

A top-down view of various healthy ingredients including spinach, seeds, and berries in small bowls. The background is a dark grey surface. In the top left, there are fresh green spinach leaves. To the right, several small white bowls contain different types of seeds: one with dark, curly seeds, one with green lentils, one with brown flax seeds, and one with blueberries. A bowl of yellow turmeric powder is on the left. A bowl of rolled oats is in the bottom left. There are also some loose seeds scattered on the surface.

10 WAYS
TO IMPROVE

digestive health

Digestive

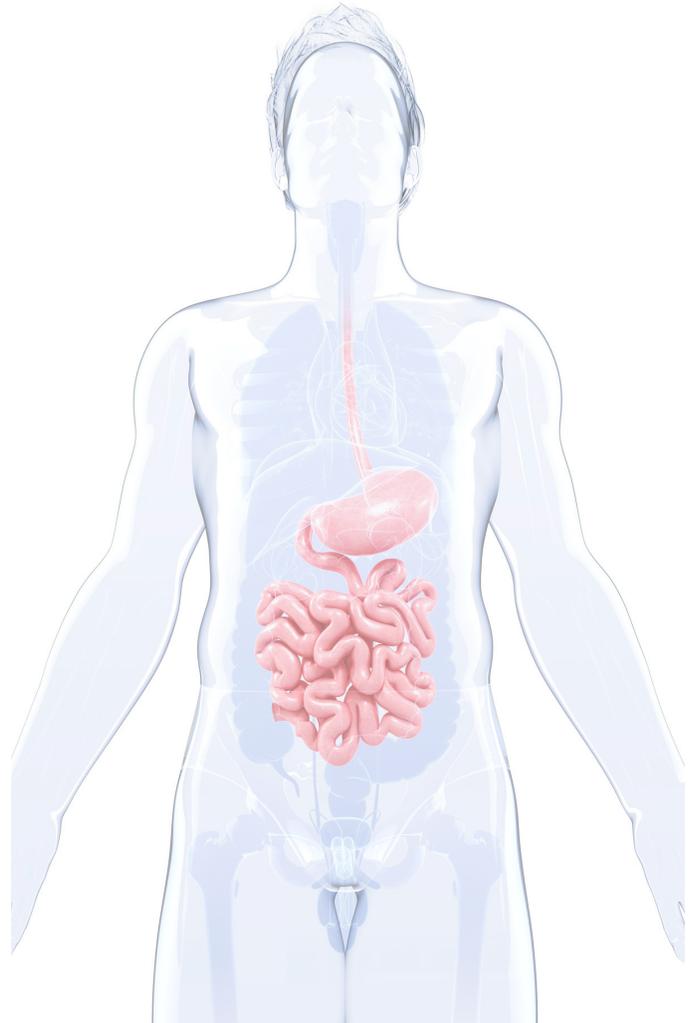
HEALTH

The digestive system consists of hormones, nerves, blood and bacteria. all of which work together intricately to digest all the liquids and foods which are consumed daily, as well as interacting with all the other systems of the body.

There are digestive juices with enzymes in them which speed up all the chemical reactions in your body, breaking down the food you eat into nutrients.

The bacteria in the gut helps to digest food, vitamins, and regulate other functions in the body. Cells found in the lining of your stomach and small intestine release and produce hormones. These stimulate your digestive juices and regulate the appetite.

The digestive system is also controlled by nerves which connect digestive organs to the spinal cord and brain, releasing chemicals that contract or relax muscles; this is essential for peristalsis or food movement. There are also nerves in the GI (or gastrointestinal) tract that are triggered when food is present, enabling the digestive system to function effectively.



Top Tips

FOR DIGESTIVE HEALTH



*to keep your digestive
system in tip top
condition, try the
things listed on the
next pages*

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chew

·Imperative for proper digestion, chewing breaks down food in your mouth, putting less pressure on the digestive system. It also releases specific enzymes which further encourages food break down , plus gives your brain chance to register when you are full, preventing over eating



eat fibre

Soluble fibre such as whole grains and vegetables absorb water and prevent stools from being too watery. Foods rich in Insoluble fibre help by adding bulk to your stools, essentially moving things along. Fibre also helps to break down any fatty foods you may have eaten



drink water

Water helps to dissolve soluble fibre, allowing your food to pass through the intestines with more ease. When you have too little water, you have harder, drier stools which make it more difficult to pass through your colon, leading to constipation and bloating



limit alcohol

Acid secretion and nutrient absorption are affected by alcohol intake. Side effects can include heartburn, diarrhoea and liver problems. Due to the liver's processing actions, this can lead to hormonal issues, plus as alcohol is a diuretic it will make you pee more, leading to dehydration and constipation



eat mindfully

Eating too much and/or too quickly can lead to gas, bloating and indigestion, and is more likely to occur if you're distracted. Power down devices and take your time to enjoy your food without distraction. This has been shown to assist with IBS and colitis symptoms



include probiotics

Fermented and cultured foods boost healthy bacteria colonisation within the gut, and promote natural enzyme activity, assisting in food breakdown. Research indicates regular consumption can assist in preventing allergies and infections



quit smoking

Nicotine is believed to relax the muscles at the lower oesophagus which normally keeps acid in the stomach, leading to acid reflux, heartburn, and increased risk of developing gastrointestinal cancer



eat warm or cooked foods

Digestive enzymes work better on warm food, breaking them down more effectively and placing less stress on the spleen and thyroid. Soups, warm teas and cooked foods are ideal



get moving

Movement or exercise increases blood flow to all organs, and aids motility of the digestive system. It's also thought to tone the wall of the colon, making bowel movements more efficient; perfect for maintaining gut health



limit refined sugar & processed foods

These foods promote growth of less desirable bacteria in the gut and inhibit growth of good bacteria. Heavily processed foods and those which are high in sugar (often termed 'white foods' are known to lead to gut disruptions and contribute to constipation

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The gut is home to TRILLIONS of bacteria, and is HUGE. The surface area if laid out flat, would cover two tennis courts, with the small intestine alone being about 20 feet long, and the large intestine about 5 feet long.

The gut is now considered to be the body's second brain because of all the functions it regulates and maintains, sending signals back and forth through the vagus nerve or the brain-gut 'super-highway'.

A LITTLE NOTE OF INSPIRATION

” Every habit we have
and every food we eat
influences our gut
microbiome; for better or
worse
