

DIGESTION

Make it work!

Alexa Jarzebowska from **FOODS FOR LIFE** gives the low-down on good digestion



Try this!

E'lifexir 'Flat Tummy' Plus new improved formula contains 20% more fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS) to feed the good intestinal bacteria and ease digestion as well as maintain healthy bowels. Comes as a pleasant, chewable tablet in a handy blister pack (RRP £8.99).

For clearing, try **DTECTA's AntiBloat**; an advanced formulation of probiotic strains and prebiotics to maintain a healthy balance of friendly bacteria in the intestines, support digestive health, aid transit and promote a comfortably flat stomach. Available in 7 one-a-day sachet mixtures, use once a month, or at least every three months.

Optima's Aloe Pura Digestive Aid Juice (500ml, RRP £7.99) is a unique blend of whole leaf and unfiltered inner Aloe Vera gel, peppermint oil, digestive enzymes and a selection of herbs recognised for their soothing properties.

Good digestion starts before food even reaches the mouth. The sight and smell of food stimulates the secretion of saliva and gastric juices.

Once in the mouth, chewing is the next vital step as it breaks down and lubricates the food particles. Chewing well helps avoid any over-sized food particles fermenting in the gut which can lead to bloating. Wave-like muscular contractions of the gut walls then gently squeeze the food through like toothpaste, but if we are stressed, rushed or 'eating on the move' then the body diverts energy away from the gut, so impairing digestion and absorption.

Once through the stomach, which works rather like a mixer, food passes into the intestines where digestion continues and absorption of vital nutrients can begin. The gut is home to more bacteria than there are humans on the planet!

It is the 'beneficial' bacteria we look to encourage and these can be categorised into two groups: 'transient' bacteria, just on holiday as it were; and more permanent 'residential' bacteria which actually attach to the gut lining. Beneficial bacteria, compete with pathogenic (disease-inducing) bacteria

will positively influence immunity, mood, detoxification and the integrity of the gut wall. However, our intestinal ecosystem is a delicate balance and can be disturbed by poor eating habits and diet, stress and antibiotics. Imbalance may lead to digestive problems, low immunity, skin conditions, hormonal imbalances, and allergies. In order to replace our 'residential' bacteria a high-potency, multi-strain supplement from suppliers such as Bio-Kult, Biocare or Biotics is recommended, please see www.optimumnutritionists.com for details.

Another important element is a daily intake of fibre found in fruit, vegetables, oats, brown rice, wholemeal bread and pasta, lentils and beans which help to 'keep us regular' by bulking up our stools so they can move through the gut properly and provide sustenance for our beneficial bacteria.

So what can you do to improve your digestion? Start with sitting down to eat and taking time to enjoy your food, even if it is just fifteen minutes away from your desk. Include 6 portions of vegetables into your daily diet, swap your white carbohydrates for wholegrain products and drink approximately 2 litres of water

each day. If you feel that you would like to talk to a Nutritional Therapist or you want more information then please contact www.optimumnutritionists.com.