

Twelve Ways To Aid Digestion

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Over 34 million Americans have one of the more than 40 gastrointestinal problems collectively called “digestive disease.” Those conditions range from common indigestion to serious, life-threatening illnesses. Digestive disease is the leading cause of time lost from work for male employees. It accounts for 15 percent of all absences from work among employees aged 17 to 64. Though some digestive problems aren’t related to life-style, many are.

Here are twelve ways to aid digestion:

1. Eat a well-balanced diet: Include fresh fruit, vegetables, and whole grain breads and cereals.
2. Eat slowly. Relax for 30 minutes after each meal.
3. Exercise regularly.
4. Be cautious taking over-the-counter medications. Follow your doctor’s instructions for Prescription medicine.
5. Avoid greasy foods.
6. If you are lactose intolerant, eliminate milk and milk products.
7. Don’t skip meals, allowing acid to build up in your stomach.
8. Don’t pacify your hunger with coffee, which increases stomach acid.
9. Don’t take aspirin for a hangover. It can further irritate a stomach already irritated by alcohol.
10. Avoid smoking, which decreases the stomach’s natural bicarbonate, an acid buffer.
11. If you drink, do so only with meals or on a full stomach, so the alcohol won’t irritate the stomach lining.
12. Ask your doctor about the antibacterial properties in over-the-counter medicines containing bismuth. Some studies suggest that certain bacteria may be a contributing cause of stomach ulcers.

Sources: "Prevention Magazine's Giant Book of Health Facts," "Mayo Clinic Family Health Book," Reader's Digest, "Great Health Tips and Handy Hints."