

Your guide to flawless digestion

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Hey, I'm Amani



I'm a Nutritional Therapist and Functional Medicine Practitioner specialising in gut, hormone and cardiometabolic health.

I guide female leaders who have put their dreams on hold, helping them uncover what's driving their health challenges through personalised nutrition and functional testing.

My work is deeply personal. In my twenties, I struggled with food sensitivities, bloating, anxiety, and chronic insomnia, until my health did a complete 180 when I got serious about getting to the root cause of my issues. That journey shaped the way I practise today. I now run a virtual gut health clinic and have supported over 350 clients around the world.

Alongside my clinical work, I host corporate wellness workshops for companies such as Soho House, Amazon, TikTok, and LinkedIn, helping teams reconnect with their health in a way that feels sustainable and human.

My favourite quote says it all: *"Listen to your body when it whispers, so you won't have to hear it scream."*

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Why does optimal digestion matter?

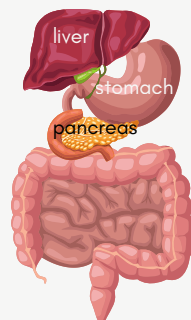
While the adage "*you are what you eat*" holds some truth, there's more depth to the story

You are what you
Eat
Digest
Absorb
Convert to its final form
And get past the cell membrane !

Which means that no matter your condition, if you are changing your diet or taking supplements, you need to make sure your digestive system is working optimally to **digest** and **absorb** the nutrients from your diet.

For instance, being deficient in vitamin B12 means that simply consuming more meat or taking a B12 supplement might not yield the desired results if your digestive system isn't functioning efficiently. Proper digestion is crucial for all of us.

To enhance both digestion and absorption, the presence of **stomach acid** (secreted by the stomach), **digestive enzymes** (secreted by the pancreas), and **bile** (secreted by the liver) is vital.



Why does optimal digestion matter?

In this guide, you will discover the core principles of achieving optimal digestion, encompassing mindful eating habits, food choices, and movements that bolster the digestive process.

Whenever I onboard a new client, this is our starting point. Remarkably, just days or weeks after adopting these digestive-enhancing tips, many find their symptoms alleviating.

Furthermore, the data below underscores the undeniable significance of prioritising digestive health.

- **Speed of Eating:** A study from the British Medical Journal showed that faster eaters are more likely to be obese than slow eaters, suggesting that many people are rushing through their meals.
- **Lunch Breaks:** Research shows the average lunch break for UK employees is around 33 minutes, far below the traditional one-hour break, and many workers skip a lunch break entirely at least once a week.
- **IBD (Irritable Bowel Disease) :** As of 2020, around 0.8% of the UK population had a diagnosis of IBD, equating to about over 500,000 people living with the condition.

Eating hygiene

1. Prioritise eating

- **Sit down.** When we eat in a way that doesn't allow our nervous system to fully relax and move into parasympathetic mode, we literally put out fewer digestive fluids. It's part of the body's survival mechanism. We either ask the body to focus and rush and perform (e.g. "fight or flight"). Or we ask it to take a break and build strength and energy for the future via eating. The body cannot do both at once.
- **Breathe.** The body needs oxygen to properly digest. Help calm your body and support digestion by taking a few, slow, calming breaths when you sit down to a meal – before you start eating.
- **Relax and Savour.** Try to learn to just be in the moment with your food. Colours, textures, aromas, flavours... Most of us are mentally "elsewhere" while we eat.



The result? The brain tends to miss out on the entertainment, and we are much more likely to overeat. Distraction increases food intake. Postpone stressful discussions, replying to tense emails, or paying bills until later.

Eating hygiene

2. Slow Down

If you wolf down your meal in a hurry, a very **full stomach has trouble mixing acid and enzymes well with your food**. All on its own, this dynamic creates indigestion.

Think of trying to blend a batch of stir-fry in a coffee cup. There's simply not enough room. When it "spills over", you belch and burp and may have reflux.

It also takes about **20 minutes for your gut to signal to your brain that you're full** and reduce your sense of hunger. Gulp down your food in 10 minutes? You're much more likely to overeat and end up feeling bloating 20 minutes later.



Eating hygiene

3. Chew each bite 20 times

Believe it or not, on average we chew a bite of food only about 6 times before we swallow (gulp!). Chewing is the only part of the digestive process that is voluntary – that we control.

- The less we chew our food, the harder our GI tract has to work. This creates post-meal fatigue. **Ideally, we chew our food until it's almost liquid before swallowing.** This can reduce gas and increase post-meal energy.
- When we swallow chunks of food (vs. tiny, mostly liquefied bits), it's harder for digestive enzymes in the intestines to do their job. To **maximise nutrient extraction and absorption**, food must be thoroughly broken down into smaller components.
- When big chunks of carbohydrate foods hang around too long, the bacteria in our guts feast too heartily and create gas build-up as a metabolic byproduct. The result? Distention, bloating, flatulence.



Eating hygiene

4. Don't drink too much during meals

Yes, we need to be hydrated and focus on plain, clean water intake for overall wellness.

- When you consume large amounts of water during a meal, **you dilute the acidity of your stomach acid and slow digestion**. Depending on your sensitivity, this can cause an early sense of fullness and belching and long-term can cause malnutrition (especially low Vitamin B12, magnesium or iron).
- **The best time to hydrate is between meals**. However, avoid drinking large amounts of water from 1 hour before to 1 hour after your meal.
- If you are really thirsty during your meal, then please drink small sips of water



Pre-meal digestive boost

Consume bitters before your meals :

Do you know why? In nature, many harmful substances taste bitter. Our ancestors, always alert to potential threats, evolved a clever response: producing more stomach acid when tasting something bitter. This extra acid is crucial for breaking down food effectively. So, **when you start your meal with something bitter**, it's not just about the taste. **You're also kickstarting your digestion**, a nod to the wisdom of our bodies and the ways of our forebearers.



Recommendations :

- **Start your meals with bitter foods**, such as rocket (arugula), fermented vegetables (sauerkraut, kimchi), endives, artichokes, kale, olives, radicchio, ginger, apple cider vinegar, lemon/grapefruit.
- **Supplement with digestive bitters**. Digestive bitters are herbal preparations that contain bitter-tasting herbs and plants such as dandelion root, gentian root, and burdock. When consumed, they **stimulate the body's digestive processes**, including the production of stomach acid, digestive enzymes, and bile. They are traditionally used to improve digestion, alleviate bloating, and reduce symptoms of indigestion. Here are two of my favourites : Tasty tonic & Bitter & ginger

Post-meal digestive aid

- **Go for a walk:** A light walk after a meal can help boost the flow of food through the digestive system. You don't need to exert yourself – even a 10 to 15-minute gentle stroll can be beneficial.
- **Stay upright:** Resist the urge to lie down immediately after eating. Sitting or standing can prevent reflux and heartburn by keeping the contents of your stomach down.
- **Herbal teas:** Some herbal teas are known to aid digestion and reduce bloating. Examples include **peppermint, ginger, chamomile, and fennel tea.**



Optimal digestion check-list

- ✓ **Prioritise eating !** Sit down, breathe and savour your food, away from distractions to maximise digestive secretions and absorption.
- ✓ **Slow down !** Dedicating 20 minutes to your meal can better signal to your brain that you've had enough
- ✓ **Chew at least 20 times each bite** to maximise nutrient extraction and absorption
- ✓ **Don't drink too much during meals** to avoid diluting digestive juices
- ✓ **Consume bitter foods or take digestive bitters** to stimulate stomach acid secretion
- ✓ **Go for a 10-min walk after your meal** to promote the flow of food through the digestive system
- ✓ **Drink peppermint, ginger or fennel tea** to reduce digestive discomfort

So what's next?

I hope you enjoyed diving into the world of digestion. Try picking 1 to 3 things to experiment with over the next couple of weeks and notice how they feel for you. And when you're ready to take things a step further, get in touch to begin your journey.

- Learn more about my programmes: From self-paced courses and group coaching programmes to high level 121 programmes, we go from awareness to integration and optimisation.
- Discover how I've empowered my clients to break free from their symptoms

Happy Healing!

