

Wellness Newsletter

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Featured Story:

Let's Talk Gut Health



About 80% of our immune system is located in the gut. Every time we eat or drink, our body is ready to prevent potential death. We are taking something from the environment and allowing it to enter our body – and we do this multiple times a day! Therefore, anything foreign that enters our body drops right into a vat of acid. Stomach acid kills most bacteria and viruses that enter the body every day.

The gut is lined from top to bottom in order to keep the contents sequestered until they are determined safe. Our body wants to reserve the right to transport only essential compounds into the blood stream for specific purposes. Designed into the gut lining we have the gastrointestinal associated lymphoid tissue (GALT) which is tasked with discriminating between harmful and harmless substances and maintaining the status quo.

In addition to many human immune cells in the gut, there are many microbes which serve to protect the health of our bodies. Research demonstrates that gut microbiota play a crucial role in intestinal immunity, acting not only as immune modulators but also to manufacture specific immune cells. A growing body of research connects our gut to many health conditions such as autism, eczema, autoimmune disease, mood disorders, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome and inflammatory bowel disease – just to name a few.

As our understanding of normal gut function deepens, so does our understanding of how gut dysregulation can develop. Science has demonstrated that many of our daily activities can have a negative effect on the gut, including ingestion of herbicides, pesticides, high fructose corn syrup, simple carbohydrates, food additives, preservatives, dyes, plastics, chemicals, acid reducers, saturated fats and sugars. The articles in this issue will all discuss gut related subjects to help readers have a pleasant holiday season!

Protect Your Gut During The Holidays



The holidays are upon us, which means indulging in plenty of comfort and holiday foods. While snacking on childhood favorites can connect us with memories from our past, many people will suffer from weight gain, skin changes, altered sleep, altered moods,

and abdominal discomfort throughout this holiday season. In an effort to make the best of this fruitful time of plenty, it is beneficial to take some steps to maintain gut health while still enjoying seasonal dishes.

Meal prep and cook from scratch. Remember to take time to shop for healthy ingredients regularly so that when it is time to head into the kitchen you have everything needed to prepare a meal. Plan your menu and make shopping a relaxing experience, embracing this time as a self-care activity that you enjoy. Purchase natural ingredients and cook your meals from scratch – knowing exactly what you are eating is a great first step to caring for your gut.

Eat plenty of vegetables. Organic vegetables are a low calorie, clean source of vitamins, minerals and resistant starch. Eating half your plate filled with vegetables, and aiming for nine servings of vegetables a day, is a great way to feel full and satisfied while maintaining nutrient intake and keeping your weight stable. The resistant starch in vegetables feeds the gut microbiome, maintains stable blood sugar levels and can improve the immune function of the gut.

Take time to destress. Stress is known to cause increased intestinal permeability, or “leaky gut,” which can lead to symptoms of bloating, belching, flatulence, variable stools and abdominal discomfort. Additionally, increased intestinal permeability is directly associated with food intolerances, eczema, allergies and autoimmune disease. By taking the time to destress during this holiday season (a hot bath, yoga, meditation, gentle walking, dancing, painting ...), it is possible to decrease added stress on the gut lining.

Balance protein and carbohydrates. To avoid weight gain and increased systemic inflammation, make sure to always combine protein and fiber with a carbohydrate. Do not forget that favorite holiday drinks are often high in calories and sugars, so be sure

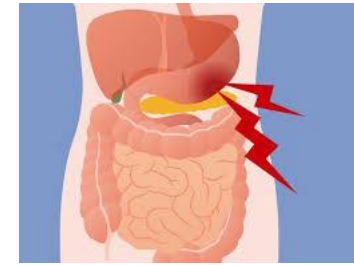
to pair your egg nog with a warm apple or pear with flax seed spread and cinnamon.

Intermittent fasting. Fasting for 12 to 16 hours is a great way to allow the body to use up stored calories, reset the metabolism and balance the gut microbiome. Ideally, the best hours of the day to eat are between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm. However, with holiday parties and events, these hours are not realistic for most people. The best tips are to not eat four hours prior to bed and fast at least 12 hours between meals.

**Only I can change my life.
Nobody else can do it for me.
Carol Burnett**

**Life is 10% what happens to you
and 90% how you react to it.
Charles Swindoll**

**Every man desires to live long,
but no man wishes to be old.
Jonathon Swift**



For decades doctors have been prescribing acid reducing medications for patients with symptoms of reflux, abdominal bloating and heartburn.

Research now demonstrates that long term use of acid reducers known as proton pump inhibitors (PPI’s) leads to irritable bowel syndrome, Vitamin B12 deficiency and increased risk of fractures from a fall. By decreasing stomach acid in millions of people for many years, the value of stomach acid has become clear. We realize that stomach acid is necessary as a first line of defense against microbial infections. Stomach acid is necessary to bathe the upper portion of the small intestine to keep the area clear of bacterial colonization. Additionally, stomach acid is necessary for gastric motility (normal stomach movement for digestion) and for absorption of many vitamins and minerals.

There is a large body of evidence which demonstrates that often low stomach acid leads to reflux, rather than high stomach acid. Knowing that stomach acid promotes normal muscle contractions needed to empty food in to the duodenum, scientists have been able to determine that when stomach acid is too low, stomach muscles do not function properly. Additionally, food can sit in the stomach for longer periods of time and ferment, causing fullness, bloating and belching.

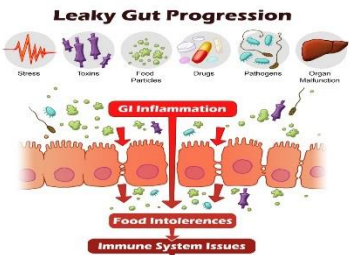
Stomach Acid: Too High or Too Low?

PPI

therapy is necessary when there is high stomach acid that is uncontrolled and refluxes in to the esophagus. Barrett's Esophagus, pre-cancerous changes to the lining of the esophagus, is a sign that acid reflux is happening frequently. If there is a concern regarding reflux or heartburn, visiting a Gastroenterologist and having an upper endoscopy is absolutely necessary. If pre-cancerous changes are found, a short course of PPIs may be necessary. During that time, identifying the underlying cause of stomach issues is essential in order to treat the problem directly.

After a proper evaluation by a Gastroenterologist, it is beneficial to work with a Functional Medicine provider to help determine the underlying cause of stomach issues. Lifestyle, stress, diet and timing of symptoms are all evaluated. A plan is put in place to either help increase or decrease stomach acid production, based on an appropriate comprehensive evaluation.

What Are Signs of Leaky Gut?



Abdominal bloating
Chronic constipation
Chronic loose stool
Joint pain
Hair loss
Loud stomach sounds
Belching

Variable stools from loose to constipated
Sensitive skin prone to rashes/eczema
Flatulence

Chronic sinus infections Headaches Abdominal cramping

The gut is lined with a single cell layer to prevent contents from in the digestive system from going directly in to the blood stream or surrounding tissue. The cells that line the GI tract are held tightly together with proteins such as occludin and zonulin. Research demonstrates that these proteins can be damaged, allowing for increased space between our protective lining. Medically speaking, this leads to a loosening of the tight junctions and leads to a highly permeable gut lining, allowing for proteins from the food we eat to leak directly into the blood stream.

The immune system in our blood is set to recognize "self" and "not-self" substances. So, when we have carrot or chicken proteins leaking into the blood, the body sends out an alarm to attack these unrecognized proteins. It is now well established in the literature that many of these proteins that leak into the blood stream will settle in the skin, lining of the lungs, joints, thyroid or lining of the entire digestive system. This causes chronic inflammation and can lead to many conditions such as asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, Hashimoto's Thyroiditis, eczema and worsening of autoimmune conditions.

To heal the lining of the gut it is important to understand what caused your symptoms from the start. Healing the lining of the gut is individualized and includes specific proteins, amino acids, diet changes and managing the stress response. Many websites now promote fermented foods, but this is not a solution for all people. Some individuals specifically should avoid fermented foods.



Squash has great benefits for your body!

- High in minerals like calcium, potassium and magnesium which can help build strong bones, maintain cardiovascular and neurological health
- High in vitamins B6 and E which protect the brain, reduce Alzheimer's risk, promote positive mood and cardiovascular health
- High in beta carotene which promotes healthy skin and mucous membranes, boosts the immune system and protects the eyes
- High in complex carbohydrates and fiber to keep you full longer and help maintain stable blood sugar levels



Butternut Squash Soup

- 1 medium butternut squash
- 1 large onion
- 3-4 stalks organic celery
- organic butter
- organic chicken broth
- 3-4 bay leaves*
- Asiago cheese
- Pre-heat oven to 350

Cut squash in half lengthwise and place cut side down on a baking sheet. Add 1" of water to baking

sheet and place in oven. Bake for 45 min or until squash is soft.

While the squash is baking, dice the onion and celery into small pieces and sauté on medium low in organic butter using a heavy bottomed pot. When celery and onion are soft, turn off heat and leave in pot.

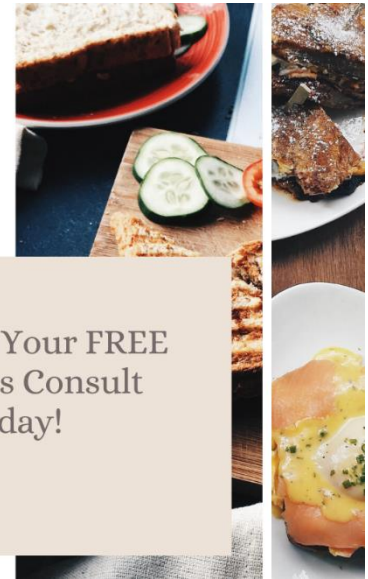
Once squash is soft and cool enough to touch, scoop out flesh into a blender or food processor. Add one box of organic chicken broth and blend the squash. For a less chunky soup, add the sautéed onions and celery – if you like you soup chunky then just add the blended squash to the pot.

Return heat to medium low, add bay leaves and simmer for at least 30 minutes.

Scoop into bowls and top with grated Asiago cheese, salt and pepper.

**Bay leaves have an interesting history. The Romans and Greeks used to make crowns out of bay leaves to signify success – this gave rise to the term "bacalaureate." Bay leaves have medicinal benefits such as improving digestion, reducing flatulence, improves insulin function and decreasing LDL cholesterol.*

Your body hears everything your mind says. Naomi Judd



Schedule Your FREE Wellness Consult Today!

Health and cheerfulness naturally beget each other. Joseph Addison