



Feel Your Best By Taking Care of Your Digestive Health

It's the time of year for holiday treats and fun, which we all deserve to enjoy without causing havoc on our insides. Heartburn, constipation, indigestion, bloating, and weight gain are just a few of the "heavy hitters" that can put a damper on a joyous time. Thankfully, by following a few basic tips, you can keep your insides functioning in tip-top shape through the holiday season.

Know your body! We all know the foods that do not sit well with us. If you know that eating dairy is going to cause you to run to the bathroom during your holiday party or leave you bloated and uncomfortable for days, avoid it. Know your trigger foods and steer clear of them.

Eat more fiber. Add in those veggies and fruits. They support your microbiome, which not only helps you maintain a healthy gut but also helps boost your immune system. Don't forget to increase your water intake as you increase fiber in your diet.

Manage stress. Stress can cause bloating and heartburn. Since stress is not avoidable, learning how to deal with it is key. Take time to add in some relaxation time, meditation, or yoga. Try downloading some apps like Calm or Headspace, and use them for at least 10 minutes daily.

Consider limiting fried foods, as these are known to cause heartburn and stomach upset. Choose to consume these foods only occasionally or not at all, and fill your plate with high-fiber foods such as veggies to help keep you full and satisfied, but without the guilt or stomachache.

Eat a balanced diet. Don't eliminate entire food groups from your diet, such as carbohydrates, as this will only lead you to load up on them at social gatherings (leaving you feeling guilty and your gut unhappy). Eating a balanced diet filled with veggies, fruits, proteins and whole grains will help prevent intestinal issues.

Get those steps in! Daily exercise can not only help with stress but can help keep excess holiday weight off. It will also keep your digestive system running smoothly. Aim for 10,000 steps a day. Park at the end of the parking lot rather than right next to your destination to get some extra steps in as you're out and about.

Just slow down. Sit and enjoy your meals with family and friends. Try to put your utensils down periodically during your meals, or take some breaths between sips and bites, to allow yourself time to feel full (and not overly full due to eating too fast). This is also a great way to practice intuitive eating and exercise portion control.