

Ten Healthy Tips to Improve Your Digestive System

1. **Keep Chewing-** Chewing is often underestimated, but it is crucial for proper digestion. The more you break down food in your mouth, the less work has to be done later. Your brain also needs some time to receive the signal that you are full, so take your time and chew eat time 20-30 times before swallowing.
2. **Eat Plenty of Fiber-** It's important that you eat enough fiber – both soluble and insoluble to keep your food moving through your intestines easily. Soluble fiber, like veggies and whole grains, draws in water and helps to prevent stool from being too watery. Insoluble fiber helps to add bulk to stool. Also, because fatty foods are hard to digest, pair such food with fiber.
3. **Drink Water-** Adding plenty of water to your diet will help digestion by dissolving fats and soluble fiber - this allows food to pass through your intestines more easily.
4. **Exercise-** Moving your body - taking walks or Jogs, lifting weights or doing yoga - keeps food moving through your digestive system. Exercise increases blood flow to your organs and engages muscles in the GI tract.
5. **Reduce Stress-** Feelings of stress or anxiety can mess with your digestive system because your brain and digestive system are connected. Stress can lead to digestive problems like IBS and ulcers. Try stress relieving exercises, getting more sleep and/or relaxation techniques.
6. **Eat Warm Foods-** The spleen works best with the warmth and dislikes the cold, and our digestive enzymes require warmth to break down food properly. Try incorporating soups, cooked vegetables or teas into your diet.
7. **Quit Smoking-**Smoking can have a serious negative impact on your digestive system because it weakens the valve at the end of the esophagus, and this leads to acid reflux and heartburn; it also increases the risk of gastrointestinal cancers.
8. **Drink Less Alcohol-** Ever notice how your digestion is a little off after a night of drinking? Alcohol interferes with acid secretion, stomach muscles and nutrient absorption, so be careful not to drink too much.
9. **Lose Weight-** Being even a few pounds over-weight can cause digestive issues; for instance, the valve between the stomach and esophagus sometimes won't close completely, which allows stomach acid back into the esophagus.
10. **Try Probiotics-** Probiotics compete for space with bad bacteria, promote the release of natural antibodies in the digestive tract and can even attack unhealthy bacteria directly in some cases. Research has found that probiotics can ease irritable bowel syndrome.

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