



“The life you touch for good or ill will touch another life, and that in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place your touch will be felt.”

Fredrick Buechner



September – October – November 2006

Digestive Health

While the climate crisis, resources boom, rising interest rates, tragic death of Australian icons, footy finals and Madonna's new hair cut all clamber for our attention, it seems the exquisite physical laws of nature that transform energy from the foods we eat into the cells of our body are towards the bottom of our list of daily attention priorities. However, if you suffer any of the following:

- Gas
- Bloating
- Headaches
- Burping
- Reflux
- Fatigue after eating
- Constant hunger
- Bowel irregularity
- Muscle joint pains
- Neck, shoulder, middle and lower back pain,

then it might be time to turn your attention to the long hollow tube beginning at your face and ending at your bottom, that has the complexity of a brain part and micromanages how you interact with the outside world of food and water.

Mouth – your body's food processor

That's right, digestion starts here as carbohydrates begin to breakdown. It is also your last chance to actively assist the process of optimal conversion of food to energy, elimination and prevention of unwanted fungi and parasite infestation.

Problem: Chewing too quickly and swallowing prematurely can leave food particles too large for stomach acids to break down and kill the parasites and fungi hiding inside. These parasites can burrow into the small intestine and debilitate the immune system.

Solution: Chew your food until liquefied. Not only will this improve your digestion, but the action of chewing slowly and thoroughly heats up food molecules and releases the most flavour compounds, so you'll get more enjoyment from your meal!

Esophagus – the water slide from mouth to stomach

Problem: gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) can be caused by a backward flow of acid into the esophagus. This can occur when you produce a lot of stomach acid – or over eat late at night or you have a hiatal hernia – you risk becoming bloated and having the fluid top off in your esophagus. Just like when you over fill your petrol tank and the fuel runs out through the opening through which it entered. Your esophagus has less protective lining than your stomach and is much more sensitive. You'll experience a burning sensation in your chest and or throat.

Solution: Avoid late night meals as lying down soon after eating encourages the flow of acid back up your esophagus so you get that burning taste which will intensify GERD. Also avoid spicy foods, caffeine and alcohol.



Stomach – the acid swimming pool at the end of the slide

Problem: Ulcer. You have a very protective layer of mucus that lines the stomach and helps protect it from being injured by acid and digestive fluids. If this erodes (inflammation, infection, alcohol, or spicy foods) and the protective layer is injured, you can develop a stomach ulcer (by providing the optimal environment for nasty bacteria to thrive) which is a raw or open sore in that stomach lining. If you experience pain in the abdominal area (just above the navel) you may need to be treated. Pain may subside with when eating as the food neutralises the stomach acid.

Solution: If it is a bacterial problem you may need antibiotics followed by pro biotics to recolonise the gut with friendly bacteria. Reduce alcohol and spicy foods.

Problem: Bad breath – can come from mouth or stomach. Just like if a sewer main breaks underground, you can smell it on the surface.

Solution: Clean teeth, scrap tongue, mouth wash, floss. If it's coming from your stomach, change your diet. This is a sensitive, personal topic and is important to emphasise that the goal is not to have so called "perfect breath".

Problem: Overeating. Your digestive system has two main hormones that control hunger and appetite. Ghrelin is secreted by the stomach and increases your appetite. When your stomach is empty, it sends out ghrelin requesting food. Leptin tells your brain when you are full. When you eat, your fat cells secrete it so that you stop eating. Some processed foods are designed to inhibit leptin secretion, so you never get the message that you are full. In turn, ghrelin secretion is never shut off so you constantly get the feeling that you are hungry.

Solution: Reduce or eliminate highly processed foods. Get more sleep. Through sleep, the brain plays a role in gut functions. When you don't sleep enough, more ghrelin is secreted and less leptin is released. So lack of sleep can cause you to eat more often.



Gallbladder – stores washing up liquid to clean fat off pans

Food moves from the stomach and into the small intestine and mixes with green bile which emulsifies the fat in your diet, much like the way your washing up liquid dissolves any fat on your fry pan. Although it is made by your liver, the bile is stored in your gall bladder.

Problem: If you notice abdominal discomfort beneath the right rib cage after eating a meal that is high in fat, it may be caused by the formation of gall stones which disrupt the distribution of bile and can cause the gallbladder to swell like a bursting balloon. Most at risk, overweight women in their forties who haven't reached menopause.

Solution: You'll need to see a gallbladder surgeon for this one.

Small Intestine – the spam filter on your email.

It is in this 6-7meter long convoluted tube that most of the food's nutrients are either absorbed or rejected.



Chemically, your intestines are the organ most similar to your brain. The neurotransmitters and hormones are remarkably alike. In fact, antidepressant drugs designed to balance brain chemicals can be a successful treatment for irritable bowel syndrome in some patients.

We are all chemically unique and as such our intestines respond to elements from the outside world differently. It is important to realise that *your small intestine is screaming clues to you, all the time*. The delicate lining is armed with unique immune cells that guard your borders and recognise foods that you (or your ancestors) could not tolerate. If you misbehave, the signals will come in the form of gas or spasms.

Problem: Food intolerances. Symptoms can range from severe abdominal pain to more subtle signs like a touch of the flu – with a runny nose and headache.

Solution: Tune in to the signals of comfort and discomfort coming from your body. Experiment with different combinations of food. Do a mental checklist 2 hours after each meal. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Am I content, or still hungry?
2. Do I feel physically energised or lethargic?
3. Am I mentally alert and stable or scatty and distracted?

You may begin to identify certain foods that are making you feel less than your best. If that is the case, try a 3 day elimination test (completely eliminate one group of foods) and notice how you feel. If you feel better, you might need to stay away from that group of foods for a little longer and re colonise the gut with good bacteria using pro biotics. Here are some groups of food you could try eliminating (one at a time) for a couple of days as a test. Wheat products, Dairy products, Protein, Carbohydrates (including sugar, rice, pasta, potatoes, corn), Fat.

Large Intestine or Colon – the final processing plant

What ever wasn't absorbed by the small intestine is considered waste and shovelled along into the large intestine. Here certain vitamins are produced and useful water is recycled back into your body. There are trillions of bacteria inside a healthy colon. The optimal ratio is 85% friendly to 15% unfriendly.

Problem: Constipation and toxic bowel. This can be a symptom of a build up of unfriendly bacteria in the colon which will disrupt peristalsis (rhythmic contractions that push food along and trigger bowel movements). Think of how food rots and smells if it remains in the garbage for several days, then imagine this process occurring inside your warm, wet intestines... eeeeww!

Solution: Eat a high quality diet including an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables and drink plenty of water. A good guide for optimal water consumption is (your body weight in kgs x 0.033).

Consider a course of high quality pro biotics to increase levels of friendly bacteria. And as always, exercise regularly!

Problem: Diarrhoea

Solution: Severe, acute cases require medication. Chronic problems may benefit from stool bulking with fibre (dietary or supplemental), however this should be introduced gradually to minimise the effects of abdominal gas and bloating.

References:

“How to Eat, Move and Be Healthy” Paul Chek. 2004

“YOU The Owners Manual” Michael Roizen, M.D. and Mehmet Oz, M.D. 2005

Website: www.mydr.com.au

Success Story

Group Fun under the Sun

Congratulations to the Monday 9am Centennial Park group who have been training with Ruthie since July 05. Ineke, the two Margarets, Anne, Susan, Penny, and the two Kates.



These gals know how to get the week off to a good start with a high intensity, fun filled outdoor session. They’ve conquered the hills, handled the hurdles and are now masters of the magic circle (pilates ring).

Most join Ruthie again on Friday 9am at Bronte beach for a similar session where they sometimes head to Bondi or enjoy aquaerobics in the baths.

And what do they like most about the training? “The neck stretches and shoulder roll at the end of class... which means it’s time for coffee and a chat!”

The Fire in Your Belly

In ayurvedic medicine (ancient science of self healing), your ability to digest and assimilate nutrients is considered to be the foundation of optimal health. If your body can’t make use of the nutrients in your food, then all bodily systems will suffer.

Imagine your digestive fire (Agni) is a camp fire. If your digestion is weak (the fire is struggling to stay alight) then you must be careful not to dump too much wood (eat too much food) in one meal, or else you will put out the flames! Also, be careful not to add inflammable material (highly processed food impersonations) or wet wood (healthy foods you may be temporarily intolerant to).

Once you build the intensity of your digestive fire with care and respect and you can sit back and bask in the comforting warmth and toast marshmallows with the ones you love!

What's New?

RISE Featured in New Woman Article

As many of you know, we’ve had the pleasure of training Jennifer Hawkins since February this year.

Check out the article in the latest edition of New Woman magazine which uncovers some the RISE training techniques which help keep her in tip top condition.



If you’re too busy to run out and buy it, why not follow this [link](#) to see the article displayed on our site.

Spot Check – Meal Awareness

Think of your last three meals... What was the texture and temperature of the food? What colours were on your plate? Did you eat off a plate, using utensils? Were you sitting down? Were you in a rush, or did you take your time and savour every morsel?

Regardless of your level of nutritional knowledge, what is your “gut feeling” (pun intended of course!) about your most recent meals?

Were they:

- (a) Water rich foods, bursting with vitamins and minerals?
- (b) Dehydrated and nutritionally void?

Were they:

- (a) Fresh, containing live enzymes to help you digest and assimilate the nutrients into your system?
- (b) Overcooked and lifeless?

Did your meal consist of a majority of:

- (a) Relatively unprocessed whole foods?
- (b) Tasty, very addictive, edible packaged products *impersonating* food?

If you answered (a) to all three questions, WELL DONE... keep up the good work! ☺ If not, then follow this link to our [tips for healthy eating](#).

