# Image Awareness Wellness Institute

## Digestive Problems



1271 High Street, Auburn, CA 95603 • Phone (530) 823-7092 • order line (800) 359-6091
Hours: Tues. – Fri. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. • E-mail: mail@imageawareness.com web: www.ImageAwareness.com



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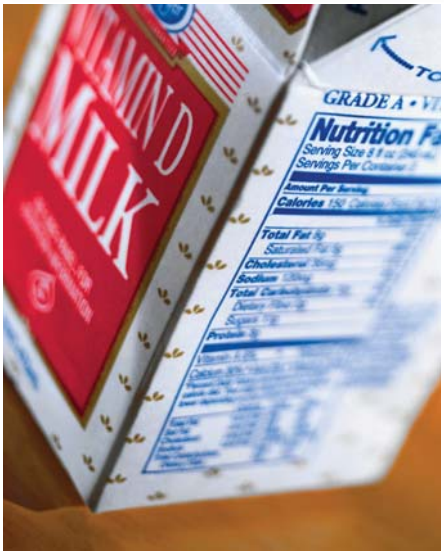


## Introduction

Diseases of the digestive tract are a significant problem in the United States. Digestive problems are often the first complaint of those who become chronically ill. Digestive problems inevitably lead to other serious health problems due to the induction of malnutrition of various sorts.

Digestive complaints arise from a variety of sources and each needs to be considered carefully if serious digestive problems are to be dealt with effectively over the long term.

## Cow's Milk

The least serious cause of digestive problems is the choice of foods a person simply does not digest well. An excellent example is lactase deficiency.

Lactase is the enzyme produced in the digestive tract which helps us digest the sugar or lactose in milk. Many population groups possess lactase as infants (to digest mother's milk) but lose the production of lactase when they become adults.

Any food which does not digest in the digestive tract has the potential to result in bacterial overgrowth if bacteria have the ability to feed on these foods even if we can not use them. The usual symptoms are bloating, diarrhea, or possibly release of bacterial toxins and severe illness.

The most frequent symptoms of lactase deficiency are constant bloating, intermittent cramps in the lower abdomen, watery stools, and expulsion of large volumes of gas.

Nine out of ten Bantus, Thais and Filipinos suffer with lactase deficiency. The same problem is evident in eight out of ten Ashkenazic Jews, Arabs, Greenland Eskimos, Taiwanese, Japanese, and Greek Cypriots. Only about 8 percent of American whites are lactase deficient, but 70 percent of African Americans are.

The problem of lactose intolerance has been greatly aggravated in the United States by the relentless promotion of milk products by the dairy industry. Most of us are familiar with slogans like "Milk is Natural," "Milk is the Perfect Food," "Everybody Needs Milk," and "Milk Drinkers Make Better Lovers." In addition there is a widespread notion, reinforced by dieticians and government agencies, that the only way to obtain sufficient calcium in the diet is by the consumption of generous quantities of dairy products on a daily basis.

GNLD products with dairy ingredients such as Nourishake and GR2 Meal Replacement limit lactose to no more than 6 milligrams per serving. Most people with lactase deficiency can tolerate this amount of lactose. The enzyme lactase is also present in Betagest to improve the tolerance of those with this problem to dairy products they might consume.

### Reference:


Oski, Frank A., *Don't Drink Your Milk!* Brushton, N.Y.: Teach Services Inc., 1996, 6-14.


## Damage to the Digestive Tract

Lactose is a disaccharide which simply means that it is a linkage of two sugar molecules, glucose and galactose. Lactase breaks apart this linkage. Other disaccharide linkages include sucrose (glucose and fructose), maltose (glucose and glucose) and isomaltose (glucose and glucose). Enzymes (maltase, isomaltase, and sucrase) to break apart these linkages are located in the surface membranes of the cells which line the digestive tract.

Damage to the the lining of the

digestive tract due to bacterial toxins, food allergy, or gluten intolerance can result in the loss of these enzymes. The result is the presence of undigested disaccharides in the digestive tract. This becomes a serious problem because these complex sugars are an ideal nutrient medium for bacteria. Bacterial overgrowth has the potential to further damage the digestive tract or to perpetuate whatever damage exists and hinder the repair process. Undigested carbohydrates encourage bacteria which are normally confined largely to the colon to colonize the small intestine.

Gottschall points out that the undigested lactose in one ounce of milk in a normal person will produce about 50 ml of gas, but if bacterial overgrowth has taken place the hydrogen gas production can be increased 100-fold.

Gottschall suggests that a diet high in simple sugars (monosaccharides) and low in more complex sugars is helpful for a wide variety of digestive disorders involving damage to the lining of the small intestine.


REFERENCE:

Gottschall, Elaine, *Breaking the Vicious Cycle*, Kirkton, Ontario, Canada: The Kirkton Press, 1997, 17-30.


## Gluten Intolerance

Gluten intolerance is a frequent source of serious damage to the digestive tract. Celiac disease is the most serious manifestation of gluten intolerance.

Sensitivity to gluten appears to have increased dramatically over the last few decades. A possible explanation for this may lie in a process called deamidation which involves treating gluten with acid at high temperatures or with enzymes to increase the solubility of the product and to make it easier to mix with other products like milk. This process has been suggested as a factor increasing the likelihood of developing allergy to gluten.

Wheat gluten in its original form or in a deamidated form is found in a wide variety of foods including soy sauce, modified food starch, drugs and vitamins (coating materials), vinegar, beer, wine coolers, tea, ketchup, fish, sausages, buckwheat soba noodles, flavored chips, ice-cream, and processed cereals.

Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder of the small intestine that results from intolerance to gluten. The immune system cross-reacts with the tissues lining the small intestine leading to a severe inflammatory reaction. The villi or finger-like projections of the cells lining the small intestine become severely damaged and atrophied. Absorption of nutrients is interfered with and digestion of carbohydrates is severely impaired as described above. The only known treatment for this condition is lifelong avoidance of gluten exposure. Supplementation with Enzyme Digestive Aid may benefit those with celiac disease because the supplement provides enzymes necessary to break down disaccharides. These enzymes are often missing or deficient in those with a damaged small intestine.


REFERENCES:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triticeae_glutens
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coeliac_disease


## Food Allergy

Gluten and lactose are common contributors to digestive problems, but an individual can suffer a world of hurt as a result of intolerance to a wide variety of foods.

While celiac disease is strongly associated with gluten intolerance in the mind of most medical professionals, cow's milk, soy, and egg have been shown to cause the villous atrophy which is the hallmark of the disease. Patients who have failed to respond to a gluten free diet have responded to avoiding other foods including cow's milk, egg, chicken, soy, tuna, amines, and salicylates. Patients with digestive symptomology often react to several foods.

Gaby lists a wide variety of digestive symptomology which is associated with intolerance to a variety of foods. Digestive disorders mentioned include abdominal pain, constipation, Crohn's disease, diarrhea, eosinophilic esophagitis, gallbladder disease, gastritis, GERD, irritable bowel syndrome, non-ulcer dyspepsia, pancreatitis, peptic ulcer, proctitis, rectal bleeding, ulcerative colitis, and vomiting.

Arthur Coca was the first to mention that ulcers might have an allergic component. He pointed to the fact that ulcers in the mouth (canker sores) are often associated with allergy, frequently to gluten. Coca tells the story of a friend who was a chemist. The man suffered with an ulcer and his doctor had put him on a milk diet. The condition became worse. Coca tested the man's pulse which was 104. When milk was removed from the diet the pulse dropped to 74-78. Avoidance eliminated the pain and allowed healing.

Marshall Mandell, a prominent allergist, tells the story of how he worked with a similar patient who suffered pain and bloody diarrhea. The woman's doctor had put her on a high milk diet. She proved to be strongly

allergic to milk. This woman proved to be allergic to 1/3 of the substances for which she was tested by Mandell.

Gallbladder disease is often associated with food intolerance. In one study of 69 patients with gallstones or gallbladder disease 93% reacted to egg, 64% to pork and 52% to onion. These patients were also allergic to other foods including fowl (35%), milk (25%), Coffee (22%), orange (19%), beans (15%), nuts (15%)), apple (6%) and tomato (6%).


REFERENCE:

Gaby, Alan, *Nutritional Medicine*, Concord, NH: Fritz Perlberg Publishing, 2011, 386, 24.

Coca, Arthur F., *The Pulse Test*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994, 90.

Mandell, Marshall, *Dr. Mandell's 5 Day Allergy Relief System*, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers, 1979, 44-45.


## Bacterial Overgrowth

Overgrowth of harmful organisms in the digestive tract often contributes to a variety of digestive disorders. These organisms can be bacterial, viral, fungal, or worms. A number of factors can increase the likelihood of overgrowth.

Firstly, ingestion of harmful organisms can pose a problem. Most of us ingest harmful organisms with the food we eat. The quantity of exposure can determine whether these organisms contribute to disease. Safe handling of food is important. Just as important is a healthy production of hydrochloric acid in the stomach. Hydrochloric acid is to the digestive tract what the great wall of China was to that nation. Hydrochloric acid kills most harmful organisms within minutes of the time they arrive in the stomach. Use of antacids will destroy this protective barrier increasing the likelihood of suffering ill consequences from ingestion of harmful organisms in contaminated food.

Secondly, overeating can contribute to microbial overgrowth. Food that is not broken down and digested efficiently provides a nutrient source for both beneficial and potentially harmful microbes. By contrast, fasting deprives internal bacteria of a food source greatly reducing their numbers. Undereating does the same, but less dramatically.

Thirdly, bacterial overgrowth is contributed to by a slow transit time. Constipation or a sluggish bowel allows harmful organisms to proliferate. The faster the transit time, the faster intestinal flora are flushed out of the body. This is why we tend to get diarrhea when harmful organisms take up residence in the digestive tract. The diarrhea will usually wash the organisms from the body.

It was long taught that the appendix had no purpose. We now know that the appendix is a probiotic reservoir. In other words, colonies of beneficial bacteria take up residence in the appendix. After a bout of diarrhea, the good guys move from the appendix to recolonize the digestive tract with protective organisms such as acidophilus. Those who have had the appendix removed by surgery would be wise to take note of this and supplement with beneficial organisms after suffering a bout of diarrhea or loose stool as their natural probiotic reservoir is missing.

Finally, the use of antibiotics unbalances microbial populations in the digestive tract. Antibiotics usually kill bacteria, both beneficial and harmful. Antibiotics to not harm fungi. The result can be overgrowth of harmful fungal organisms like Candida albicans. Fungal overgrowth is also promoted by consumption of excessive quantities of sugar and carbon dioxide. Sweetened soft drinks are an ideal nutritional medium for fungal overgrowth in the digestive tract.

## Supplements for a Healthy Digestive Tract

### Betagest

Betagest is an extract of hydrochloric acid from beet stems and beet roots. The supplement is designed to address failure of the digestive process in the stomach. For example, it contains lactase to aid in the breakdown of milk sugar (lactose). Hydrochloric acid is highly effective at preventing allergic responses to foods by helping in their breakdown. Studies by William Philpott have shown that digestive aids like Betagest and Enzyme Digestive Aid reduce the tendency to express allergic responses to foods. Hydrochloric acid is also highly effective as an anti-microbial substance. Few microbes will survive for much longer than a few minutes in the stomach when it is properly acidified.

### Enzyme Digestive Aid

This supplement further enhances the breakdown of foods decreasing the likelihood of allergic response and

IMAGE AWARENESS
WELLNESS INSTITUTE
1271 HIGH STREET, AUBURN, CA 95603
PHONE (530) 823-7092 ORDER LINE (800) 359-6091
E-MAIL: MAIL@IMAGEAWARENESS.COM
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microbial overgrowth. It also assures that we derive the nutritional benefit from the foods we eat.

**Acidophilus Complex**

This supplement helps to prevent overgrowth of harmful organisms. The beneficial bacteria in this supplement are particularly effective in supressing the growth of harmful fungal organisms. Acidophilus Complex restores beneficial bacteria after the use of antibiotics or ingestion of foods which have been treated with antibiotics. The populations of beneficial bacteria in the colon can also be disturbed by excessive consumption of sugar, alcohol, or spoiled foods.

**Salmon Oil Plus**

One does not normally think of omega-3 fatty acids as important nutrients for the digestive tract. The gut is prone to inflammatory problems. A number of digestive complaints have a large inflammatory component.

**Allium Complex**

Garlic and other members of the allium family contain natural compounds which can kill digestive pathogens, particularly fungal organisms such as *Candida albicans*.

**Antioxidants**

Antioxidants can be quite effective at restoring intestinal health when combined with the omega-3 fatty acids in Salmon Oil Plus. The inflammatory process in the gut is like a fire. The combination of these two categories of nutrients is like throwing a wet blanket on the fire. The most effective antioxidants are Vitamin E, Vitamin C, and Carotenoid Complex.

**Tre and Aloe Vera Drink**

Tre is an excellent source of natural anti-inflammatory antioxidant compounds in liquid form which makes it easy to ingest. The advantage of liquids such as Tre and Aloe is that they can rapidly permeate the tissues of the digestive tract providing needed nutrients and their soothing and anti-inflammatory action.

Aloe Vera Plus is also very anti-inflammatory. Aloe promotes healing of damaged tissues and serves as a natural probiotic--a food for beneficial organisms. Aloe is one of the most effective measures for reducing or eliminating heartburn.

## Web Resources

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