



*Natural Solutions for Healthy Living*

## Herbs to Help Digestion



Aloe Vera



Chamomile  
*Matricaria recutita*



Peppermint  
*Mentha piperita*

### The Importance of Healthy Digestion

*The digestive process is fundamental to life. In simplest terms, the digestive systems job is: to take in food to break it down so nutrients can be absorbed as a source of life giving energy and eliminate waste.*

*The health of the digestive system has far-reaching effects on overall health. If nutrients are not properly broken down and absorbed, the body can't adequately fuel or repair itself. Everything suffers, from the smallest cells to the largest organs and tissues.*

*Proper elimination is also essential to health and vitality. If uneliminated waste is allowed to stagnate in the colon, the body can become poisoned. Many health problems begin in the colon. If problems in the colon aren't corrected, toxins spread to other tissues and organs, resulting in a wide variety of diseases.*

*The list of potential digestive problems is a long one that includes indigestion, nausea, vomiting, hiatal hernias, peptic and duodenal ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis, diverticulitis, constipation, diarrhea and hemorrhoids.*

*Because most digestive problems are linked to poor nutrition, they respond exceptionally well to proper nutrition and supplementation.*

### How the Digestive System Works

*Every day, the average adult processes about two-and-a-half gallons of*

*food through some 30 feet of digestive organs.*

*Enzymes have an integral function in proper digestion. Some are produced by the body, while others are present in food.*

*After food is swallowed, it travels down the throat to the esophagus. The esophagus is the most common site of heartburn.*

*The stomach churns and mixes the food into a paste called chyme to allow for further digestion. Digestive juices further break down food.*

*From the stomach food passes into the duodenum, where digestion continues with the help of secretions from the gallbladder. Next food passes into the small intestines.*

### The Small Intestine, Liver, Gallbladder & Pancreas

*In the small intestine digestion of starches, proteins and fats occurs with secretions from the liver gallbladder, pancreas and intestines.*

*About 90% of nutrient absorption takes place in the small intestine.*

*Each day the liver manufactures anywhere from a pint to a quart of a bitter alkaline substance known as bile, which is stored in the gallbladder. Bile is released into the small intestine and, with the help of enzymes, breaks down fatty materials.*

*The pancreas is located behind the stomach in the upper left side of the abdomen. This important organ secretes enzymes and hormones—one of the most well-known is insulin—which are*

needed for the digestion and absorption of food.

### The Large Intestine and Rectum

Components of food that are not absorbed in the small intestine are moved into the large intestine. More nutrients and water are absorbed and then remaining waste matter is eliminated through the rectum.

Generous amounts of dietary fiber are essential for colon health. Fiber helps speed the passage of waste through the colon and out of the body for elimination.

When fiber-poor foods are standard fare in a person's diet, un-eliminated food can build up and stagnate, creating numerous problems for the colon and eventually, the whole body. Low fiber consumption is linked to almost all diseases of the colon, as well as many types of cancers.

A healthy intestine is home to millions of beneficial bacteria that assist in the absorption of nutrients and manufacture vitamins, including vitamin K and the B-complex family. They also keep harmful bacteria in check. The most well-known of these friendly bacteria is *Lactobacillus acidophilus*.

Antibiotics kill beneficial bacteria along with harmless ones, allowing yeasts and other harmful organisms to proliferate. This can increase susceptibility to food allergies, digestive discomforts and infection from harmful microorganisms.

### Enzymes

Enzymes are protein substances that act as catalysts in countless actions in the body, including the digestion of food and repair of tissue.

Each of the thousands of enzymes in the body has a specialized function.

Without enzymes, life could not exist.

The body manufactures some enzymes, but it also gets enzymes from food.

### The Large Intestine and Rectum

Even low levels of heat can destroy food enzymes, making it important to eat plenty of raw foods.

If one eats a diet devoid of raw foods,

the body's supply of enzymes becomes overtaxed, increasing susceptibility to low energy, illness and disease.

### Common Causes of Digestive Problems

The first step in solving digestive problems is to determine where they begin. Listed are the most common causes of problems.

Appropriate herbs and supplements will be needed to target specific problems or weaknesses.

- Eating the Wrong Types of Food
- Stress
- Lactose Intolerance
- Not Chewing Food Well
- Food Allergies
- Enzyme Deficiency
- Overeating and Constant Snacking
- Imbalance of Beneficial Bacteria
- Poor Elimination
- Constipation

### Helpful Herbs for Constipation

- Aloe Vera Juice
- Cascara Sagrada
- Flax Seed
- Licorice Root
- Psyllium Hulls
- Senna
- Apple Pectin

### Helpful Herbs for Heartburn

- Ginger
- Goldenseal
- Gentian
- Fennel
- Catnip
- Food Enzymes

### Helpful Herbs for Ulcers

- Aloe Vera Juice
- Capsaicin
- Chamomile
- Evening Primrose oil
- Goldenseal
- Licorice Root
- Papaya
- Slippery Elm

### Helpful Herbs for Irritable Bowel Syndrome

- Garlic
- Ginger
- Peppermint Oil
- Psyllium Hulls
- Slippery Elm
- Chamomile
- Food Enzymes
- Acidophilus
- Essential Fatty Acids

### Helpful Herbs for Diverticulosis

- Psyllium Husk
- Slippery Elm
- Garlic
- Charcoal
- Food Enzymes
- Acidophilus
- Chlorophyll

### Helpful Herbs for Hemorrhoids

- Psyllium Husk
- Guar Gum
- Butcher's Broom
- Aloe Vera Juice

### Summary of the Digestive System

Because the digestive system supplies fuel for all bodily functions, it is essential to eat foods and use supplements when necessary, that build, rather than hinder, the digestive process. Most problems with the digestive system can be traced to poor dietary choices.