

How to solve your reflux and bloated stomach

By Dr David A. Pierotti

Digestion is one of the most fundamental processes all animals need working optimally in order not only to survive, but also to thrive.



We at times take it for granted that this beautifully intricate system will work behind the scenes to make sure we are a picture of wellness. But what if it goes wrong? Why would it go wrong and what can we do if

it does? I'd like to briefly address some forgotten ideas on eating and digestion.

I'd like to invite you to use your body and mind to consciously participate in the ordinary everyday act of eating. Not only will your health improve as a result of this heightened awareness, but your experience of enjoyment will also most certainly be lifted.

I will focus on the stomach in this article primarily due to the primacy of this organ as the origin of much of digestive upset. But remember this is but one small snippet of an overall picture of digestion, and therefore general knowledge I will share on this topic is not meant to serve as diagnosis or treatment. If you suspect an issue with your own digestion please check in with myself or Eric and we will advise and treat the issue accordingly.

Firstly, you should understand that the conversion of food into nutrients that will be absorbed and distributed by the body (i.e digestion) does not begin in the stomach. It actually begins in the brain. The signal to eat the food in the first place begins with the hunger hormones. From there, your senses will come

alive to navigate and choose the right food for you at the right time. Your sense of smell and sight will fire up and you will even engage touch and hearing into your experience (think about walking into a restaurant and feeling moved by the hum of conversations of the other diners or the sounds of vendors at a market or feeling the outer flesh of a perfect avocado).

Once the food has been picked up with your hands or with cutlery, your mouth engages it in a tide of saliva followed by mastication. The mechanical chewing of the food as well as the chemical components of the saliva have already begun the transformation of the food into its constituent parts to become part of you. Your taste now becomes the dominant sense but olfaction (smelling) is crucial, and in fact makes up a significant part of taste (try blocking your nose during chewing and see how little you'll taste).

The gustatory receptors for taste on your tongue will send signals to the rest of the body, including the brain, *the instant the food touches them*. This means that well before that food has left the mouth and journeyed through the rest of the digestive tract, your body knows what it's about to receive. This is an ancient evolutionary tool the body has developed so it can prime the next stages of processing to best assimilate the foods coming in.

If chewing is conscious and complete, it will lessen the load the stomach must bear to mechanically mince

the substrate into smaller and smaller parts. So chewing properly, swallowing and waiting for that bite to enter the stomach before the next bite is taken is vital to lessen the stress on your stomach.

The bolus of food then makes its way via the esophagus into the stomach, a highly acidic environment of pH around 2. This is no mistake, the high acid environment serves to kill the majority of parasites, bacteria, fungi and viral particles that have come along for the ride. Secondly, the acid actually activates the enzymes that will do the first part of protein digestion.

So now it begs the question: if stomach acid is so vital to digestion and we must digest food to live, why would we want to use an ant-acid or acid-reducing drug like Nexium??? The simple answer is that the pharmaceutical companies have it backwards. Their goal is to reduce a *symptom*. If we have acid reflux, which means acid is making its way up into the esophagus, the logical *symptomatic* solution is to reduce the acid, right? Well, kind of...

We must ask **why** that acid is in the esophagus in the first place. O.K so, physiology 101;

#1 the stomach produces stomach acid,

#2 that acid serves many functions,

#3 one of which is to **close the sphincter between the esophagus and the stomach.**

#4 Therefore, **low** acid = open sphincter.

#5 Open sphincter = acid reflux into the esophagus and all the fun and pleasant symptoms of burning, discomfort, burping etc. So the solution in that case is actually to *increase* acid so that the valve will close thus preventing it entering places it's not wanted.

There are many reasons that there would be low acid to begin with. Firstly, each individual, as we mature and spend more time on this earth, will eventually experience lowered functioning of the cells that produce the acid. After the age of about 40, there is a fairly significant drop in this natural acid production.

Secondly, mechanical/structural subluxation of the sphincter/stomach itself will cause dysfunction of the valve.

Thirdly, a nerve interference of the Vagus nerve along its course from the base of the brain to the stomach will inhibit proper acid production.

Fourthly, a deficiency in the chemical cofactors to manufacture acid will literally halt production of acid in the stomach.

As you can see, there is not a single solution to your stomach digestion issue. It must be diagnosed and treated accordingly if a solution to the cause is desired. Of course you may take a symptom relieving drug. However you will experience incomplete digestion and therefore lowered overall wellness. But if you're here, reading this, then I suspect you're preference is complete wellness, yeah?

In the bulk of cases, these kinds of problems are imminently treatable. In fact it's one of the areas myself and Eric specialise in.

Firstly, there are several things I urge you to 'get right' as part of great digestion. Please ensure you've mastered these before seeking assistance.

#1 **Engage your senses:** before eating, during preparation of meals and of course during the actual eating itself, be sure to really smell, hear, feel and taste your food. It's one of life's great joys that we get to eat many times a day for many years. The more you can involve heightened, conscious sensations the better this experience will become.

#2 **Chew thoroughly:** Initially, shoot for a number such as 30 chews. When you get used to it, you'll subconsciously chew your bite until it's uniform in nature.

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#3 **Savour:** This means sit to eat. Never stand, and certainly don't eat 'on the run'. This also means to savour your eating experience both as an entire meal and also each bite. Make sure you don't go for another mouthful until the previous one is in the stomach.

Buon appetito!

Dr David Pierotti

I run an online community designed to inspire and empower individuals to become the change they want to see in their own lives. Head over there and check out my messages of inspiration and wisdom.

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