

5 Ways to Keep Your Digestive System Healthy

Good digestion is an important part of your overall health and wellness. Your dietary and lifestyle habits can have a big impact on your digestive tract, and making healthy choices can help you avoid bloating, indigestion, heartburn, and other unpleasant issues. No one's diet is perfect all of the time, but some small adjustments could have great benefits for your digestion. Here are five tips for a healthy digestive system:

1. Drink Plenty of Water

Water is essential for so many aspects of your health, including your digestion. When you're hydrated, your body has plenty of water to soften your stool, which helps you avoid gastrointestinal discomfort. The general recommendation is to drink at least eight cups of water per day, but you may need to drink more depending on your size and activity level.

Not only is it important to drink enough water, but you should also be careful about what water you drink. Filtered water is the best for your digestive system as it greatly reduces your risk of ingesting harmful contaminants or bacteria. Choose the best water filter to keep at home so that you always have access to clean water.

2. Get Enough Fiber

Fiber is the most important nutrient when it comes to digestion, so your diet should include both soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber draws water into your digestive tract to break down and soften its contents, and insoluble fiber adds bulk to the stool to help it pass through the tract.

Some of the best sources of dietary fiber include vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains. Fortunately, these items are fairly easy to add to your diet as side dishes to meals or as snacks throughout the day. You can also take fiber supplements to strengthen your digestive system, but experts state that dietary fiber is better than supplements.

3. Consume Probiotics

Probiotics are microorganisms that provide healthy bacteria for your digestive tract. A healthy gastrointestinal tract contains a variety of beneficial bacteria that keep everything in balance, and probiotics can be a great way to improve your gut health if you haven't been feeling well.

Probiotics are found in fermented foods, including yogurt, kimchee, and kefir. They're also available in supplement form if you can't add probiotic foods to your diet.

4. Reduce Your Intake of Fatty Foods

While there are many benefits to eating healthy fats, if your diet consists of too many fatty foods, your digestive health might suffer. Fat slows down the digestive process because fat molecules cannot be broken down by water-based digestive enzymes. A diet high in fat, especially in fried foods, can lead to bloating, constipation, and other issues. To avoid this problem, limit your consumption of dairy products and other high-fat items, and opt for leaner cuts of meat.

You shouldn't cut fat out of your diet entirely, though. Instead of avoiding fat altogether, try to pair fatty foods with high-fiber foods so that the digestive benefits of the fiber counteract the fat. By strategically planning your meals to include both nutrients, you can meet all of your dietary needs while maintaining good digestive health.

5. Follow a Consistent Eating Schedule

No matter what you eat, following a regular eating schedule can benefit your digestive health. Overeating at certain meals or going too long between meals can overwork your digestive system, so you'll experience far less discomfort if you stick to consistent eating patterns.

This doesn't mean that you have to eat at the exact same time every day. Keeping the same general schedule as much as possible can help, though. Try to eat every three or four hours so that your stomach can digest your food properly between meals.

You don't have to eat a flawless diet every day for good digestion. If you drink enough water, incorporate fiber into your meals, and cut back on certain products, you'll likely see a noticeable improvement in your digestive health. Be sure to consult with your doctor if you have serious concerns about your digestion as everyone's medical needs differ. However, most people are able to maintain a healthy and functional digestive tract simply through their dietary choices.