

HERB STOP

September 09 Highlight



Aging Starts In The Digestive System

A household saying in ancient Europe emphasized that “Death dwells in the bowel”, which was primarily due to a faulty digestion. Today, many health experts give credit to this statement. Knowing this, would you not want to reverse this process to “Life begins in the stomach”?

Around 80 percent of Americans have digestive disorders of one form or another, such as gastric/duodenal ulcers, colitis, diverticulitis, GERD/acid reflux, gastritis, bloating, Celiac’s, constipation, diarrhea, Crohn’s, dyspepsia, indigestion, etc. These health problems are very challenging. With an ailing stomach one is unable to properly digest and absorb vital nutrients, even if we eat the healthiest foods. Due to this fact, our overall health and well-being becomes challenged as well.

Let’s look at our digestive system. Digestion starts in the mouth, where saliva and enzymes prepare the food to enter the stomach. Also, our taste buds are involved in this process to not only tell us if the food is good or bad, they are there to send messages to the stomach on which enzyme to activate. When the chewed food empties into the stomach, these enzymes are present and ready to break down the food further.

After age 40, we should begin helping the digestion with food enzymes, eating more live foods and herbs before meals – such as papaya, mint, fennel, ginger, aloe vera juice, anise and caraway. Cooking raw foods destroys their enzymes; therefore our bodies have to “steal” enzymes from the system to process our meals. For that reason, whenever you eat cooked foods, always include some raw foods, such as salads. Have you ever wondered why you get a pickle with your hamburger? A pickle is a fermented raw food, which greatly enhances digestive activities. Taking a small amount of unrefined salt in a little water before meals can assist the body in the manufacturing of hydrochloric acid, vital for proper digestion in the stomach.

If you eat different kinds of foods all at the same time it must be broken down to the same consistency before the stomach will actually begin to empty. Fats and proteins take longer to digest than do carbohydrates. Simple fruits may take ten to twenty minutes, while meats might take forty-five to ninety minutes – depending on how well they are chewed. If fruit is eaten at the same time as meat, the fruit will have to stay an extra hour in the stomach. During this time, fermentation will take place, introducing gas into the system and causing indigestion, belching, and/or cramps. Fruits are the easiest to digest and take the shortest time. Next in line are the vegetables, then grains, beans, seeds, nuts, dairy products, and at last, the meats.

The stomach is one of the most sensitive organs in the body, because it is finely tuned by the nervous system. Stress of any kind affects its function; our emotions are closely linked to our eating habits and the ability to process food. At mealtimes, choose a relaxed setting, chew your foods thoroughly, do not eat too many different kinds of food at one time, and do not overeat. Too much or too frequent eating can overwork, weaken, and even wear out the digestive system to the point that it breaks down. After a meal take a little time to relax, and then you need to move your body, to assist digestion, assimilation and distribution of nutrients.

Herbs For A Healthy Stomach

Chamomile is one herb of the best remedies traditionally known to treat any kind of stomach related problems, especially when stress and nervousness is involved.

Slippery Elm is a highly nutritious herb, providing nutrients to the GI tract. It is used mostly to soothe irritated and inflamed mucous membranes, such as stomach/duodenal ulcers. Additionally, it can neutralize stomach acidity and assist in the digestion of dairy products.

Ginger stimulates hydrochloric acid production for better digestion and absorption of nutrients. It increases overall absorption by 30 %. Herbalists have long used ginger for indigestion, nausea and gas pain.

Licorice has a soothing influence upon gastric mucosa. It is an excellent remedy for peptic and duodenal ulcers, gastritis and chronic constipation. Caution: Do not consume large quantities in cases of heart conditions, because it creates water retention and elevates blood pressure.

Calm Digestion has traditionally been used for mild cases of GERD (gastro-esophageal-reflux disorder) and acid indigestion due to poor diet, as well as for hiccups.

After Dinner Tea is an excellent digestive tea to drink warm with meals, known to promote and stimulate digestion and absorption of nutrients. It contains enzymes and organically bound calcium to assist digestion, when stress has affected the stomach. For tightness in the stomach, stomach cramping, hiatal hernia, nausea, motion sickness and morning sickness, this tea may be helpful.

Before Dinner Tea is beneficial to drink warm before meals to help those with weak stomach acidity, as it stimulates hydrochloric acid for better digestion. The underlying cause of an overly acid stomach is usually because the person does not produce enough hydrochloric acid when the food enters the stomach. The undigested food is regurgitated over and over again back into the stomach for additional hydrochloric acid until it has broken down sufficiently to be allowed to enter the next phase of digestion/absorption.

Digestive Bitters has been used by people who feel bloated and tired after a meal. They say that it energizes their digestion to speed up transition time in the stomach.

Stomach Soother is a formula given to us many years ago by a woman who healed herself from stomach ulcers. The herbs in this blend soothe inflammation and irritation of the mucous membranes in the alimentary tract.

Nature's Zymes is a fabulous digestive enzyme formula. The herbs in this blend have long been used by people to improve digestion, especially the digestion of fats, to reduce formation of uric acid build up and to reduce and prevent fermentation, gas, bloating, and flatulence.

Lullaby

Lullaby is a digestive tension releasing glycerite for babies, children and grown-ups. Lullaby is known to relieve tension in the stomach, as well as to release built up acids in the body.

Tips For A Healthy Stomach

- ☼ Chew your food well
- ☼ Eat in the middle of the day, because at this time the amount of hydrochloric acid available is at its peak.
- ☼ Avoid eating a heavy meal before going to sleep.
- ☼ Eating the hard to digest foods first will give the body a chance to break it down before the easier foods come along.
- ☼ Eat only when hungry. When you are not hungry, food stacks up making it very difficult to digest.
- ☼ Avoid cold drinks, as it cramps the digestive tract and makes it very difficult to digest and absorb your nutrients. Un-boiled water takes three hours to digest. Boiled water that has been allowed to cool down is digested in 1.5 hours and water that is boiled and drunk warm is digested in 48 minutes.
- ☼ Do not drink coffee or teas that contain tannic acids.
- ☼ Get familiar with the acid/alkaline balance. Alkaline-forming foods should make up 75 to 85 percent of the diet.
- ☼ Eat locally grown foods to avoid allergies.
- ☼ Do not eat microwaved foods.
- ☼ Do not eat soy.
- ☼ Do not eat pork. We do not have an enzyme to digest pork.
- ☼ Combine your foods well:
 - When you eat protein eat it without starchy vegetables.
 - Eat plenty of enzyme rich foods (40-80% of our diet should be raw)
 - Fats, liquids, or hot/cold food slow the digestion making it possible for more fermentation.
 - Eat fruits alone. Fruit will easily cause acidity problems if mixed with other foods.
 - Do not eat sugar. Sugar with any food easily causes a fermentation problem.

There are no good foods or bad foods for you, only what your body tolerates. See what works for you.

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