

Healthy Digestion - Healthy Body!

According to Ayurveda^{i[1]}, the traditional medicine of India, the digestive system is the physical root of most diseases in the body. In other words, as disease develops, its early signs are often seen as digestive problems. Gas, constipation, diarrhea, indigestion and bloating are all considered to be warning signs of future problems that are more serious. If the digestive system is properly cared for many diseases can be averted and diseases that are present have a better chance of healing. Ayurveda places a lot of emphasis of the care of the digestive system. In doing so, Ayurveda addresses not only what food is best for an individual but how food is eaten and how it is combined. If proper food is taken and it is taken in the proper manner most digestive problems go away. For those that do not, Ayurveda utilizes herbs to normalize the function of the digestive system. How do you know if you have digestive problems that may cause future challenges? Most of the signs are obvious. If you have gas, bloating, constipation, diarrhea or cramping you have mild but important signs of imbalance. If you have been diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome, ulcers, ulcerative colitis, diverticulitis or GIRD (gastrointestinal reflux disorder), your challenges are more serious but can still be helped. The knowledge of Ayurveda is important to the correction all digestive imbalances. Proper digestion begins not with what you eat but how you eat! Here are five simple but important guidelines to assure that your digestion is optimal. 1. Begin meals with a moment of relaxation or grace: When the body is relaxed and focused on the food, digestive enzyme secretion is maximized. 2. Eat in a calm environment: When the mind is involved in drama and emotion, digestion is disturbed. Turn off the TV, don't discuss intense issues at the dinner table and avoid eating while driving in the car. 3. Chew your food well: Digestion begins with chewing. Proper chewing allows enzymes in the saliva to begin the digestive process. Food should be chewed until it is an even consistency. 4. Eat until you are satisfied, not till you are full: Overeating is one of the major causes of digestive upset and subsequent disease in Western countries. The surest way to extend life for most people is to eat less! It is important to learn the difference between genuine hunger and the desire for pleasure through taste. 5. Rest before going on to the next activity: For optimal digestion, it is important to rest after eating. Failure to rest means that the body's physiology will switch away from digestion and toward the activity of the muscles of the body. This leaves poorly digested food in the digestive system. It is best to wait at least 20 minutes before going on to the next activity. Simply eating food properly will alleviate a lot of chronic digestive problems there by preventing more serious disease. When this is combined with a healthy diet, the effect is even more dramatic and almost all digestive problems disappear. Ayurveda teaches that the best diet is the one that is proper for a person's constitution^{i[2]}, or unique balance of body energies. People with a more vata nature or those who suffer from constipation and gas tend to need more cooked foods taken with some oil and spices, including salt. It may come as a surprise to find that raw salads can cause more gas. Those with a more pitta nature or those who suffer from burning indigestion and loose stools need to eat more raw foods and take food that is less spicy and less oily. Deep fried foods are the worst food for people with pitta imbalances. Those with a kapha nature or those who tend to feel heavy and sluggish and sometimes get nauseous after eating require food that is dry, light and spicy. People with a kapha nature thrive as vegetarians. What food should you eat? Ayurveda teaches that everyone is a unique individual. Nothing is right for everyone but everything is right for someone. Ayurveda is a path of finding out what is right for you. For the best personalized dietary plan, consult a Clinical Ayurvedic Specialist. In addition to supporting dietary and lifestyle changes, your Clinical Ayurvedic Specialist may design individualized herbal formulas to give your digestive system and the rest of your body its best chance of getting well.

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