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easy ways to beat the bloat

Bloating, cramping and general digestive discomfort bring misery to the lives of millions, and often unnecessarily. With a little know-how, it's easy to tame troublesome tummy issues, and these few simple steps might be all you need to get yourself back on the road to feeling amazing without spending a fortune.

1. Think about your food.

The very first step in the digestive process is a really important one but it's often something that people don't even think about. It's called the cephalic phase of digestion and it's triggered when you look, smell or see food. You are literally whetting your appetite. When you start thinking about the lovely meal you are going to prepare, you are getting your digestive juices flowing. The enzymes in your saliva help you break down your food more easily so, when the time comes, your body is actually ready to start digesting your food before you have even cut the first slice – never mind actually put anything in your mouth.

It may sound an incredibly simple step – and it is – but these days we are often so busy rushing around that we don't make the time to think about our food in this way. If you are someone who is always on the go, sometimes eating at your desk or in the car, this is a vital step you are missing out on.

A simple fix is to consciously spend a little bit of time thinking about your lovely lunch to get the digestive juices going.

2. Chew your food thoroughly

Let's get one thing straight: your tummy doesn't have teeth. Chewing your food is vital, and this is the second phase of digestion. With proper chewing, you are mechanically breaking down the food into smaller pieces so that there's a greater surface area and the digestive enzymes can get to work more easily doing their job.

You might have heard the saying, you are what you eat. To be correct, you are what you can absorb and, if you're not chewing properly, it's highly likely that you will not be digesting your food properly and you certainly won't be absorbing it well either.

The other thing that happens when you don't chew properly is that the food takes much longer to break down and, as it hangs around in your digestive system, it can start to ferment, causing uncomfortable, wind gas and bloating. You don't need to chew a specific number of times because that will depend on what you are eating and various other things. However, the ideal scenario is that you chew it sufficiently so that should you be asked to spit it out, no one would have a clue what you had been eating. A further tell-tale sign that you are not digesting your food properly is if you start to see undigested food in your stool.

3. Do you have too much or too little stomach acid?

The pharmaceutical heartburn medication business is booming because so many people believe their digestive troubles are linked to too much stomach acid. What nutrition professionals find more frequently in clinic is the opposite is the case.

As you age, and as a result of stress and some over-the-counter medications, your stomach acid levels can drop to the extent you don't produce enough to do the job of digesting food sufficiently.

Why is this important? Quite simply, the stomach acid you produce not only kills any bacteria in the food you are eating, but it also breaks down the protein in your meal. If you're not properly digesting the protein element in the food, food can start to ferment, creating gases that force up the esophageal sphincter muscle (a type of muscle flap) and what little stomach acid there is can escape. So the burning feeling, especially if accompanied by smelly gas, can be a sign your digestion isn't working as well as it might be.

One solution is to take a little tot (about a teaspoon) of apple cider vinegar before each main meal. It is important that you choose apple cider vinegar with mother like this one ([click here](#)) rather than one you can buy in the supermarket (that's for your chips).

There are people who genuinely produce too much stomach acid and, if you try the apple cider vinegar trick and it seems to make things worse, you can neutralise the acid by taking a little bicarbonate of soda.

4. Consider taking digestive enzymes

Another thing that happens as you age is that you naturally start producing fewer digestive enzymes. Some foods are naturally higher than others in these helpful enzymes. Try eating a little pineapple or papaya before a meal and see if this works for you. For many people, this advice won't necessarily be practical. That's when taking a digestive enzyme capsule (available from health food shops) might be helpful. It will give your system a gentle boost to help it do its job properly.

5. Take a little stroll

When you walk shortly after you've eaten, magic starts to happen. To start, a gentle walk lowers your blood sugar levels, so your body makes less insulin. As insulin is the fat storage hormone, taking a gentle stroll for 15 minutes makes you less likely to store fat. When it comes to digestion, can help you digest your food better. A German study back in 2008 showed that this was because a gentle walk increased the speed at which the food moved through the digestive system. So, you see, your granny was right after all. (Just so you know, they also tested other traditional digestive 'aids' such as strong coffee and a digestif like brandy – no correlation was found with these and improved digestion).

Go ahead, try these tips out for yourself and see if any of your symptoms improve. If you have been struggling with digestive problems for a while, take a look at the [zest4life 21 day Digestion Rescue Plan](#), a three week programme designed to help you understand what might be going on in your gut and take greater steps towards a resolution.

21 digestion rescue plan

Gut issues can bring a daily dose of misery to your life, whatever this means for you personally. Not many of us take digestive health particularly seriously even if we experience symptoms, yet the state of your gut is critically important for your overall health.

If you are experiencing digestive symptoms, isn't it time you did something about it?

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Which of the following resonate with you?

- Bloating
- Belching
- Cramping
- Constipation
- Diarrhoea
- Smell gas
- Alternating bowel movements (sometimes loose, sometimes constipated)
- Gurgling
- Undigested food in stool
- Heartburn
- Indigestion
- Feeling full after small meals
- Less than one bowel movement a day

Good gut health is about so much more than just the digestive system - your gut plays a major role in your immune system and also on your mental health.

The following are also common problems linked to gut health.

Poor overall health
Bad breath
Body odour
Hives
Thrush
Athlete's foot
Brittle nails
Acne
Eczema
Rosacea
Dermatitis
Food intolerance
Difficulty maintaining weight
Arthritis
Anxiety, depression, brain fog
Autoimmune disease (Hashimoto's disease, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, etc.)

So, how long have you been struggling?

Often, by the time a client visits a nutrition professional they have been battling symptoms for at least five years and, frequently, longer.

You don't need to put up with these symptoms of poor health any more! In fact, in order to live a long and healthy life, you MUST take care of your digestive system.

21 digestion rescue plan



The 21-day Digestive Rescue Plan is part information, part diet plan designed to help you improve your digestive health and improve your symptoms. It will also help understand what other factors might be impacting on your symptoms and which tests might be relevant for you to consider.

The programme includes all you'll need to make an informed decision about what might be going on for you PLUS 21 days of easy-to-prepare meals and snacks for you to enjoy.

In this course you will learn:

- The root cause of your digestive issues
- What your digestive symptoms are telling you
- What foods to eat to heal
- How to eat for to improve your digestion and regain your energy
- Which tests might be relevant to resolve your gut issues

If you like what you see, come on in and let's get you started!

Just click **HERE** to sign up.

Disclaimer: This course is not intended as a replacement for medical advice in any way. Always check with your GP or nutritionist before making big changes to your diet or taking new supplements and if you have any concerns about symptoms. There are some symptoms you should always seek advice regarding. These include the following: persistent unexplained pain, unexplained bleeding or discharge, blood in vomit or stools, inability to gain or lose weight, loss of appetite, unexplained weight loss, fissures, black tarry stools.