

Digestive Health

By Laura Jimenez, M.S.W.

Who doesn't want to eat delicious foods? Unfortunately, many of the foods we choose add unwanted pounds. It is possible not to overindulge and keep your digestive health in mind so that it can work better for you now and in the future. Here are a few guidelines which can make a huge difference:

- (1) Chew your food properly since digestion starts in the mouth;
- (2) Know that the following impacts how efficiently your digestive system works:
 - (a) what and how much you eat and drink;
 - (b) how much you exercise; and
 - (c) your stress level;
- (3) Choose mostly fresh, unprocessed food (limiting processed foods as much as possible);
- (4) Consider recipes which are healthy and scrumptious (e.g., homemade fruit smoothies offer a delicious and nutritious breakfast alternative – see no. 7 below, Omega 3 butter can be substituted for traditional butter, and recipes which use whole wheat flour are generally healthier for you than recipes which use all-purpose flour);
- (5) Get enough exercise to make it easier for your body to digest meals and absorb nutrients. Aim for at least 30 minutes a day three days a week;
- (6) Drink plenty of water which aids in the elimination process (divide your weight in half and that's the number of ounces of water you should drink daily); and
- (7) For those who really want to eat healthy, following the Fit For Life guideline of eating only fruit until Noon truly improves digestive health. Blending a combination of your favorite fresh fruits, frozen fruits and water for breakfast and eating whole citrus fruits and apples for lunch goes a long way to being able to indulge a little at dinner or dessert time. Since most fruits digest in 20 minutes (bananas and dates take about 45 minutes), give your body a chance to digest the fruit by not eating anything else for those 20-45 minutes.

Read as much as you can about digestive health to make the most informed decisions possible for you and your family. Following ere are five links for additional information:

- (A) <http://www.everydayhealth.com/CS/forums/130/ShowForum.aspx>
- (B) <http://www.everydayhealth.com/health-report/healthy-eating/how-to-personalize-a-healthy-diet.aspx>
- (C) <http://www.dietitian.com/teenager.html>
- (D) <http://www.everydayhealth.com/digestive-health/index.aspx>
- (F) http://www.naturalnews.com/022235_food_digestion_meals.html

Wishing you and your family fantastic health and wellness, Laura