

Breathe Fresh Air

As we open the windows to get fresh air into our houses, we must look at the air around us. What does the air around you say about you? Do you give off toxic fumes after you eat? Does your family leave the area so they can get some fresh air?

The air around us indicates the status of our gut where we digest our food. The gut consists of a hollow tube that begins at the mouth and stops at the end of the colon. Signs of a malfunctioning GI tract could include the following:

- Bloating and/or acid reflux
- Light colored stools and/or constipation
- Pain on the upper right side of the abdomen
- Gall stone formation
- Dry skin and/or skin rashes
- Pain in the neck and upper back or between the shoulder blades
- Belching/gas, and indigestion after eating fats, oils, and/or protein.

The digestive process begins in the mouth with the mixing of food with saliva. Washing down the food with a drink prevents the digestive process from starting. Drinking with meals also dilutes the digestive enzymes that are present in the gut, causing indigestion and gas. Drinking should be completed one hour before meals. This rule applies to all liquids including water, wine, milk, soda pop, tea and coffee.

One way to influence the air is to avoid eating specific gas producing foods. The National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse, www.niddk.nih.gov, recommends avoiding broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, onions and asparagus. The other foods to avoid are beans, apples, peaches and pears, soda pop and milk products.

Many of these foods are high in anti-oxidant and anti-cancer vitamins and minerals. These foods can produce more gas during normal digestion when specific digestive enzymes are missing. Instead of avoiding foods, fix the gut!

According to the Regional Medical Center, www.mccares.org; National Digestive Diseases, a healthy digestive system is important. Digestive difficulties can develop when we eat too fast or when there are insufficient digestive enzymes in the gut to allow the proper breakdown of foods eaten. When food is not properly digested it can ferment, putrefy, become rancid, and injure the lining of the gut. Food ferments when we do not have the proper digestive enzymes from the pancreas, liver and stomach to break the food down. The pancreas produces enzymes that aid in the digestion of carbohydrates and sugars. The liver makes bile that is stored in the gall bladder, for fat digestion. The stomach produces enzymes to break down protein. All of these organs need to be working together for proper digestion to occur.

We enjoy the fermentation process that creates such products as beer, wine and alcohol. We do not enjoy the fermentation process that results in gas and bad breath. If our bodies are unable to produce the correct combination of digestive enzymes, the food will ferment order to move through the system. Fermentation is why we pollute the air after eating. Fermentation of our food is never desirable in the gut. The gut bacteria that ferment the food also create an acid. This acid can reflux back up into the esophagus causing a burning sensation or acid reflux. The key is to fix gut digestion.

Cooking spices that help promote improved digestion include ginger,

allspice, dill, parsley, cardamom seed, bay leaves and cloves. Some alternative herbal teas to aid digestion after a meal include chamomile, parsley, and peppermint. Peppermint tea aids digestion best, when it is drunk an hour after eating. Another way to help soothe the gut an hour after meals is to drink the juice of one-half lemon in a cup of tepid water.

The real solutions to poor gut function are to avoid drinking water and other beverages with meals, eat slowly so that digestion can occur, and restore the normal gut bacteria and enzyme production so that food eaten can be properly broken down. This way there will be good digestion taking place and clean air around us. Everyone should do their part to clean the air and get their digestive system tuned up and working again. Disclaimer: The recommendations in this article are not to be taken as medical advice.

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