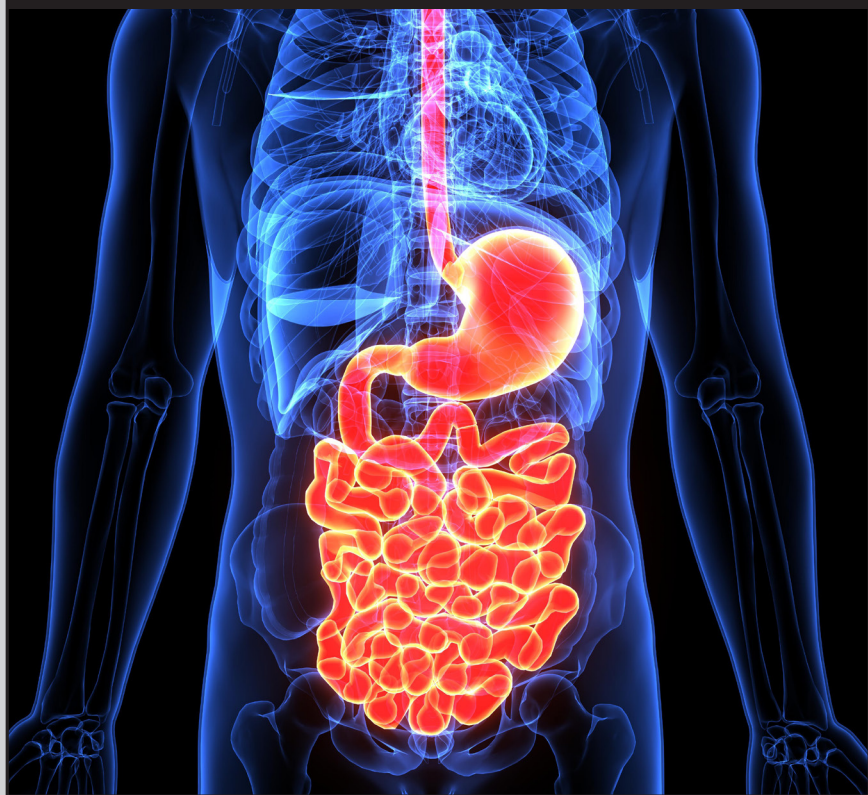




Healthy Choices For A Better Life

SPECIAL REPORT



8 Super Cures **for Better Digestion and a** **Healthy Colon**

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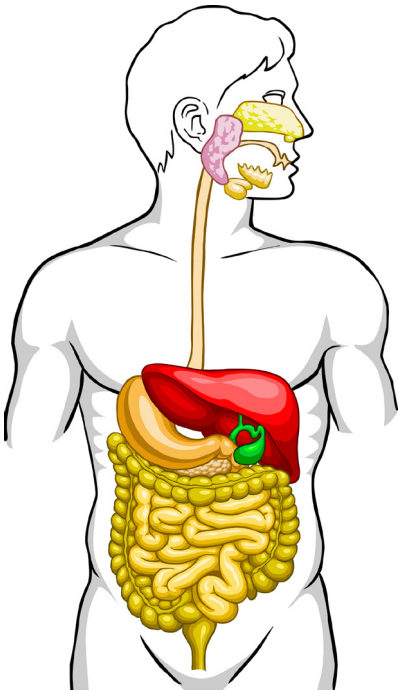
8 Super Cures for Better Digestion and a Healthy Colon

The moment a forkful of food enters your mouth it has begun the journey southward through your digestive system. Your body and its various parts work to move pieces of food along and break them down as far as possible, retrieving the chemical components of that piece of broccoli or slice of turkey so your body can use them. The entire reason you eat – other than for taste – is performed by your

digestive tract.

You might not think digestion begins when you're chewing, but it's true: that saliva is secreting an enzyme that is already starting to digest starch into small pieces¹. Then food travels through several "hollow" organs, along the twisting route from your mouth to your anus. Muscles in your esophagus, stomach and intestine allow the walls of each organ to move, propelling food and liquid along. Digestive juices are produced by "mucosa," that is the lining of your digestive tract, your liver and your pancreas. These juices contain the enzymes that break down the food into nutrients that are absorbed into your body for energy, and for all the roles that vitamins and minerals perform in your body.

The digestive system exists because the sandwich we eat, for example, may look good, and it's lovely to bite into, but for our body it is not in a form that can be used for nourishment. All food must be changed into small nutrient molecules so that they can be absorbed into the blood.



The main things our digestive system is preoccupied with are carbohydrates, vitamins, protein, fats, water and salt.

Like many other health concerns, digestion problems tend to be symptoms of another disease or disorder. However, even those people with a clean bill of health can suffer from the occasional bout of indigestion, flatulence, or stomach cramping. If you have ongoing problems with digestion, it is wise to see your health care practitioner for a professional opinion. Because there are hidden causes that could be leading to indigestion, excessive flatulence, abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, heartburn and bloating.

8 Shocking hidden causes

1. Gallstones

Although it is women who are most often affected by gallstones, they also occur in men. Up to 22 million people in the United States may have gallstones at any given time. That is about one in every 12 Americans!² What's more, is that they usually go undetected and become a hidden cause of what seems to be digestive trouble. They are called "stones" for a reason, as calcium, cholesterol and salts

that form in your gallbladder can harden and either one stone, or a cluster of small ones. Try not to flinch when you read that they can grow to the size of a golf ball.

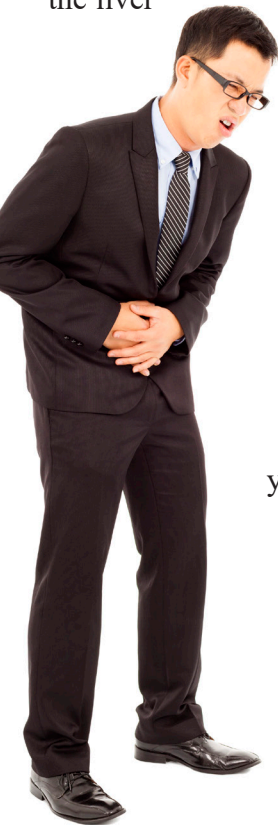
Digestive symptoms include vomiting, loss of appetite and consistent pain following every meal. Accompanying these symptoms may be a fever, nausea or yellowish skin. They can be completely painless, thus "silent," and in these cases they secretly cause some intestinal problems. At their painful apex, gallstones can really hurt your abdomen or lower back. Sometimes, but rarely, they lead to serious health problems, usually when they have caused an infection of some sort. About 800,000 people head to hospital each year because of painful gallstones.³

For relief:

Here's the first course of action: drink water, and then more water. The hint here is that water is good. Alter your diet so that it is very low in sugar, fat and refined products. Instead eat a lot of fibrous foods, and as many fruits and vegetables as you can get your hands on. The best ones for gallstones are cabbage, oranges, peas and carrots.

Also, there are some herbal

remedies that can help dissolve the stones and alleviate uncomfortable symptoms. An excellent option for reducing symptoms of gallstones is milk thistle (420 mg a day), which increase bile production and lowers cholesterol levels in the body.⁴ Turmeric is the spice that turns curry dishes yellow – in Germany it's a popular treatment for reducing the symptoms of gallstones.⁵ Another herb, celandine, is widely touted for its ability to treat gallstones and help the liver with bile production.



2. Fructose intolerance

Haven't heard of this one before, have you?

Well, in case you don't know, it's a relatively unknown condition that has some dreadful side effects that would indicate digestive

troubles. Most experts write fructose intolerance off as very rare, but in truth the condition is not well understood and there is no accurate ways to figure out just how much of a risk it could be. So far, the most frequent rates are pegged at one in 10,000 people.⁶ It is a hereditary disorder where your body cannot metabolize fructose (a kind of sugar molecule), resulting in its build-up in the liver, kidneys and intestine. Its subsequent hypoglycemic reaction means the person can feel major abdominal pain and vomiting. You might suspect there is a fructose problem should you experience these symptoms continually after eating foods that list it as an ingredient. But to be truly diagnosed, a doctor must perform a test on enzyme activity, or a "fructose tolerance test."

For relief:

There is but one way to relieve the abdominal symptoms of this rare genetic disorder, and you've probably figured it out already: avoid fructose. But also, you need to avoid sucrose and sorbitol as well, two other sugars that can cause problems. It takes some effort to adhere to this diet, but there are many people in our society doing it. When you have

no other choice, it's not so hard to stick to it. First, ease up on your sweet tooth. Gather nutritional information to see which foods are safe. Here is a small sampling of foods you can eat safely:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Certain meats – (beef, chicken, pork, veal, lamb, turkey and fish)
- Certain vegetables – (asparagus, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, green beans, green peppers, lettuce, spinach and wax beans)
- Potatoes (not sweet)
- Spaghetti
- Cereals without sugar
- Soda crackers and saltines
- Butter, margarine and oil



- Coffee and tea
- Vegetable juice
- Soups
- Diet beverages

The notable exceptions include some fruits, ham, bacon, lunchmeats, some

bread, mayonnaise and certain condiments. Because of the lack of fruits, it may be wise to supplement with vitamins and minerals.

3. Overuse of antacids

It is possible that antacids are not the solution to an upset stomach at all, but instead can actually exacerbate the problem. People take antacids orally to help with heartburn, a troublesome stomach or indigestion. They can work effectively by lowering levels of stomach acid that are often the culprit. They should only ever be used occasionally, temporarily. But sometimes a reverse effect happens and your digestive problem continues unabated. There is no guarantee that antacids won't cause severe, continuous constipation, feelings of discomfort and a loss of appetite. It's possible they push levels of stomach acid so low that it allows invasive bacteria to flourish and lead to an ulcer.⁷

For relief:

The obvious cure for this hidden cause is to halt your use of that particular antacid. You may try switching types of antacids, for they come as calcium carbonate, aluminum carbonate, magnesium hydroxide, aluminum hydroxide and magnesium oxide. But better

yet, you should probably stop using antacids altogether if they do nothing to stop your stomach problems. Because in doing nothing, they might be prolonging your troubles. Instead of relying on antacids, try the herbal route with ginger, celandine, artichoke, “deglycyrrhizinated” licorice and milk thistle – all of which are potentially capable of bringing down your digestive ill symptoms.

4. *Helicobacter pylori*

This is the hidden cause behind a significant number of stomach ulcers. One myth is that spicy foods and stress can aggravate ulcers – but this is not true. The presence of *H. pylori* in patients who suffer duodenal ulcers is very high – in some studies, 100% of the patients had been infected. Those who have peptic ulcers are very likely to have had *H. pylori* in the past 10 years. For both, the bacteria directly caused the vast majority of cases.⁸

What happens, is that your immune system reacts to the bacteria and causes inflammation in your intestinal system. The bacteria can produce “cytotoxins” that are linked to gastric and peptic ulcers. The infection can also reduce the levels of ascorbic acid

within the digestive juice. The bacteria can move very fast while staying alive inside your stomach – despite the acidic conditions. Ulcer symptoms include pain during an empty stomach, nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite.

For relief:

Doctors typically administer antimicrobial therapy. That’s about 10 to 14 days of one or two different types of antibiotics. This helps to kill the *H. pylori* bacteria, and is usually an effective treatment.

If you prefer the natural route, you do have a couple of options. The first is “deglycyrrhizinated” licorice, which can help heal the mucus membranes in your stomach – the ones swollen by the infection.⁹ Some trials have found it as good, or better than a popular drug for peptic ulcers, with fewer recurrences of ulcer growth. Doctors suggest taking one or two chewable tablets about 15 minutes before eating and an hour before bedtime.

The amino acid glutamine is your other option, as it is reported to help people who suffer peptic ulcers. It’s not as proven as the licorice, but you can try taking 500 to 1,000 mg, two or three times a day during an ulcer.

5. Excess gas

Let's revert to schoolyard topics here for a moment and discuss what is usually not discussed with friends at dinner parties, or strangers in line at the grocery store. What could be more hidden than the invisible gas inside us all that can create bloating and uncomfortable cramps as a result of digestion?

Everyone gets gas. In fact, people generally expel gas about 14 times a day (including burping). Gas comes primarily from swallowing air and when friendly bacteria in your colon breakdown certain undigested foods. (We know most famously of beans, which contain enzymes that produce gas in your stomach.) This gas may be the hidden cause, and when we turn to relief we must look into prevention.

For relief:

Doctors sometimes tell people to eat fewer gas-producing foods, but this could cut a lot of nutrients from your diet. Here's a few tips on making beans and peas less gaseous: there should be two to three times as much water as there are legumes when cooking. Bring the water to a boil, then turn down the heat and allow the beans

to simmer until they are tender. Take them out and rinse them. Then cook them in new, fresh water. This helps cut down on the indigestible sugars in legumes that produce gas.



Also limit your intake of foods high in saturated fat, as they can increase discomfort. It allows your stomach to empty more quickly, permitting gas to escape into the small intestine. Through a process of trial and error, figure out which foods cause you the most gas problems and cut them out or down. You can try taking an antacid temporarily if you are very uncomfortable or are even experiencing gas-related pains in the abdomen.

To limit the amount of air you swallow, be sure to avoid

chewing gum or eating snacks that involve having your mouth open continuously. Also, eat slowly because military-like quick eating increases the likelihood you are gulping mouthfuls of air along with that meal.

6. Celiac disease

This disease can happen to anyone. For every 133 people in North America, it's figured that one will have a hidden case of celiac disease, which slowly damages your small intestine and impairs your body's ability to absorb nutrients.¹⁰ It will always be hidden at first. An individual will experience cramping, bloating, fatigue, gas, muscle cramps and chronic diarrhea. Also, intestinal problems will occur soon after eating, nearly every time. Their bones and joints could be in pain as well. Although you may have an idea because its main trait is that it "runs in the family," celiac disease can be triggered suddenly by surgery, pregnancy, viral infections or stress.

Anyway, the disease is based on sensitivity to gluten – the protein found in rye, wheat, and barley, which happen to be ingredients in a great number of

common foods. Gluten is the one that destroys part of the lining of the small intestine, interfering with the absorption of nutrients. Even a small amount of gluten can cause damage, and sometimes no symptoms will be apparent. Celiac disease is a lifelong digestive disorder that could be the cause of digestive problems.

For relief:

There is one way to avoid the painful, frustrating effects of this intestinal illness: avoid gluten forever. There is no other way to look at it – you must immediately develop a lifestyle of gluten avoidance. You must remove all grains that damage your intestines, and need to start examining food labels closely looking for any sources of the aforementioned grains and their derivatives. Wheat and barley is used commonly, so maintaining this diet won't be without a challenge, although most vegetables and fruit are gluten-free. Make sure to get a diagnosis of CD before doing anything like this.

7. Blind loop syndrome

This hidden cause sounds as if it occurs when you're aboard a particularly frightening roller

coaster. But this ailment is not fun. This syndrome is caused by a blocked intestine, through which any digested food cannot pass. The food sits there instead, in the midst of your intestine, and collects boatloads of bacteria that lead to nutritional deficiencies because vitamins and minerals can't be properly absorbed.¹¹

This can remain hidden until a doctor diagnoses it after taking an X-ray, or doing a CT scan, a stool test, or even a breath test (looking for signs of bacteria). All you notice is an unwillingness to eat anything, nausea, bloating, loss of appetite and diarrhea. In particular, the bacteria uses up all of the vitamin B-12 in your system, causing a deficiency. Blind loop

syndrome often erupts after surgery performed somewhere near the stomach.

For relief:

Natural remedies are not the best bet for this condition. Because of the incredibly high build-up of bacteria in the intestine, the first mode of treatment is antibiotics. You should also supplement with vitamin B-12 to avoid any side effects of its deficiency. Unfortunately, should long-term antibiotics prove unsuccessful, you'll need surgery to correct the obstruction in order to get food flowing freely again.

8. Drug side effects

Whether obtained by a prescription, or retrieved over the counter, there



are infinite amounts of medications that will cause gastrointestinal disturbances and perceived digestive problems. Among the most common drug side effects – meaning they have found in many cases during clinical studies – is upset stomach, diarrhea and bloating. In addition, heartburn, indigestion and abdominal pain also occur frequently as a result of drugs.

We could try to compile a complete list, but it would simply be too long. It's best simply to assume that any drug you take, from Aspirin to warfarin can cause potential side effects. Speaking of Aspirin, we'll look at one example: Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). These ubiquitous pain relievers can cause stomach irritation by weakening the stomach's lining, and thereby making it more susceptible to acid's effects.

For relief:

Know that the two biggest reasons you get digestive side effects are from mixing two or more drugs (causing a drug interaction), or by overusing a medicine. Both can cause mild to severe complications.

The simplest way to relieve your problem is to drop a medication, or reduce dosage if you are able to. You should speak to your doctor before making any decisions.

Here are a few good rules to follow regarding drugs. Make sure you truly need to take the drug (ask if there is any other way to treat your health issue, including alternative means). Before you get a prescription, give your doctor all pertinent information, including any supplements or drugs you currently take. If you can't remember, bring them all to your next appointment! For proper relief, jot down what symptoms you have experienced, when they occurred and any new problems that have arisen. Always follow the directions on a label, and understand any medicine you take. Don't ever pop pills with ignorance.

A couple more relief ideas: aim for "coated" tablets as often as possible, as they cause fewer stomach effects. Don't drink alcohol while taking drugs, and take medicine with liquid and food.

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