

# **5 secrets for better digestion**

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**Simple tips to deflate naturally  
and build a strong foundation  
for your health**



**Happy Belly Wellness**



Hi! So glad you found me! I'm about to drop the spoiler of the century:  
Feeling like poo is not normal.

Sometimes it's really hard to tell how bad we are feeling because, well, we've probably felt that way for a while and it's become our "normal". Even though we have inklings that there are steps we could take to feel better, it can be hard to put a finger on what "it" is or where to begin. The answers are not always straight forward, but there are simple habits we can put in place to help us start feeling better ASAP.

It's no secret that WHAT we eat plays a huge role in how we feel, but *it is* a secret that what we DIGEST plays a bigger one. So you can throw out the "you are what you eat" mindset and reframe to "you are what you absorb and digest".

I'm going to give you some of my favorite tips for improving digestion. Say so long to daily blowouts (and I'm not talking about hair), cramped tummies, and post meal fatigue.

The best part is, these tips cost NOTHING so you can implement them right away!



Happy Belly Wellness

# Tip #1

## Slow Your Roll

Admittedly, I've been known to eat while standing up, scrolling through Instagram, while watching Netflix or even while driving in the car. Some may consider the combination of eating and any of the above activities efficient, but they don't do any favors for our digestion.

Our bodies need to get into a relaxed state in order to properly digest and integrate the nutrients we are feeding it. That relaxed state is what is known as our Parasympathetic Nervous system, also commonly referred to as our "rest and digest" state.

Its counter part, the Sympathetic Nervous System turns on when we are in "go mode", which if we're being honest, is 90% of the time. Our "go mode" is known as our "fight or flight" state. The Sympathetic Nervous System is most concerned with making sure we are prepared to outrun a bear, or Becky at your next sample sale.

As long as our Sympathetic Nervous system is in the drivers seat, our digestion will be taking a back seat. When in "go mode", our body isn't able to produce the gastric juices, enzymes and blood flow it needs to properly digest our food.. Undigested food leads to unused nutrients, stomach aches, bloating, the toots, and even post meal fatigue.

TL;DR, RELAX! If you're eating, just eat!



## Tip #2

# Happy Breathing

The main takeaway from our mini science lesson in tip #1 is that more relaxed and present we are while we are eating, the better for our digestion. But we can't go from 100 to 0 right away. Because we live in such a go go go society, we often don't take the time we need to actually turn down our stress dial.

Whether you're eating right after the gym, a stressful day at work, or after an impassioned conversation about how Jim microwaved fish in the break room again, you gotta calm down before you start eating.

Doing some deep breathing is a great way to gently escort your nervous system into its preferred rest and digest mode.

Before you take your first bite, make sure you:



Are sitting down looking at your food.



Distractionless: phone on airplane mode (or in another room), no TV, no books, 0 distractions.



Take 5-10 deep breaths (4 seconds in 4 seconds out)



## Tip #3

# Practice the Slow Chew

A little known, but very important fact, is that digestion doesn't start in our stomachs, *it starts in our mouth.*

More specifically, digestion begins as soon as when we see or smell our food. Our mouth starts producing salivary enzymes that start to break down sugar and starches immediately.

Along with our trusty mouth enzymes, our mouths have another tool our stomachs don't.. teeth! The better we chew our food up top, the better our stomach and small intestines can digest it down the line.

You don't have to count every bite (though a good starting point is 20), but take enough time to savor the flavor, textures and aromas that your food can offer. In other words, chew the #\$%# out of your food for optimal digestion.



## Tip #4

# Hydrate! But not during your meal

Drinking enough water is crucial for many reasons, one of which is it basically turns our intestines into a waterslide so food and waste can make its way out of us (very helpful visual, I know).

However drinking *during* meals can get in the way of our digestion by diluting our natural digestive enzymes our body produces.

Aim to stop drinking about **30 minutes before** a meal. If you are going to be drinking during a meal, focus on taking smaller sips through out your meal rather than big gulps or chugging.



# Tip #5

## Supplementation

Sometimes we just need a little extra support! Different factors like age, stress, lack of sleep and other environmental factors can affect the way we are able to digest food. A few common supplements that I recommend are:

- **Digestive Enzyme**
- **Betaine HCL with Pepsin:** Great for helping increase stomach acid production and breaking down proteins in the stomach. Bulking up the stomach acid can also help with relieving symptoms of acid reflux (bonus tip!)
- **Ox Bile:** I know, I know, sounds gross but ox bile is great to help break down fat. If you have recently switched to a higher fat diet and are experiencing stomach aches, oily poops, or gas, you may need a little support. Also super helpful if you have had your gallbladder removed.
- **A positive attitude:** Sorry folks, can't buy this one online, but on the upside it's free! Our mindset and environment play critical roles into how our body is able to digest our food. You could be eating the healthiest diet in the world, but if your emotional diet is negative or unhealthy, you're kind of missing the point. Think about the best meal you ever had: Likely it wasn't \*just\* because of the food you ate, but also because of your mood, the people you were with, the ambiance, the conversation, etc. If you bring a positive attitude to your plate, you're increasing both your digestion and overall nourishment 10 fold.

