts and whole grains you are more likely to have optimal colon health.

Eat Good Fats: Foods containing good quality fats and oils such as salmon, flax, sesame, olive, nut butters and avocados are high in essential fatty acids and are known to reduce inflammation in the stomach and intestinal track caused from excess acid.

Eat Protein with each Meal: Foods such as meat, eggs and beans, contain large molecules of protein that require enzymes to adequately break them down. Regular protein intake increases the activation of enzymes in the stomach that in turn, assist in the breakdown of other foods.

Drink an Adequate Amount of Water: Water (at least 6-8 glasses per day) is important in preventing constipation and in the cleansing process. Ideally you should drink water away from meals to avoid diluting the powerful digestive enzymes necessary to break down the meal. Adding lemon to your water aids in cleansing the colon and balancing the body's PH.

Walking or Other Light exercise After Meals: Walking, biking, yoga, or pilates a half an hour or so after a supper can increase the blood flow to the intestinal tract and improve the digestion process as well as boost your metabolism.

Eat at Least Three Hours Before Bed: Lying down with a full stomach can cause the stomach contents to press against a muscular valve called the lower

esophageal sphincter. Stomach contents may flow back into the esophagus causing acid reflux.