



## Tips for Better Digestion

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- **Cheat well!** Chewing food properly is the simplest thing and its importance is totally underestimated. By chewing 20 - 30 times per bite, you take off a load of your digestive system. Furthermore the enzymes in the saliva have the opportunity to get to work.
- **Blending!** Blending is like chewing your food well just without the good enzymes from our saliva, so make sure you drink smoothies and soups slowly and even chew a little bit.
- **Avoid cold** drinks with meals as they shock your digestive system and liver, also avoid cold foods from the fridge.
- **Avoid drinking with meals** as too much liquid dilutes your digestive juices and weakens therefore your digestive power. It's really good to get well hydrated before a meal, but stop drinking 30 minutes before you start eating, and wait at least 60 minutes afterwards, before you drink again. A small amount of water to swallow your supplements with your meal is totally fine.
- **Cooking food** (gently) makes it easier to digest and absorb, even just slightly steaming your veggies helps with their digestion and absorption.
- **Raw food** is an important component of our diet as well, but often people with compromised digestive systems have to reduce raw food for a while, till they regained their digestive power. Raw foods have the benefit of having all their enzymes and vitamins intact (minerals are actually more bioavailable when veggies are cooked). Raw **fermented** foods are foods that have the benefits of raw foods, but are easy to digest and actually help digestion (see raw fermented foods below). Another easily digested raw food that is super beneficial, is sprouts or microgreens. They are baby vegetables which are full of nutrients, very alkaline, and can be quickly added on top of a meal.
- **Adding fermented foods** to your meals such as unpasteurized sauerkraut or kimchi is a great digestive aid, full of enzymes and probiotics. It's also already 'pre-digested' by the good bacteria - you will find fermented cabbage much easier to digest than raw cabbage. Furthermore the nutrients in fermented foods are much higher and more bioavailable. There is about 10 times more vitamin C in sauerkraut than in the original cabbage!
- **Probiotic supplements** - you can find probiotics in raw fermented foods, but often we don't get enough through diet. Those little helpers are crucial for a healthy digestion, immune system, and gut-mind-connection. They battle opportunistic

bacteria and have anti-inflammatory effects. I highly recommend supplementing with a good quality probiotic - probiotics need to be properly manufactured so that they are viable and protected from the stomach acid.

- **Apple cider vinegar** in warm water half an hour before eating. Apple cider vinegar contains naturally digestive enzymes and probiotics. It's acidic in the stomach, which is supposed to be acidic to break down proteins, however it's alkaline for the body after it's metabolized. Apple cider vinegar is also gently cleansing for liver and gut and furthermore it lowers the glycemic index of your food. If you miss taking it 30 min before your meal, you can have it in a small amount of water just before the meal (e.g. to swallow your supplements) and of course you can use ACV as a condiment for your meal.
- **Digestive enzymes** (in form of a supplement) at the beginning of the meal to help break down food.
- **Warm smoothies** - smoothies don't have to be ice cold. I like adding some warm water, especially if the ingredients just came out of fridge and freezer. You can also make savoury soup like smoothies. Adding hot water, some healthy fat and salt helps the absorption of nutrients of the vegetables.
- **Avoid heavy meals in the evening.** At night, our body is in resting and restorative mode and not prepared to digest big meals. Try to have your dinner at least 3 hours before you go to bed. If needed, a light snack before going to bed should be fine (such as a cup of bone broth, golden milk, or some avocado with seaweed). Our digestive power is strongest during lunch time.
- **Food combining matters:** If your digestive system is on the weaker side, try avoiding combinations of high protein foods with high starch foods (such as meat and potatoes, chicken and rice, beef and beans), and avoid fruit as dessert or other sweet foods at the end of a high protein meal. Adding non starchy vegetables and fermented vegetables makes the rest of the meal more digestible.
- **Adding warming spices** such as ginger, turmeric, cinnamon
- **To increase regularity:** minimum 2 liters of clean water/ day, chia seeds, fresh pressed juices (mostly vegetables), beets, prunes, dates, exercise, magnesium, probiotics, minimum of 30g fibre per day (see fibre chart) - but increase fibre intake gradually.

#### **Natural alternatives to antacids:**

- A teaspoon to a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar in a glass of water
- Digestive enzyme supplements
- You can also get digestive enzymes from raw food, especially from pineapple and papaya and from fermented foods such as unpasteurized apple cider vinegar or sauerkraut
- Supplements with betaine
- Aloe vera, liquorice root, ginger, turmeric, garlic have anti-inflammatory effects on the gut