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FIX YOUR GUT: PROVEN WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR STOMACH PROBLEMS

By Renee Clerkin, Registered Dietician & Nutritionist

Questions to Consider

Do you suffer from bloating? Abdominal pain? Diarrhea? Constipation? Gas?

Do you feel like you're stuck with these gut symptoms forever?

Have you tried to make changes, such as diet changes or taking medications, and nothing seems to be a long-term solution?

Do you suspect that food may play a role in your gut symptoms but just don't know where to start or what to do in order to find relief?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, this guide is for you! You do not need to live with uncomfortable gut issues forever — let me show you the way.

WHAT IS
THIS GUIDE?

OVERVIEW

-
- Team Up with a Great Doctor
 - Eat at Consistent Times
 - Slow Down
 - Change Your Diet
 - Next Steps
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Step 1: Team Up with a Great Doctor

If you have already talked to a doctor about your digestive symptoms, you can skip this step and jump straight to step two. If not, listen up. Figuring out the root cause of your digestive issues is key to finding a long-term solution. You want to make sure your doctor checks you for bowel disease and conditions, such as celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), bowel cancer and possibly small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO).

Symptoms will overlap between various diseases and conditions. For instance, diarrhea and stomach pain are both symptoms of celiac disease and Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). However, the treatment for these two conditions is totally different. **Understanding the cause of your symptoms is the first step to finding long-term relief.**

A lot of people skip this step and jump right into changing up their diet (Step 4). As a dietitian, I can appreciate the enthusiasm for using food as medicine. However, this step is really important.

Lastly, if you don't get the results you want from changing your diet down the road, then it's crucial to loop back around to this step and reset.



The first step for anyone with digestive issues is talking with a doctor. This is especially true if you fall into any of the below categories:

- You have unexplained weight loss alongside your digestive symptoms
- You have a family history of bowel diseases, such as celiac, Crohn's, or colon cancer
- You experience rectal bleeding or have anemia
- You have a fever alongside your digestive symptoms
- You started experiencing symptoms after the age of 50 years old
- You have persistent daily diarrhea
- You have recurrent vomiting
- You wake up in the middle of the night to have a bowel movement
- Your symptoms are progressively getting worse
- You are a woman and notice your symptoms get worse around your menstrual cycle



**When the diagnosis is correct,
the healing begins.**

CARL JUNG

Step 2: Eat at Consistent Times from Day to Day

Adopting an eating schedule can work wonders for your digestive symptoms. Our bodies work best when we are on a predictable rhythm with eating.

Our digestive tract cleans itself in between meals. When you are not eating, the smooth muscles in the digestive tract push waste, undigested food, microbes and toxins out of the body and into the stool. When you are eating, this cleaning process gets interrupted and has to start all over.

Giving your body a 3-5 hour break between meals helps to ensure the gut can properly clean itself — and a clean gut is much more likely to be a symptom-free gut.

A regularly spaced eating schedule will help regulate bowel movements and improve digestion.





I recommend the following tips when adopting an eating routine:

- Eat a medium-sized meal every 3-5 hours.
- Try to avoid grazing or skipping meals entirely.
- Plan ahead to avoid becoming overly hungry as this can lead to overeating and indigestion issues.
- Try to eat meals at roughly the same time each day as your body thrives on consistency.
- Try to give yourself at least 12 hours between dinner and breakfast. If you stop eating at night around 8pm, try to wait until 8am the next day to eat breakfast.



90%

OF ADULTS DON'T MEET THE
DAILY RECOMMENDED
VEGETABLE INTAKE

75%

OF ADULTS ARE INTERESTED
IN MAKING THEIR DIET
HEALTHIER

Step 3: Slow Down and Chew Your Food

Your body needs to be at rest in order to properly digest your food.

Eating while stressed or on the go doesn't do your digestive issues any favors. Slowing down also ensures that you can properly chew your food. This is key for optimal digestion since digestion begins in the mouth.

Taking the time to chew your food will lead to less indigestion, bloating and gas.



I recommend the following tips when eating your food:

- Take the time to thoroughly chew. Ideally, you want your food to be pureed completely (applesauce consistency) by the time you swallow it.
- If you are a highly-stressed person, try to take a few deep breaths before eating. This will help put your body in a more relaxed state for optimal digestion.
- Try to always eat sitting at a table, in a chair and from a plate. Basically, try to get out of the habit of eating on the go or out of a bag/box/container. These habits are not ideal for digestion.
- Schedule time in your day to eat. This one is hard in the fast-paced world we live in, but it is so important. Try to schedule at least 10 minutes for your meals, if not more.



Step 4: Change Your Diet

This step is the most fun because people tend to see the biggest improvement in their symptoms once they adjust their diet. However, most people find this step to be the most overwhelming.

I get it. Changing up your diet is no small feat. But, I promise you can do it with the right guidance.

Once you start to feel better on a regular basis, your whole life will change for the better.

If you have been diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), have digestive symptoms that interfere with your life and have found that nothing works, such as medication or lifestyle changes, then a low FODMAP diet might just be the answer.

Important Note: Always check in with your doctor or healthcare provider before making any changes to your diet. A low FODMAP diet is not for everyone. If you are pregnant, breastfeeding or dealing with any sort of disordered eating patterns, then a low FODMAP diet may not be appropriate for you.

My goal is to help you to feel better, not worse.



What is a Low FODMAP Diet?

A low FODMAP diet is a temporary, therapeutic elimination diet. This means you eliminate certain foods from your diet in order to find which foods are triggering your symptoms, such as gas or bloating. The group of foods eliminated in a low FODMAP diet are called FODMAPs, hence the name.

FODMAPS is an acronym for specific types of carbohydrates (sugars and fibers) that are often poorly digested. They are either absorbed very slowly or not at all, and as a result, sensitive individuals experience a wide range of symptoms, such as bloating, gas, and stomach pain.

FODMAPs are found in a wide range of foods including fruits, vegetables, breads, grains, nuts, dairy products and processed foods.

Eliminating FODMAPs from your diet can lead to a reduction in digestive symptoms for about 75% of people with IBS. This means less bloating, less gas, less abdominal pain, and less diarrhea in intolerant individuals. So, it's a great place to start if you have IBS or other related digestive struggles.



So... What's Next?

The Low FODMAP diet may seem daunting. And, honestly it is... a little bit. It can be complex and overwhelming. However, it is also temporary and can be a complete game changer if done properly. So, instead of focusing on everything you need to give up — think about everything you will gain when your gut issues are resolved. You will have more comfort in your body, better quality of life and improved mood due to the powerful brain-to-gut connection.

Besides a shift in mindset, I think it is also wise to get support. A low FODMAP diet can be really hard to do on your own and you deserve support and guidance to get you through this phase of your health journey.

Reach out to a FODMAP trained dietitian or check out my blog posts: **The Beginner's Guide to a Low FODMAP Diet** and **How to Tell if the Low FODMAP Diet is Right for You**. Also, please join my free Facebook group: Gut Health Support ([Facebook.com/groups/HealthyGutSupport](https://www.facebook.com/groups/HealthyGutSupport)) to follow along with new gut health content each week.



Recap

1 TEAM UP WITH A DOCTOR

Figure out the cause of your issues.

2 EAT AT CONSISTENT TIMES FROM DAY TO DAY

Get into a routine.

3 SLOW DOWN AND CHEW

Let your body do its thing.

4 CHANGE YOUR DIET

Make sure you're fueling your body properly.



ABOUT RENEE CLERKIN

REGISTERED DIETICIAN & NUTRITIONIST

Nutrition has always been my passion, but in the 10+ years I've been practicing, I've come to believe that it's also my purpose. Connecting with people and helping them take care of their bodies is one of my greatest joys. I believe the human body is incredible, and after working with me, I think you will too.

ONGOING LEARNING

ONLINE COURSE: THE HEALTHY GUT SOLUTION

In this course, you will learn the ins and outs of following a low FODMAP diet in order to successfully and confidently manage your IBS symptoms in as little as two weeks. All while having the support and guidance of your very own FODMAP trained dietitian.

To join the waitlist, email me at **Renee@reneeclerkin.com** to be notified as soon as the course becomes available.

JOIN MY FACEBOOK GROUP

Stay up to date on my latest gut health content by joining my free Facebook group Healthy Gut Support at:
facebook.com/groups/HealthyGutSupport