

## What do your answers tell you and your practitioner about your digestion?

In #1, questions a & b, if you answered:

**DAILY:** Good. It is better to move our bowels and pass urine at least once, but ideally a few times daily.

**OFTEN or NEVER:** we recommend you consult with your doctor or healthcare practitioner as soon as possible.

For the rest of the questions in sections #1-#3 if you answered **DAILY** or **OFTEN** you should also talk to your healthcare practitioner as soon as possible.

In #4, your answers will tell you about your nutrition - what is better (keep that!) and what needs attention - so here are some tips based on your "yes" replies:

- If you feel bloated or uncomfortable after eating daily or most days then right now is your better time to do the **Dietitian Approved Digestive Tune-Up**.
- If you feel low energy or feel hungry after eating more often:
  - You may not be digesting or absorbing what you are eating better so consider digestive enzymes when eating, adding glutamine as a supplement to do some digestive repair work, and **Dietitian Approved Liquid Nutrition** as a tool especially for days when stress could be impacting your digestion.
  - Your nutrient balance, quality and quantity may not be working for you.
  - Your caffeine and added sugar intake may be impacting your digestion and your energy.
  - Your supplements - what you are taking and when you are taking them - may not be working better for you.
- If you are avoiding foods or food groups daily or often:
  - Make sure you are making up for the nutrients (including antioxidants and other plant nutrients) you are not getting from those foods.
  - Getting in a rainbow doesn't just mean your plate looks pretty it means you are getting in foods that help the digestive system run better. For example, lemons, limes and greens are key alkaline formers - important to helping your lower digestive tract be a better home for good bacteria (probiotics). Do the **Dietitian Approved Rainbow Evaluation** to make sure that you are getting in different colors - and their nutrients - from plants more often.
  - Use better nutrition tools like the **Gluten-Free and FODMAP Menus** to help you make better, not perfect, choices more often.
  - Discuss with your practitioner a plan for testing (GI MAP, MRT, food intolerance etc) and when to do the **Digestive Tune Up** either before (most often) or after the additional testing.
  - Review section #5 tips as your lifestyle choices and current health maybe factors in what you tolerate better. For example, you may tolerate certain foods on a non-travel day better.
  - You can't have better digestive health if you don't meet your better water amount most days. Do the **Dietitian Approved Water Evaluation** to get your number, to assess your current intake, and to get tips to do better.



In #5 you will learn that many lifestyle choices, experiences, and your current health status will impact your digestion. Here are some tips for how to help your digestion do better based on your "yes" answers.

1. Our digestive process relies on movement of the digestive tract (it contracts to move food along), so when our body sits for a long period of time it can interfere with better digestion.
  - a. Set an alarm to make sure you get up and move every 3 hours, paying attention to moving your mid-section.
  - b. If you can't move far, at least stand and stretch, touch your toes, lift your bent knees up towards your chest, do seated chair twists. If you are injured get some guidance on how you can keep your digestive tract moving as you recover.
  - c. If you are on a plane, you may need some extra help – I rely on magnesium when I travel to keep my muscles relaxed, including the digestive muscles, so they can move along better.
2. Got stress? The body knows what to do. Stress is a natural response to good and bad things. The body tightens up and focuses all of its attention on what needs to get done. Why is stress bad for us? It's not unless the stress doesn't turn off.
  - a. Do the better magnesium evaluation and use the better magnesium menu to make sure you are getting in enough of the mineral that the body uses to turn off stress at the cellular level.
  - b. Breathing helps too. Do the 4-7-8 breath (10 rounds) to help your body move from stressed to relaxed, better.
  - c. Working out hard is awesome, but it actually stresses the body so make sure your workout recovery includes magnesium and possible adaptogens to turn off stress as well as herbs that help promote a healthy inflammatory response (use the **Dietitian Approved Anti-inflammatory Menu**)
  - d. Lack of sleep is also stressful on the body. It needs its recovery to function better. Magnesium helps (noticing a trend here?!) as does setting and keeping a bedtime schedule, shutting down from social media and TV an hour before bed, and journaling or some breathing if stress is keeping you from better sleep.
3. Excess weight – especially body fat – may be a sign that your digestion is not better.
4. If you have a digestive disease or diagnosis you will want to work with your practitioner to build your better nutrition plan to include nutrients that can help the digestive tract run better.
5. Hormones directly and indirectly impact digestive function. If you are pregnant, getting your period, entering menopause, low on testosterone or experiencing any hormonal fluctuations it is good to look at your nutrition to do better on nutrients that can support hormonal health (magnesium, calcium, iron, omegas, herbs). You should discuss this with your practitioner if you notice digestive changes after a medication or as you advance in your pregnancy so you get personalized advice.
6. Medications that you are currently taking as well as ones you took years before can impact digestive function. Some may have removed the good bacteria, others may have injured the digestive tract lining (leaky), and others may have or be slowing down your system. The great news is that better nutrition can help. Work with a practitioner to develop a better plan and do the **Dietitian Approved Digestive Tune-Up** now.

In #6 & #7, you learn that your digestion impacts your skin and your immune health. Here are some tips for how to help your digestion do better based on your "yes" answers.

1. If you are frequently getting sick or infections, you should discuss with your practitioner as it is a sign that your immune system isn't working better. Your digestive system is part of your immune efforts so consider:
  - a. Probiotics – make sure you look for strains that are clinically shown to support immune health. Foods and beverages that contain probiotics can be helpful but dairy may be an issue for your immune system, and bubbly probiotic beverages are not advised if you already are dealing with bloating. This is where a better supplement or a better-quality dairy-free option are better choices.
  - b. Glutamine helps to repair the digestive tract so it can be a better tool if you've taken medications for your skin or others that impacted your digestion.



- c. Dairy-free, gluten-free, etc. You may do better removing certain ingredients but make sure that your diet is still full of better ones. Try using the better [Gluten-free Menu](#) for ideas. Dairy is often a challenge for immune health and skin, so if you do consume it, consume less and improve the quality (especially get rid of fat-free dairy).
- d. Herbs like turmeric and ginger can help promote a healthy inflammatory response which will help heal your skin and support better immune health.
- e. Investigate homeopathic remedies for your colds and symptoms before they turn into infections or ones needing medication.

In #8, you learn that your supplements impact your digestion.

Here are some tips on what is and could be better:

1. Your multi could be providing nutrients to support better digestion or it could be part of the problem!

- a. Does it contain calcium and iron? – these can be constipating and compete with each other for absorption.
- b. Are you getting a quality source and amount of magnesium? Some forms are less well absorbed (oxide, tablets) especially if you are already dealing with digestive issues. Calcium and magnesium should be about the same amounts however you should do your calcium and magnesium evaluations because if often turns out people are doing better on their calcium intake so they need less supplemental and, thus, need more magnesium.
- c. Is your probiotic better (i.e. working? There are different kinds of bacteria in our digestive tract and you want to make sure you are giving your body all of them, ideally from strains that have science-based evidence of being effective to support better digestive health (i.e., Bifidobacterium infantis, lactis, animalis), there are others that can help with specific conditions (i.e., Sacchormyces Bourlardii for traveler's diarrhea). Your food containing probiotic should be made of other ingredients that are better too.
- d. Taking glutamine or collagen for digestive health? Great. Just make sure the product is delivering you a better ingredient for your digestive system – and enough of it. I often have my patients on 3-5 grams of glutamine (that's way more than many products have in their capsule or serving. Collagen powders differ vastly, so if you are not seeing better results in 4 weeks you may want to change products.
- e. Fiber is essential for better digestion and there are many forms you can get from food, but a better supplement can be helpful too. Use the better fiber evaluation to see what's already better (keep that) and what you may need to meet your better fiber amount more often. Is the fiber from a food source? Are the other ingredients in the product better for you too? Avoid products with artificial colors and sweeteners. Also assess if the fiber supplement is making you bloated or gassy. You may need less at first and you will for sure need more water (use the better water evaluation to see how you are already doing and use it for how you could do better).
- f. Prebiotic fibers can be helpful (they help feed good bacteria) but they can also be part of the problem for a lot of people that deal with bloating and gas. Assess products with inulin and chicory root to see if they are part of your digestive problems, and be careful when eating sunchokes which can do the same. You may notice that you do great with dandelion greens, jicama and artichokes but not so great with these others or with garlic and onions.

Your digestion is the most important part of your health because it is responsible for delivering the rest of the body what it needs to run better and to remove what the body will not use or what it finds irritating and harmful. Better digestion should be the first step in any [Dietitian Approved Nutrition Plan](#), so get started on yours today!



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