TIPS FOR REGULARITY, CONSTIPATION & GUT HEALTH

notes by Blake Bars

There are varying degrees of constipation but anything less than one bowel movement per day is considered constipated by most naturopathic physicians. Some naturopaths even say that someone with a healthy gut will have a bowel movement about a half an hour after every meal (2 to 3 bowel movements per day). Bowel movements are such an important part of our overall health that many naturopaths start with gut health and regularity when treating patients. Bowel movements are our bodies primary detox pathway. With the amount of toxins we are exposed to in our modern world it is imperative to keep things moving out of the body in a healthy and regular manner. Reach out for help finding any of the products below or if you have any questions. You can message us at www.naturespantry.life.

HYDRATION

- Stay super hydrated. Everything moves through the digestive tract smoothly when we are hydrated but come to a screeching halt when dehydrated. Drink half your bodyweight in ounces everyday.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables have lots of water in them to help hydrate the intestines and ease movement through the digestive tract. Processed food & animal products have almost no water.
- Drink away from meals. Drinking too much liquid with meals dilutes stomach acid and food is not broken down as well. Drinking too much with meals can lead to the body producing more acid to compensate which can lead to acid reflux. I don't do it perfectly, but I try to drink most of my water between meals. One hour before meals & two hours after meals is best.

NUTRITION

- Eat a diet of WHOLE, REAL, FIBROUS, UNPROCESSED, ORGANIC, NON-GMO food. Eat food the way that God made it, not the way man has "fixed" it. Before the industrial food revolution, this was the only kind of food there was.
- Eating lots of fresh uncooked fruits and vegetables makes bowels movements way easier and more regular.
- Eat salads, salads and more salads! Not laxatives. SIDE NOTE: Miralax (chemical name: polyethylene glycol) pulls water into the bowel to help soften stools which can lead to a variety of side effects. I prefer simply supporting the colon with proper hydration and proper diet.
- A big part of the problem is that we eat foods that stick to the intestinal walls. This is what you call impacted poop. Think about when you wash the bowl that you mixed pancake batter in or the dish that you baked a cheesy macaroni in. Does the batter and cheese stick to the dish? You have to work to scrub it off a bit, don't you? What about a bowl that had a big vegetable salad in? No scrubbing necessary, right? Just rinse it out and it's pretty much clean. In the same way, processed foods stick to the intestinal walls and are hard to clean off, whereas whole plant foods move through our digestive track nicely.
- Soaking the hard-to-wash dish in water for a few minutes really helps. How can we soak the intestinal walls in water? Good methods include: vigorous hydration, juice fasts, water fasts, water enemas, and hydro colon therapy.
- A de-greasing soap can also help clean that stubborn dish. Bile is the body's de-greasing soap. Bile is a fat emulsifier and powerful alkalizer made by the liver. Healthy livers produce about a quart of bile per day. The gallbladder stores the bile and then releases it into the intestines to help digest food. Many of us are not producing enough bile, which leads to trouble digesting fats, proteins, etc. This is why supporting liver health is so important (more on this below).
- To further frustrate the issue, impacted fecal matter on the intestinal wall is a breeding ground for parasites, pathogenic bacteria, candida & other microforms. Eating ultra processed carbs then feeds these microforms.
- Fruits and vegetables do not stick to the intestinal wall. Not only are fruits and vegetables loaded with vitamins and minerals and enzymes, but they have lots of fiber and water. In other words, fruits and vegetables have structure. When we eat a large volume of these structured foods, they actually mechanically sweep the intestinal tract clean.
- There's a reason for the old saying: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away!" Getting a large volume of high fiber plant foods every day is key. Ten servings per day of fruits and vegetables is ideal (1 serving = 1/2 cup).
- Eat at least 25 to 35 grams of fiber per day. 90% of adults do not get enough fiber in their diets. EXAMPLES: 1 stalk of celery 1g, 1 cucumber 2g, 1 apple 4.5g, 1 orange 2.5g, 1 cup broccoli 5g, 1 carrot 2g, 1 cup raspberries 8g, 1 cup lentils 15g, 2 oz almonds 7g, 2 tbsp chia seeds 8g, 1/2 avocado 5g.
- At Nature's Pantry we have a ton of high fiber foods (besides the obvious fruits, vegetables, whole grains, etc) such as Flax4Life brownies and muffins, high fiber and high protein pastas, and lots more. I love the Ezekiel 4:9 brand cereal and bread, and the Nature Path Smart Brand cereal. It has 17g of fiber per serving.
- Psyllium husk and ground flax seed are both high fiber. I like to throw these into different meals to boost my fiber intake. I'll throw them into a smoothie or oatmeal or on top of toast with almond butter and apple sauce.
- AVOID processed sugar, processed flour, excessive animal products, fried foods, fast foods, powders, flours, too much cheese. I'm not saying I never eat any of these things, I just know that for me if I overdo these things, I pay for it. If I make sure to get lots of plant foods it helps my body process the occasional cheat.

CHEW YOUR FOOD

- When you chew your food twenty to thirty times until it's apple sauce consistency, you will feel your cheeks excrete enzymes into your mouth. This is the first phase of the digestive process.
- When you chew your food well your stomach does not have to produce as much acid to break it down and your body does not have to work as hard to break it down and extract nutrients from it.
- Chewing your food well helps it travel through the gut better and improves nutrient absorption and therefore overall improved health.

SUPPLEMENTS

- **Vit C** – I take 10,000+ mg every day. Start slow with C. Start by taking 2,000 mg three times per day and work up to 3,000 to 4,000 mg three times per day. If you get gassy or have loose stools, back off a little bit. Just below bowel tolerance is your optimal dose.
- **Mag Oxide** – I take 2 to 4 caps (800 to 1,600 mg) of mag oxide every night before bedtime. Start slow with mag oxide. Start by taking 1 cap (400 mg) before bed and work up until you get the desired results. My goal is to have a full/large bowel movement first thing in the morning, preferably in log shape, and not too loose or too firm. I know this is TMI, but it might help someone. LOL ;)
- **NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS to get things moving** – Vibrant You Colon Clean / Vital Planet Vital Lax / Global Healing Oxy Powder / Traditional Medicinals Smooth Move Tea / Vital Planet Vital Fiber
- **LIVER SUPPORT** – Supplements that support the liver can help increase bile production and improve digestion. Milk thistle, dandelion, turmeric, NAC, and glutathione are great for liver support. Ox Bile supplement can help if you are not producing enough bile yourself.
- **DIGESTIVE ENZYMES** – Taking digestive enzymes with every meal for a couple of months is how I got off the over-the-counter acid reducer medicine I was taking. Taking digestive enzymes with food can drastically help with digestion and overall health. For more on digestive enzymes see the interview and flyer I did with Dr. Daniel Nuzum at www.naturespantry.life under the health show tab: https://naturespantry.life/e41-dr-dan-nuzum-1

QUIT COFFEE

- Coffee is a diuretic that dehydrates you. Coffee can help you go in the short-term, but I wonder if over time coffee actually dehydrates the digestive tract helping things get plugged up. Since quitting coffee and improving other habits, things are moving much better for me. When trying to quit a bad habit like coffee, I recommend finding a healthy replacement that you like. In quitting coffee, Pero was the replacement that worked for me.

DON'T HOLD IT

- When you have the urge to go, go. Holding it can lead to things getting backed up.

DON'T EAT LATE AT NIGHT

- Our digestive system is running at full strength from morning until afternoon. Late afternoon, early evening, our digestive system is slowing down. The earlier you can be done eating, the better. Not eating after 3 or 4 pm is ideal, but at least try to not eat after 6 or 7 pm.

EXERCISE

- Moving your body helps keep things moving through the colon.

STRESS

- Stress isn't the only thing you'll have bottled up inside if you don't find healthy ways to cope.

SQUATTY POTTY

- People have squatted to poop for thousands of years. This position is ideal for elimination as it reduces straining, leads to faster and more complete elimination, helps relieve constipation and bloating, prevents and relieves hemorrhoids, improves pelvic floor health, and improves digestive condition like IBS.

ENEMAS

- Enemas are a fabulous, yet forgotten, practice to help get things moving, improve detox, improve weight loss, improve skin health, and improve overall health. Our digestive tract goes from mouth to anus. Why do we only clean the top end. We should definitely be cleaning the bottom end on a regular basis too. Here's a video on how to do water enema from Olivia Budgen: Enema Step By Step Tutorial https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UMu_iP-AJE

OTHER TIPS

- See our other flyer at Nature's Pantry titled Gut Health Tips to Optimize Health for much more information on things like parasites, liver cleansing, stomach acid, probiotics, prebiotics and postbiotics, dysbiosis, and fasting.
- Juice fasting is a great way to heal gut and body. Do your homework. We have a few books at the store.
- Consider a Daniel Fast or strict whole food plant based diet for a couple months or longer.
- Read more about constipation from Andrew Saul PhD here: http://www.doctoryourself.com/constipation.html or search constipation at www.doctoryourself.com
- One of my favorite videos on gut health: The Gut For God - Barbara O'Neill: https://youtu.be/sYvih-xcGJg?si=_IeIwW5ZzMWNgX90

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