

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 |

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| | | 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: | | |
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| 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 |

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