

# The 6 Keys To Great Digestive Health



Digestive health is one of those things that many of us don't even consider until something goes wrong, however the health of our digestion actually has a big impact upon the rest of our day to day lives. Maintaining healthy digestion can not only help with issues such as constipation, diarrhea, stomach ache, heartburn and bloating, but it can also help prevent serious life threatening diseases.

## 1. Begin With Breakfast

Many of us have heard the expression 'Breakfast is the most important meal of the day!'. It provides us with the energy needed for the day ahead, but it also aids in maintaining a healthy weight by stimulating the metabolism and getting the digestive system working first thing. Try to make sure you have a healthy breakfast that is high in fibre to support your digestive function.

## 2. Enjoy A Variety Of High Fibre Foods

Fibre is crucial to digestive health and we may be surprised by just how much we need to be consuming on a daily basis in order to maintain a healthy digestive system. Not only that, there are actually 3 types of fibre and that we need to be eating. These include:

- **Soluble fibre** found in oats, barley, legumes, vegetables and fruits with skins left on. This works to slow the rate in which food passes through the stomach and small intestines, which increases the amount of nutrients that can be absorbed here.
- **Insoluble fibre** found in wheat bran and other wheat based cereals as well as pasta and quinoa. This fibre increases the time in which waste passes through

the large intestine, which decreases the amount of toxins that become stored in the bowel. It also creates a softer and more regular bowel movement.

- **Resistant starch** found in cooked pasta and potatoes as well as legumes and fresh (not too ripe) bananas. This works to create good bacteria, when it is fermented in the large intestines, that forms short chained fatty acids. These fatty acids are integral to cell health within the bowels.

### **3. Drink Plenty Of Water**

Aim to drink 6-10 glasses of water per day (depending on your size) to help with the digestive process. A good way to ensure you are drinking enough is that your urine should stay an almost clear colour. The reason this is so important with digestion is the amount of liquid the body uses during the digestion process. Approximately 6 litres of fluid travel through the digestive system that have come from the stomach juices, liver, pancreas, biliary system, and small intestines. Much of this is reabsorbed by the body, however if you are dehydrated then it makes it more difficult for the body to produce these digestive juices.

### **4. Assist Your Digestion With Probiotics**

You can use probiotic supplements to enhance the body's naturally occurring good bacteria. This aids in many aspects of digestion, including the breakdown of fibre in the bowel, maintaining the correct pH balance, help in stool production and passing as well as combating nasty bacteria.

### **5. Don't Cut Carbs!**

Because of new weight loss fads, people are opting to reduce or remove carbohydrates from their diet. This not only reduces the amount of energy they have to get up and exercise, but it will also affect the health and function of their digestive system. Many of these healthy complex carbs come from foods that also provide us with the necessary fibre we need to keep our digestive system on track.

### **6. Consider Your Lifestyle**

There are many other lifestyle factors that will be impacting on the health and function of your digestive system. These include things such as alcohol and caffeine consumption, general diet, regularity of sleep, stress and smoking.