

The Key to Health

The Key to Health is a healthy functioning Gastrointestinal (GI) Tract. How well it performs determines our overall health.

The GI tract is a hollow tube that starts at the mouth and ends at the end of the colon.

It is in the GI “hollow tube” tract where food is digested and broken down into appropriate sized molecules. The molecules are then transported across the digestive tract membrane into the blood where they are delivered to the rest of the body. From the blood these molecules go into the cells and are used for body growth, tissue repair, and energy production.

A healthy functioning GI tract also has a very important role in prevention. The GI tract acts as a protective tissue barrier keeping toxic unhealthy materials, microbes, and debris from entering into the circulation. A healthy GI tract can effectively and routinely attack these unhealthy materials, compact them, and eliminate them from the body. Signs of a malfunctioning GI tract could include bloating, acid reflux, belching/gas, and indigestion after eating fats, oils, and/or protein. Other symptoms include light colored stools, pain on the upper right side of the abdomen, gall stone formation, constipation, dry skin, skin rashes, and pain in the neck and upper back or between the shoulder blades.

Digestive difficulties develop when there are insufficient digestive enzymes in the GI tract to cause the proper breakdown of foods eaten.

When food is not properly digested it can ferment, putrefy, become rancid, and injure the lining of the GI tract. When the cell lining of the GI tract becomes injured, the protective



barrier becomes more permeable to unwanted materials.

Increased permeability can then set the stage for a variety of chronic illnesses and food allergies. Various digestive difficulties develop including acid indigestion, acid reflux, leaky gut syndrome, dysbiosis, stomach burning, food allergies and sensitivities, irritable bowel, and mal-absorption syndrome creating additional nutritional deficiencies.

Food allergies and sensitivities are on the rise due to changes in the U.S. diet. Chronic sinus congestion or sinus headaches are often indicative of hidden food allergies. There are many people who are allergic to gluten, the most common component of grains, including wheat. Allergic reactions to dairy, corn and soy also are increasing, as more products contain these items. Diets high in grains and animal protein can also cause an allergic reaction in the GI tract.

Another irritant to the GI tract are Trans fats. Trans fats are used in all commercially processed food products. Compared to the good dietary fats that take 18 days to break down. Trans fats take 120 days to break down. Because they take 3 months, they cause an inflammatory reaction in the GI tract and throughout the entire body.

If you want to be healthy you must eat good fat, not Trans fat. Your body needs good fat to function properly. Nearly half of the dry weight of the

brain is fat, and a quarter of this is cholesterol. Besides the brain, every cell membrane in the body contains fat, and some of those fats cannot be synthesized -- making it essential to obtain these fats from diet.

There are two fatty acids which cannot be manufactured in the body, and which must be obtained from dietary sources. These are the essential fatty acids, which are needed by the brain and all cell membranes. The essential fatty acids are found in the diet in only a few food sources: flaxseed, cold water fish, and fish oils.

These highly beneficial fats are called the Omega-3 and Omega-6 oils. The correct dietary ratio for optimal health between these two oils is 2 Omega-6 to 1 Omega-3. Yet, the average American diet has a ratio of 25 Omega-6 to 1 Omega-3.

Cholesterol is an essential component that helps form the brain, the sex hormones, bile acids, D vitamins and the steroid hormones that are produced in the adrenal glands. Cholesterol does not need to be eaten, because the liver and other tissues can manufacture cholesterol from saturated fats. High blood cholesterol indicates that there is an inability of the body to correctly manufacture the needed hormones and vitamins. The solution to high cholesterol is to repair the GI tract, and the organs involved in fat metabolism.

In the GI tract, the liver and gall bladder are responsible for fat metabolism. The liver makes bile, the ingredient necessary for the breakdown of fat. The gall bladder is a storage sac for the bile, and releases the bile as needed into the GI tract.

When fats and oils are not digested properly in the GI tract, the body cannot correctly make or use cholesterol, make hormones or even bile.

Poor fat digestion affects the balance of hormones, the formation of vitamins, creates pain and inflammation in the body, alters skin color and texture, and causes digestive difficulties. The body must be able to digest all fats, including the essential fats to achieve optimal health. The answer is not a low fat diet, but to restore the GI tract to normal function, so that it can digest fat properly.



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Disclaimer: The recommendations in this article are not to be taken as medical advice. If your digestive function is not what it should be, consult a qualified wellness consultant to determine the cause of your digestive distress, and for specific recommendations on your personal health issues.

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Dr. Carol A. Fischer, D.C., N.D

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