

### Louise's Healthy Nutrition Hints

#### ✓ BE Proactive – Digestion Series Part 2 of 3 Compromising Our Digestion: The Hard to Swallow Truth

Most of us unwittingly compromise our own digestion repeatedly on a daily basis, increasing the inflammation in our bodies to dangerous levels. Impaired or poor digestion is the beginning of a process that ends with chronic diseases and promoting the advancement of age related illness (i.e. auto-immune diseases, arthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and IBS). Intestinal bloating, frequent bouts of diarrhea or constipation, gas and pain, heartburn and acid reflux are warning signs of an inflamed digestive tract.

Let explore a daily diet scenario that many people can relate to. You've got a lot on the go, demands at work, commitments at home with the family and you are still trying to fit in some "me" time. For breakfast you may grab a flavoured yogurt or slap together a cream cheese bagel and coffee. At lunch you grab a sub or fries and chicken, then head back to your desk to work. No matter what your intentions, your choices have set you up for impaired digestion. Your breakfast didn't really have much nutritional substance to keep inflammation at bay. Your lunch was predominantly processed in spite of throwing in some veggies somewhere, so the GI index of your meal is high. Yes, adding veggies is good but the real hard truth is that your other less nutritious choices outnumber the good. Your blood sugar and insulin surges significantly, increasing your inflammatory markers, called cytokines. You are multi-tasking (as we all do); working and eating at the same time. Your stomach becomes confused, saying "are you eating or working or what?" It will not produce sufficient stomach acid if you are stressed (even if you don't realize it) and not taking the time to relax and be present when you eat your food. Stomach acids also naturally decline with age, making it even more important to be aware of the perils of multi-tasking while you eat.

After lunch, you feel bloated or uncomfortable. Adding insult to injury, you aren't taking the time to drink enough water throughout the day which is key to reducing inflammation and eliminating toxins. In fact, you may experience bouts of constipation or your tummy becomes all knotted up. In that witching hour of the 3pm mid-afternoon slump, someone offers you a cookie or two. You accept because they seem healthy with nuts and raisins, but they are made with vegetable oil, like canola or corn. These are Omega 6 oils, which are theoretically good but our ratios tend to be way too high compared to our Omega 3's. As a result, the oil in your cookies converts into a further inflammatory response.

Onward to dinner, pasta is a quick dish. Hopefully you have thrown in lots of veggies but you also drink a lot of water or milk with your meals. Having your drink **with** your meal waters down and dilutes the stomach enzymes necessary to digest your food effectively. Essentially you have fanned the fires (increased inflammation) rather than squelch it and compromised your immune system. Some simple remedies to put out that fire: get an oil change - opt for Omega 3 rich oils like olive oil. Add walnuts and flaxseeds. Incorporate coconut oil, as well; it is a great digestive aid. Cut back on refined foods. Make room for more of those colourful veggies, high in anti-oxidants, which play a huge role in reducing inflammation. Spice things up with herbs and spices such as turmeric, ginger, garlic and peppers. Try having your water 20 to 30 minutes before you eat to avoid interfering with your body's natural digestion process. Check in next month, when Part 3 of this series examines the role of your oral health in good digestion.