

“And They'd Feast! And They'd Feast! And They'd Feast, Feast, Feast, Feast!” Kelly Pomeroy, M.H.

The Holiday hoopla has hit, with packages, presents, cards, caroling and feasts! In the words of Dr. Seuss, “And they'd feast! And they'd feast! And they'd feast, feast, feast, feast! They would feast on Who pudding, and rare Who-roast beast.” And with all of that lovely feasting, if we are not conscious and cautious, there often comes an unwanted case of indigestion. It comes in the form of acid reflux, heart burn, bloating, sour stomach, bad breath and more. We can have the lovely feasts and still be glad we did afterwards, if we have an understanding of how foods affect us and we are willing to exercise a little self-control.

Let's take a look at the digestive tract so that we can make better choices for the New Year and also give natural aids for those suffering with “feaster's remorse.”

One of the simplest tasks we underestimate is our chewing. As soon as food enters our body digestive juices are secreted in the mouth in the form of saliva. Saliva mixes with our food and helps to soften, break down and prepare the food for nutrient assimilation in the body. If we bypass thorough chewing, or in the words of Remy from “Ratatouille,” we “hork it down,” it will spend more time in the stomach. This layover is necessary for the stomach to break down the food sufficiently to pass through the rest of the digestive tract. However, this detainment causes the food to sour and ferment, creating excessive acid and gas.

The innermost lining of the stomach has cells that secrete mucous that protects itself from acids that are secreted therein to aid in digestion. It also secretes bicarbonate that aids in neutralizing the acid at proper times. Deeper in the stomach lining are cells that excrete *hydrochloric acid* that break down food and kill bacteria, *pepsin* that digests proteins, *somatostatin* that inhibits the cells from secreting, gastrin that aids in the production and secretion of the hydrochloric acid in the stomach and *ECL* that stimulates the production of hydrochloric acid. This intricate system is highly efficient, but must be used properly. If misused over time, extreme health problems occur. If misused occasionally, there are aids we can use to help the system.

Nothing is as miserable as a sour stomach or heartburn. I ate some food at a party this season that I was not accustomed to and sure enough the burning sensation came. What can we do when moments like that strike? Because we have overloaded our system, we have created too much acid. While we need acid to break the food down properly, taking an antacid will hinder the digestion and food absorption process. Here are a few ideas that others and myself have tried that work and that support the body's process:

1. Remember to chew your food properly. This can alleviate a lot of problems.
2. Relax at meal time. Set aside stresses and take time to enjoy your food. Hurrying through



meals can cause the food to sit for longer periods of time in the stomach.

3. Eat small meals frequently. Small meals allow the body to break down food with greater ease, avoiding too much acid production in the stomach.
4. Try not to drink water with your meals. It dilutes the saliva and keeps it from properly breaking down food in preparation for the stomach.
5. Eat simple foods most of the time such as fresh vegetables and fresh fruits. They are generally less acidic in nature and quickly break down and process through the stomach. Richer foods such as meats, eggs, starches and sweets should be eaten in moderation and in proportion to the amount of work your body does. Meats, dairy, eggs and sweets are acidic by nature. They cause the body to create more acid to break them down. This causes them to digest much slower in the system.
6. Avoid mixing meats with fruits. This combination causes gas and fermentation in the stomach. Fruits break down quickly, but meats do not and so the sugars linger with the meat, causing a souring of the stomach and excess gas.
7. Take Papaya leaves in a capsule or as a tea after you eat. Papaya contains the enzymes *papain* that digests proteins quickly so that they do not putrefy in the stomach.
8. Eat or take in capsule slippery elm. Slippery elm absorbs gases and toxins, can soothe heartburn and aid the stomach wall in creating a mucilaginous barrier inside the digestive tract. Dr. Christopher has a formula called *Soothing Digestion* that is a combination of Slippery Elm and Licorice that works great!
9. *Catnip and Fennel combination*. Catnip relaxes and soothes and fennel eliminates gases. Dr. Christopher has a formula for both adults and children that works great called *Catnip and Fennel or Kid-e-Col*.

There are many additional ways to combat these discomforts. They can be found at www.herballegacy.com or by enrolling at The School of Natural Healing. You will learn firsthand how to best help you and your loved ones enjoy the festivities. Cheers to a happy, healthy you and yours this coming New Year!

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