

The Dove Clinic for Integrated Medicine

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Tips for Improving Digestion

Our internal Blender

Mouthful-chew-drop-breath routine:

Take a fork or spoonful into your mouth: place your fork or utensil on the table: chew your food 30-40 times, and once you have swallowed it, take 2-3 deep breaths before you pick up your utensil to have another mouthful. This enables the enzymes in the saliva to mix with the food and to start the digestive process off. So mechanical and chemical digestion begins in the mouth. We have the teeth for the purpose of tearing and grinding and mashing food into smaller pieces. This increases the surface area of the food, allowing the digestive enzymes in the mouth to further break down the food, increasing the release of nutrients. When we do not chew our food properly, we miss out on absorbing these nutrients.

The acid zone, i.e. the Stomach:

Add one teaspoon of Apple Cider Vinegar, one teaspoon of Lemon Juice and half a teaspoon of Grated Ginger to half a cup of warm water and drink approximately 5-10 minutes before eating. The Apple Cider Vinegar and Lemon Juice are weak acids, assisting with the digestion of proteins in the stomach.

Ginger increases blood flow to the stomach region and enhances the release of intestinal and stomach enzymes.

Hydrochloric Acid (HCl) is important as it is required to activate Pepsin in the stomach, which is responsible for breaking down proteins in that organ and releasing minerals such as Zinc, Iron and Calcium. HCl also stimulates the release of Intrinsic Factor, which transports B12 through the small intestine into the bloodstream, and improves the digestion of fats and removal of toxins and excess hormones by sending a message to the liver and gallbladder to excrete bile. HCl is a major defence barrier against pathogenic organisms which can disturb our gut flora and harm us.

HCl supplements can be taken (Betaine), and we often give Digestive Enzymes as well.

Liver, Gall Bladder, and Bile:

- Adding bitter foods, spices and drinks to your diet enhances the production and secretion of bile. Ideas for adding bitter food into your diet include:
- Adding Radicchio to your Salad.
- Stir-Frying Bitter Melon/Gourd.
- Most green leafy vegetables such as Chard, Kale and Spinach are slightly bitter.

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- Try and include more Beetroot in your diet as this is a natural bile thinner. Raw, grated Beetroot can be added to salads; mixed with Vegetables, Mushrooms and Pine Nuts.
- Include Cumin and Turmeric in your cooking, as these bitter spices support bile secretion. Cumin also enhances the release of Digestive Enzymes in the small intestine, and Turmeric is anti-inflammatory and helps the detoxification pathways in the liver.