

# Essential Guide to *Healthy Digestion*

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Our digestion has never been worse. More than 20 million Canadians suffer from digestive disorders every year, and up to **1 in 5 Canadians** are estimated to suffer IBS in Canada. Our digestive tract is essential for not only assimilation and absorption of nutrients, but also detoxification, elimination, and immune function.

While there is little available in conventional medical care for digestive disorders, there are many key principles that everyone can take to promote healthy digestion. *Don't let this list overwhelm you.* Start by implementing one of these recommendations and you can begin your journey to healthier digestion.

## Here are our 7 key principles to follow for optimal digestion:

# 1

### Reduce or eliminate foods that are difficult to digest

If we cannot adequately digest the foods we eat, these foods will not be absorbed and will stay in our intestines fueling the overgrowth of bacteria and fungal organisms that can lead to digestive dysfunction. Many of the foods that are in our day-to-day diet have carbohydrates, fats and protein that are difficult for our digestive tract.

#### Limit these foods in your diet:

- High FODMAP foods (*check out our FODMAP guide to learn about these foods*)
- Cow dairy products
- Trans, deep fried fats



# 2

### Reduce foods that lead to inflammation

Certain foods are prone to activating inflammation in the digestive tract by generating histamine. Eliminate or reduce the following foods, especially if you are already experiencing digestive upset:

- Dairy
- Gluten grains\*
- Soy
- Egg
- Onions and garlic
- Beef, pork, and game meats
- Citrus fruits  
(excluding lemon and limes)

\* Check out our eating gluten-free guide to learn more about eating gluten-free



### Take time to eat mindfully

We are often pressed for time in our hectic lives. Being present can affect not only our mind but also our bodies. Mindful eating can improve the digestive experience by increasing digestive secretions, ensuring we chew enough and giving us time to check in on when we have eaten enough.

#### Eat mindfully by:

- Turning off all media (TV, tablet, computer, cell phone, etc.)
- Sit down
- Engage in stress-free conversation at the table
- Put your utensils down between each mouthful of food and bring your attention to the taste in your mouth

# 3



### Introduce fasting periods

# 4

Time restricted eating involves only eating during a 6–10-hour period throughout the day. This way of eating has been shown to influence circadian rhythm (may help sleep and wake cycle), support better bowel motility and positively impact gut microbiome, and much more. Start by introducing a 10-12 hour fast after your dinner.

Once you have created a new daily rhythm, try to eliminate eating in between meals. Some individuals with difficulty regulating blood sugars may find this difficult and should consult their healthcare provider.



### Eat local, eat organic

Foods that are grown locally generally taste better, have higher nutrient value, and have lower impacts on the environment. It also has the added effect of supporting local businesses and the local community. By eating organic you reduce your exposure to potential toxic chemicals while eating foods that have healthier microbes supporting a healthy gut microbiome.



# 5

# 6

### Add fermented foods and/or supplement with probiotics

We have been fermenting foods to preserve produce for millennia. Properly fermented foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, yogurts, kefir, etc. can also support digestion and provide healthy pre and probiotics to enhance your gut flora. If you are not used to eating these kinds of food start slow. Eating a large quantity of fermented foods right off can lead to bloating, gas, and abdominal pain. Begin with a tablespoon daily or as directed by your healthcare provider.



### Make sure you move

# 7

Physical activity is not just great for your muscles and cardiovascular health, but also great for digestion. Moving leads to improved gut motility and reduced symptoms of IBS. There is no need for a gym or special equipment to get these benefits, start by regular walking (30-45 minutes 3-5 times per week). If you have problems with heart-burn (GERD) consider speaking to your healthcare provider for guidance on how to time your exercise to prevent aggravation of your symptoms.



## Consider focused advice for more significant digestive problems

It is critical to make these foundational changes to support gut health, but sometimes you may need more guidance.

Consider consulting with a member of our clinic team for advice on individualized diets, gut/digestion testing, probiotic selection, or supplements to support digestion and healthy gut mucosa.



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**Book a discovery call now  
to see how we can help**