



GUIDE TO
Optimal Digestion

In order to optimize digestion, I think it is important to have a good idea of the process to truly understand what's going on

Firstly digestion starts in the mouth with chewing. This is a very overlooked, yet maybe most important part of the digestive process. Enzymes in the mouth begin to break down food while in the mouth. Chewing our food well can impact the amount of work the rest of the body has to do in the digestion process. How often do we quickly eat your food? Literally inhaling it and barely chewing it?

It's important to not only chew our food well to assist the rest of the body, but it is also important to eat in a calm state. Eating while not rushing, on the go in the car, or around other fast eaters does not assist in the start of optimal Digestion. If we are rushing to eat, simultaneously, the nervous system is in a state of stress as well. By the time the food reaches the intestines, it has been diminished of digestive enzymes. A few things occur here: the body begins to work really hard to digest the food, the food sits and ferments and does not digest well, leading to gas, bloating and indigestion, or is later broken down into glucose and stored as fat. If possible drink water or lemon water 30 minutes before your meals.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

STEPS TO CONSIDER

1. Be in a calm state while eating
2. Chew your food well
3. Do not rush
4. Drink lemon water or water 30 minutes before eating
5. If eating out, eating a salad (minus the croutons and slathered in creamy salad dressing) before will help aid in digestion because of its natural digestive enzymes due to the fiber in the greens and will prevent you from overeating

IDENTIFYING INDIGESTION & FODMAPS

Improper Digestion can rear it's head in so many different ways. It may be rearing it's head and you may not even be aware because you think it's normal. To clarify, when you are experiencing optimal Digestion, it does not make you feel uncomfortable in any way. If you eat and afterwards (whether immediately or 30 minutes later) experience any uncomfortable feelings, digestion is impaired.

Here are some very common (but not limited to) signs of indigestion :

- Gas or gas pains
- Bloating
- Belching
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Excessive Grumbling
- Feeling full for a few hours
- Nausea
- Heartburn
- Stomach cramping

Do you feel like you are eating healthy but still have some signs of indigestion after eating? You may exhibit a sensitivity to a certain food group called FODMAPS. This stands for fermentable oligo di mono..... These food groups can often be the culprits for the uncomfortable feelings in healthy eating. These particular foods (some more than others) don't digest well and can't be broken down efficiently so they begin to ferment in the gut, causing gas and uncomfortable bloating. In So being able to identify which ones you are sensitive to, they are ranked based on which fruits and vegetables are the highest in FODMAPS properties (more than likely to cause indigestion) and the lowest (least likely to cause issues, but still not to be dismissed)



IDENTIFYING & HEALING A LEAKY GUT

This is a topic that I covered in my webinar "7 Steps to Better Digestion and Hormone Balance". If you haven't yet listened to the webinar it's a great idea to review that before reading this section because I will review those steps in a little more detail.

You don't have to have "gut" symptoms to have a leaky gut. Leaky gut can manifest in a number of ways. In my AHSG, I define **leaky gut as a result of infiltration of pathways**. The pathways in stomach lining that usually keep out toxins or undigested food become permeable (or broken through) and find their way to the bloodstream, which in turn manifest in many different ways. Leaky gut can manifest in ways such as **skin issues like eczema or psoriasis, allergic reactions to food or drinks, heart conditions, depression, anxiety, ADD, brain fogs, sugar/carb cravings, excess fatigue, nutrient deficiencies, poor immune system, weight fluctuation, auto-immune conditions like thyroid diseases, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and many more**. In my recent blog post on "Underlying Secrets of Weight Loss" I discussed the most common causes of a leaky gut. So I'm going to review those right now. I will go a little more in depth by giving more examples. The difference from the webinar transcript will be in *italics*



Common Causes of Leaky Gut

.....

A. Chronic Stress- Stress is one of the most common reasons hormones take a major hit. Chronic stress, hormones, and gut health have to do with an area of the nervous system called the "HPA Axis". *This is the main relationship between the gut and the brain that govern our responses to stress. When constantly taxed, this system's response becomes diminished along with the production of the crucial hormones and neurotransmitters which occur in our gastrointestinal tract.*

B. Antibiotics and medications like NSAIDS and birth control- these can affect and deplete the amount of good bacteria in the gut flora, decreasing them in number and increasing risk of leaky gut and chronic illness.

C. Diets High in processed carbohydrates, saturated fat and SUGAR - these have a similar effect as the above mentioned antibiotics, and these also deplete crucial nutrients in the body that are necessary for the creation of our hormones.

D. Toxins and Undigested Food - toxins (from either pesticides or processed foods) and undigested food when allowed in the blood stream can mimic our own hormones leading to the body getting confused and resulting in auto-immune diseases (autoimmune diseases arise from inflammation and the body fighting itself)

E. Diet low in fermented foods - fermented foods gives us the good bacteria that we need to boost our immune system, absorb and assimilate nutrients and repair our leaky gut. Some examples of fermented foods are kimchi, kefir, sauerkraut, kombucha, any formed of pickled food, and there are other examples that I will include in the handout.

F. Chronic Infections - chronic infections often lead to the use of more antibiotics and steroids which don't really reboot out immune system and deplete the good gut flora.

G. Alcohol, coffee, grains, unhealthy vegetable oils

COMMON WAYS TO ASSIST IN HEALING YOUR LEAKY GUT

These recommendations are general and for leaky gut that does not involve other complicating factors (such as candida, IBS, etc). These are ways to improve and sustain the gut wall to encourage healing of a leaky gut. With variations in bio-individuality, these are not cure-all solutions but great steps toward the right direction.



Bone broth-packed with collagen, proline and glycine, working great together to repair the damaged cell walls of the gut

Eliminate gut irritants- if you have noticed adverse reactions to foods or drinks in the past, try eliminating them (dairy, gluten, sugar, etc) for 30 days and then re-introduce them

Eliminate Added Sugar- sugar feeds the bad bacteria in the gut and can lead to SIBO and Candida. It is counter intuitive when trying to heal a leaky gut or maintain a healthy diet.

Boost your gut flora- with a soil based organism probiotic or if necessary a pre-biotic and pro-biotic to rebuild the gut flora and create stability for absorption of nutrient, hormone synthesis and immune support. Another way to boost the gut flora is with fermented foods or drinks such as kombucha, kimichi, sauerkraut, miso, sugar free yogurt, kefir,

Eating a nutrient dense diet - a diet rich in vegetables, grass fed animal products, wild caught fish, healthy fats, and fruit not too high in sugar.

Remember to keep in mind which foods are high in FODMAPs

Incorporate a Green Smoothie- adding a green smoothie, low in sugar to your morning routine can supply the gut with natural digestive enzymes and fiber to help balance and avoid blood sugar spikes

L-Glutamine powder- a very effective supplement for leaky gut and constructive in repairing and regrowing the gut lining

Digestive enzymes- if having difficulty chewing and breaking down food, digestive enzymes can assist in reducing the big food particles and encourage absorption of nutrients

PAIRING FOODS

For Optimal Digestion

These food combinations are for "optimal digestion" and do not follow the typical "My Plate" recommendations regulated by USDA.

**FRUIT + RAW GREENS (EXCEPT
MELONS)**



FATS AND STARCHES



FATS + PROTEINS



PROTEINS + PROTEINS



PROTEINS + STARCHES



PROTEINS + VEGETABLES



STARCHES + STARCHES



STARCHES + VEGETABLES



GIVE IT AN EXTRA BOOST!



1.

BREATHE

2.

GET QUALITY SLEEP

3.

UNPLUG AND RELAX

4.

MEDITATE

5.

RELAX