

ACID INDIGESTION

by Nadine

Harmony and Balance - two key words to a healthy digestive system. When we eat nutritious foods that are in Harmony with our body we provide the macronutrients (protein, carbs, and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) to assist in the natural healing, cell growth and Balance of our Mind, Body and Spirit. When we eat out of Balance we create a disharmonious relationship with our natural digestive system creating havoc in the form of acid indigestion.

Acid Indigestion is exactly what the name implies – a lack of digestion with an imbalance of stomach acid. Common symptoms of indigestion include bloating, belching, sour burps, gas, heaviness, regurgitation, nausea, cramping and pain. Too little stomach acid is the most common reason for most symptoms of simple indigestion. Other causes of an imbalance include: eating or drinking too fast, which creates hiccups; introducing a new food in large quantities, which creates gas and many times sour burps if the food has a high acid concentration; eating or drinking too much at one time, which creates heartburn because the acidic juice in the stomach backs up into the esophagus; eating on an irregular schedule; and lastly, eating foods that are on your AVOID list.

The digestive system feeds the rest of the body and is itself sensitive to malnutrition or under-nutrition. Our goal then is to ensure we are providing our bodies with adequate amounts of protein, carbs, fat, water, vitamins and minerals. Below is a listing of the nutrient and the *role* it plays within the body.

Nutrient	Role in the Body
Protein	Repairs damage to tissues and cells as they normally break down, stimulates and maintains bodily metabolism. Proteins can help normalize the acid-base balance by acting as a buffer
Carbs	Main source of fuel and needed to regulate protein and fat metabolism
Fats	Protects vital organs from trauma and temperature change by providing padding and insulation. When the digestive system is working well, up to 95 percent of dietary fats are absorbed into the body
Water	Carries nutrients to the cells of the body; transports toxins out
Vitamins	Essential for growth, health, vitality and helpful in digestion, elimination and resistance to disease
Minerals	Like vitamins, assist the body in energy production

How much is enough? Balancing the macronutrients (proteins, carbs and fats) within your diet is a key factor to a healthy digestive system. While rare cases pop up, I have found the majority of my nutrition clients reach a healthy balance with a daily macronutrient breakdown of 30 percent Protein, 50 percent Carbohydrate and 20 percent Good Fats (poly unsaturated). As you learn to create your meal plan, focus on fueling your body with Primary and Secondary foods first and filling in the gaps with Tertiary foods. Keep a journal and note when your body is out of balance. As you learn more about your own digestive system and food needs, you may want to further refine your daily intake. Two

methods I highly recommend are to Eat For Your Blood Type and to incorporate those foods that bring the Alkaline/Acid base of your body into balance.

Food Item	Resource
Primary Foods	Whole grains –20-30% - rice, quinoa, amaranth, oats, spelt, kamut, etc Protein – 20-30% - animal proteins, fish, tofu, tempeh, beans, legumes, etc
Secondary Foods	Vegetables - 30-40% - fresh and seasonal
Tertiary Foods	Dairy, eggs, and fruits – 5-10% Fats and oils – 2%
Eat Right 4 Your Type	Focus on eliminating the AVOID foods and incorporating the BENEFICIAL and Neutral Foods. This link will take you to a wonderful database where you can look up individual foods http://www.dadamo.com/typebase4/typeindexer.htm
Alkaline/Acid Base Foods	Eat 80% Alkaline foods and 20% Acid foods. Begin slowly and incorporate foods slowly. This link will take you to a site that incorporates Alkaline/Acid Balance foods <i>with</i> Blood Type information. I have linked you to blood type O since it is the predominate type. http://herbtime.com/InformationPages/blood_type_o.htm

If you suffer from indigestion the use of over the counter antacids (tums, Roloids, etc) is counterproductive. The problem here is that antacids are designed only to *temporarily* relieve pain caused by heartburn by neutralizing stomach acid for a while. However, when the antacids reduce normal stomach acidity, the result is producing MORE acid to restore the normal acid condition. Additionally the ingredients in antacids can interfere with the body's ability to absorb vital nutrients. Herbs are a more effective approach.

Solutions

Many solutions to indigestion can be found in your kitchen, more specifically your spice rack. Most herbal spices are carminatives (meaning they prevent and relieve gas), stimulants and aids to digestion. Herbal spices are often regarded as "crisis medicine" and can be thought of as a safe and natural alternative to synthetic drugs. Below is a chart containing items you can find in your spice rack and ways to use them for indigestion.

Spice	Medicinal Properties	Method of Use
Sweet Basil	Prevents/relieves gas, stimulates digestion	Make an infusion (tea) with one ounce of basil leaves to a pint of water simmered for twenty minutes
Bay	Prevents gas and indigestion	Add 1-2 bay leaves to soups and beans.
Caraway	Indigestion and gas	Make an infusion with an

		ounce of crushed seeds. Bring water to a rolling boil, turn off heat, add the crushed seeds, steep for 20 minutes. Suggested intake: 2 TBS of the tea frequently until relief
Cardamom	Carminative and stimulant mixed with other spices to treat Indigestion and gas	Chai tea: grate 1 ounce of fresh ginger, add 7 peppercorns, a cinnamon stick, 5 cloves, and 15 cardamom seeds. Heat in one pint of water, simmering for 10 minutes. Add one-half cup of milk and simmer for another 10 minutes. Add a sprinkle of nutmeg and a few drops of vanilla extract. Drink one cup of tea twice per day.
Cumin	Prevent/relieve gas	Add Cumin to cooked beans and/or rice. You can also make a tea, however the flavor is very strong. Suggest making gelatin capsules from powdered seeds. Suggested Intake: 2 capsules at mealtime in the evening.
Ginger	Indigestion, cramps, nausea	Eat crystallized ginger pieces for immediate relief of cramps, nausea and indigestion. Ginger tea can be made by grating one ounce of fresh ginger, simmering 10 mins in a pint of water

Prevention is the best course of Action. We have already discussed incorporating those foods that are BENEFICIAL, thus Healing to your body according to your blood type. Removing foods classified as AVOID will assist in removing known toxins or poisons to your digestive track. In addition we have introduced the concept of eating 80 percent of your diet from Alkaline-base Foods. Above we have listed common kitchen spices that will bring relief to common symptoms of indigestion. The flowing information is provided in the event you would like to take another step in being in Harmony and Balance with your Body, Mind and Spirit. These herbs are listed for there ability to aid and support a healthy digestive system and the method of application. Eat well and make wise choices as you *Create New Lifestyle Changes to Last Your Lifetime.*

Herb	Aids in:	Method of Use
Alfalfa	Improving digestion and assimilation	One cup of an infusion taken 3 times a day
Angelica	Digestive weakness and gas <i>If the tea is taken after a meal it will prevent flatulence</i>	Tea: 3-9 g of normal tea infusion; Tincture: use 10-30 drops 3 times a day
Aniseed	Prevent/expel gas, aid in digestion, relieves belching, bloating and nausea gas/indigestion/bloating	3-9 g of the crushed seeds steeped in a cup of boiling water. Take 2-3 times a day as needed; Tea made from a pinch each of powders of aniseed, ginger, cardamom, and cinnamon. Steeped in boiled water or scalded raw milk. Drink a cup after meals to promote digestion.
Asafoetida	Gas, weak digestion, food sensitivities	100 mg – 1g of powdered gum steeped in boiling water, or added to food
Camomile	Digestive disorders	Standard infusion; Tincture 10-30 drops
Comfrey	Lack of pepsin for protein digestion	Standard decoction; Tincture, 1 tsp, 3 times daily
Elecampane	Digestive weakness	One ounce of dried root steeped in a pint of boiling water for 20 mins. 1 cup three times daily; Tincture, 10-30 drops, 3 times daily
Goldenseal	Dyspepsia, acid indigestion, gastritis, colitis	1 tsp of root simmered in a cup of boiling water 10-20 mins; Tincture 5-30 drops
Papaya	Promotes digestion	Eat the fruit
Rice	Aids in digestion, overall convalescence	Congee: 1 part of rice to 7-10 parts water, slow cooked for 6-8 hours. Eat as needed
Thyme	Indigestion	Standard infusion
Turmeric	Digestion and assimilation	3-9 g in an infusion or mild decoction

Treatments for:		
Indigestion	Herbs to Use	Directions
<i>Make an extract in any white wine using</i>	Dandelion root – 1 part Calamus root – 1 part Gentian – 1 part Angelica – 1 part Valerian – 1 part Ginger root – ½ part	Use 2 ounces of herbs to one pint of wine and let extract for two weeks. Suggested Intake: one teaspoon before and after meals.
Indigestion & Gas	Herbs to Use	Directions
<i>Mix equal parts of the powdered herbs:</i>	Calamus Wild cherry bark Gentian Oregon grape root Cascara bark Goldenseal Dandelion root Wild yam root Lobelia Ginger root Licorice	Fill “00” capsules. Suggested Intake: 2 capsules 3 times a day, with one cup of dandelion root tea, one-half hour before meals to improve digestion
Stomach Acidity	Herbs to Use	Directions
<i>Take internally as a decoction or in gelatin capsules</i>	Dandelion root – 1 part Slippery elm – 1 part Goldenseal – 1/8 part Calamus root – 1/8 part	Suggested Intake: one-half cup of the tea or 2 gelatin capsules of the powder every hour or as needed.
Poor Digestion	Herbs to Use	Directions
	Tincture of Agrimony or Gentian	Suggested Intake: 1-2 teaspoons before meals
Flatulence	Herbs to Use	Directions
<i>Make in infusion of any of the following herbs. When taken after a meal will relieve flatulence</i>	Fennel Mint Dill Camomile Aniseed or Lemon Balm	Use 1 teaspoon of dried herbs to 1 cup of water; steep for 10-15 mins
Stimulate the appetite	Herbs to Use	Directions
Make a decoction. Taken before a meal will stimulate the appetite	Gentian Dandelion	One ounce of dried root or bark to just over a pint of water; simmer for 10-15 mins

References

- Blood Type Diet Encyclopedia* (1996-2006) Retrieved March 9th 2006, from <http://www.dadamo.com/typebase4/typeindexer.htm>
- Foods for Alkaline/Acid Balance*, nd. Retrieved March 9 2006 from <http://herbtime.com/InformationPages/FoodsforAlkalineAcid.htm>
- Haas, E. (1992). *Staying Healthy with Nutrition: The Complete Guide To Diet and Nutritional Medicine*. California: Celestial Arts. 15,31,36,39, 55-59,71,83-84,155
- Mabey, R. (1988). *The New Age Herbalist*. New York: Simen & Schuster. 135, 164, 193, 200-205
- McCready, L. Extracted from *Nature's Field*, Vol.17 No.3, (May/June 2001), *Digestive Disorders: Causes and Therapies*. Retrieved on March 9, 2206 from <http://herbtime.com/InformationPages/AcidRefluxAntacids.htm>
- Tierra, M. (1998). *The Way of HERBS*. New York: Pocket Books. 47-51, 72-215, 245-288, 342
- Sizer, F.S., & Whitney, E.N. (2003). *Nutrition Concepts and Controversies* (9th ed). California: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning. 83-86