

The Building Blocks of Digestion

Written by Tracy Sharuga, HHP, DIP of PHYTO

Digestive issues are a common concern – and the first and one of the most important issues that as an Herbalist I seek to address and support. Digestion is your bodies ability to take in food, drink, medicine and break it down into molecules that absorb through the epithelial wall of the intestines to be processed by the liver, taken into the bloodstream, essentially providing all the cells in your body the sustenance they need to function. However, the body is a complex and intricate organism that requires a basis of more than 40 nutrients for energy, growth and tissue maintenance – this includes fats, proteins, vitamins and minerals (yes carbohydrates too) and water. A lack of variety of these can cause deficiencies and weakness, and the body being as smart as it is will find ways to compensate to maintain function. This issue can partially be attributed to diet - not getting enough variety of basic requirements, also soil depletion is a big concern as the food that we eat can not pull enough nutrients from the soil to sustain the amounts we can eat. The other issue is added chemicals in our environment (teratogens) and these can exist in places that we may not even think of clothing, mattresses, cleaning products to name a few, they like to block certain receptor sites and can cause havoc in the body. Also, the additive chemicals in our food and medications (even supplements) that are usually in there to preserve and stabilize them can not only irritate the digestive tract as well as the bowel but can contribute to the wearing away of the microvilli that line the intestinal wall that we need to properly absorb anything we put in.

Stress is also a key factor in digestion. A common term used by doctors is the development of a 'stress ulcer' this is severity of stress as a factor. Constipation is a common issue that can be attributed to long periods of immobility, chronic stress and on-going depression. It is also known that although emotional conflict and stress do not cause Irritable Bowel Syndrome they are triggers – IBS is more complicated to address but as an herbalist I find herbal medicine to be of great benefit to help mitigate the triggers and lessen symptoms. In this regard I also think that its of importance to evaluate how you able to digest the things occurring in life, or the ability to let things go emotionally I have seen make a difference in clients' ability to eliminate physical waste.

This brings me to the eliminative processes! Most people are hesitant to discuss the state of their poop and pee. But it should be one of the first things to discuss because your poop tells so much about your ability to absorb what you eat as well as the state of your liver and gall bladder. It is *PARAMOUNT* that when detoxing/cleansing you should be eliminating waste at least *TWICE* as much as you normally do because you want to get those toxins *OUT* of the body – and get the toxins out of your life.

This is only a miniscule part of what encompasses digestion. Please come out and join our Detox Challenge April 7th to 21st – its always nice to have the support of others who are also going through it and to help keep you accountable to sticking with it. Also, please join me in my talk: **WHAT THE POOP?!** on April 10th at 7pm, where I will discuss further what your poop may be telling you.

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Do You Need Detoxification?

We are all exposed to thousands of toxins and chemicals each day at work, in the home, through the air we breathe and, in our food & water. A recent well-publicized study found that the average Canadian has 53 chemicals stored in their bodies - a very troubling number. Our bodies are not able to eliminate all the different toxins and chemicals that we absorb. Toxins can accumulate in our cells, tissues, and organs, and remain stored for an indefinite length of time, causing a large number of health problems of varying severity.

What are the symptoms of toxic overload?

Depending on the toxicity you could experience any or all of the following symptoms:

- Fatigue and low energy
- Headaches
- Weight gain
- Skin problems
- Arthritic conditions
- Digestive problems
- Allergies
- Frequent colds
- Hormonal dysfunction



DETOX KITS

(Member of the Spring Detox Challenge receive special discount for any detox kit)

HERBAL D-TOX

The Wild Rose Herbal D-Tox has been used in Canadian clinics for over 30 years to provide a complete multi-system detoxification of the colon and kidneys; acts on the urinary tract and the gastro-intestinal system; and has an effect on the liver. To stay in good health - Clear a congested system - Use after over-consumption.

WHOLE BODY CLEANSE

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TIAO HE PAK

Tiao He Pak is designed to support the cleansing mechanisms of the body by targeting the digestive system and large intestine. Traditional cleansing herbs help rid the body of impurities and accumulated buildup through the intestinal system. Completing a comprehensive herbal cleanse, according to traditional herbal medicine, leaves one feeling rejuvenated and refreshed. Tiao He is a Chinese phrase denoting the restoration of harmony and balance.

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