

# Do Something About Embarrassing Digestive Problems

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This question from F.K. in Sagaponack: My husband seems to be healthy but his digestive problems can be ... embarrassing, any ideas?

Digestive problems can occur for numerous reasons and many a book has been penned about them.

As usual, any problem that is new, severe, of rapid onset or accompanied by pain or blood in the stool should be checked out by your physician. Fortunately, most problems are of a functional nature.

As we age, three things commonly happen to our digestive tract. Things tend to slow down, so we need more roughage/fiber and water. Our stomach's production of hydrochloric acid decreases as does our production of digestive enzymes. As a result we can develop symptoms of gas, bloating and indigestion as the good bacteria in our digestive tract are thrown out of balance by their changing environment.

To add fuel to the fire, as our production of hydrochloric acid and enzymes decreases, it makes us more susceptible to infections. Over time the accumulated assaults of innumerable tiny and sometimes not so tiny infections in the digestive tract can cause damage to what are referred to as the "tight junctions," so that incompletely digested molecules are absorbed into our blood stream. This will then lead to the development of food allergies which will only make these symptoms worse.

Now, what is hubby to do? First, to address the slowing down issue — which allows food to putrefy and produce gas — eat more fiber, drink more fluids and exercise.

As we exercise — fast walking, bicycling or swimming being among the best — it not only helps our muscle tone, bone density and svelte appearance, but it also stimulates our gut to move more regularly, hopefully at least twice per day. To compensate for our decreased production of hydrochloric acid, the natural supplement Betaine HCL right before meals can be very helpful. Taking a supplement like Similase BV after meals can support our decreased production of digestive enzymes. To minimize the effects of inflammation and infection, making sure that we have plenty of good microbes in our digestive tract is of vital importance. Probiotics like Jarro-Dophilus or Pro-Flora can easily fit the bill here.

If the digestive problems remain then coming in for food allergy testing and addressing the undigested molecules that are leaking into the blood stream can often solve the problem, if not then more extensive testing is indicated. Until then, Glade air freshener can work wonders.

Send in your questions and be well.