

## BASIC NUTRITIONAL APPROACHES FOR STOMACH AND INTESTINAL SYMPTOMS AND DISORDERS

- I. Avoid or minimize gastric stimulants, highly allergenic foods and/or specific foods which cause you problems
  - A. Gastric Stimulants
    1. High fat and/or fried foods
    2. Caffeine-containing foods (coffee, chocolate, tea, etc.)
    3. Alcohol
    4. Spicy and hot foods
    5. Sugars – in all forms including fruit juice (and most fruit if not tolerated)
    6. Smoking
    7. Others, if necessary, depending upon your reaction – e.g. tomatoes (acidic) and/or nightshade vegetables, carbonated beverages, onions and/or garlic
  - B. Highly Allergenic Foods
    1. Milk and dairy products – many people with these symptoms are lactose intolerant and unable to tolerate cheeses, yogurt, etc.
    2. Wheat and flour products – especially those containing yeast such as bread, but also wheat products such as pasta, crackers, etc.
    3. Corn and corn products
    4. Citrus fruits
    5. Peanuts and peanut butter
    6. Coffee (even decaffeinated)
    7. Shellfish
    8. Others that you react to
  - C. Some General Guidelines to Evaluate for Your Experience
    1. Cooked vegetables are often tolerated better than raw vegetables
    2. Lower fat is often tolerated better than higher fat
    3. Soups and stews are often tolerated well (especially with a ginger seasoning)
    4. Of the complex carbohydrates, starchy vegetables (e.g. sweet potatoes, carrots, etc.) are often tolerated better than whole grains or beans
    5. Nuts are often not digested well – try a nut butter like almond butter or tahini

- II. Stress is a major factor that everyone with stomach and intestinal problems must address – it does stimulate acid secretion, too
  - A. Exercise
    - 1. Helps to alleviate or discharge stress and tension; and may help in other ways such as relaxing abdominal muscles, carrying nutrients to abdominal tissues and carrying toxins away, cellular detoxification, and possibly others
    - 2. Stretching, exercise and/or light weights should be done every day even if just for 5-15 minutes.
  - B. Relaxation Techniques
    - 1. Physical techniques – including yoga, tai chi, chi gong, etc.
    - 2. Biofeedback, meditation, guided imagery, breathing exercises
    - 3. Hobby/fun approaches – gardening, playing music, singing, juggling, reading, etc. Make sure you are relaxing and not worrying about things, arguing with people, watching the time or involved in other ‘mind sets.’
- III. Other important guidelines
  - A. Eating-related
    - 1. Chew your food well and eat slowly. Put your fork down between bites.
    - 2. Eat smaller, more frequent meals (4-6 times per day) and avoid over-eating
    - 3. Don’t eat too much too late or when you are too tired
    - 4. Avoid temperature extremes – too hot or too cold
    - 5. Eat in a relaxed environment – not at your desk or watching television
  - B. Miscellaneous
    - 1. Lose weight if needed
    - 2. Wait 2-3 hours before lying down
    - 3. Go for a walk after eating if you are able
    - 4. Wear loose fitting clothing
    - 5. Check with your physician regarding medications that may irritate the esophageal lining such as: calcium channel blockers, tricyclic antidepressants, progesterone, antibiotics such as tetracycline, non-steroid anti-inflammatory drugs (aspirin, Tylenol, etc.), potassium chloride, iron salts, anticholinergics
    - 6. Antacids alter gastric pH, may prolong gastric emptying time, hinder protein digestion and contribute to “dysbiosis”, ultimately aggravating GERD
    - 7. Try healing foods/nutrients such as ginger seasoning, aloe vera juice, plant-based digestive enzymes (bromelain, papain), chamomile tea (warm)