



COLOR MY FOOD

Nutritional Therapy with Diana Galindo

Improve your Digestion

Digestion is a gateway to your health. Your gastrointestinal tract (gut) is connected to every major system in your body. Every CELL that makes up every TISSUE that makes up every ORGAN depends on your digestive system to provide the nutrients it needs to continue functioning.

The goal of digestion > chemically and mechanically breakdown food into molecules so minuscule that the nutrients can be *absorbed* through your intestinal wall and used by the cells of your body. Impaired absorption can cause nutrient deficiencies, and food can become a source of inflammation. Inflammation is the root cause of many chronic diseases.

How digestion it works

Key Idea: Digestion is a north to south process

It starts in your BRAIN triggered by the sight and smell of food > MOUTH, chewing and enzymes in saliva breaks down CARBOHYDRATES > food passes through esophagus into STOMACH - the only highly acidic environment in your body. Stomach acid kills any pathogens you might ingest. It also breaks down PROTEINS, continues to break down carbohydrates and starts digesting fats.

Stomach contents > SMALL INTESTINE, bathed in enzymes released by your PANCREAS. Bile, produced in your LIVER and stored in your GALL BLADDER breaks down FATS.

The breakdown of all nutrients continues until ready to be absorbed through the wall of your small intestines into your blood stream and distributed as needed throughout your body.

Whatever remains > large intestine, or COLON for one last chance to be recycled before waste is eliminated as stool.

What can go wrong

Key idea: Nourishment mismatch

- Food mismatch – Ancestral humans ate a wide diversity of whole foods. Modern humans: processed foods, poor quality fats, excessive sugar, diet trends such as low-fat/low carb/keto dieting, which can result in nutrient deficiencies, dehydration and inflammation.
- Nervous system mismatch – Ancestral humans lived primarily in a parasympathetic state (rest and repair). Sympathetic state (fight or flight) triggered only in emergencies – run for your life from the lion/tiger/bear. Modern humans live in a chronic fight or flight state.

Chronic perceived threat (stress) is especially harmful to your digestive system.

What you can do about it

Key idea: Nourish your body

Instead counting calories, aim for nutrient density (nutrients per calorie). Instead of a “diet”, build a nutrient dense *lifestyle*. Give your body the essential nutrients it needs for structure and function:

- Water
- Proteins > amino acids
- Fats > essential fatty acids
- Carbohydrates > glucose (fast burning fuel) and fiber. Ancestral humans ate 100 – 150 grams/day. Modern humans average 10 grams/day
- Micronutrients: vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals (every color = protective and healing compounds)

Hydration is key to support proper digestion. Water also helps flush out toxins that can overload digestive organs.

Aim for half your body weight in ounces of water (140 lbs. = 70 oz of water). How to know you're hydrating adequately? Quick bathroom check – plentiful and clear urine indicates you are. Dark urine is a reminder to drink more water.

Choose food from nature

Aim for at least 3 – 4 colors each meal. Build up to 30 plants foods a week.

- Leafy greens and cruciferous
- Rainbow vegetables and plants
- Beans and legumes
- Ancestral whole grains
- Nuts and seeds

- Sustainably sourced fish and seafood
- Sustainably sourced eggs, poultry, meat
- Herbs and spices

Key idea: Eat Mindfully

Mindful eating can improve digestion, nutrient absorption, and overall satisfaction with meals.

- Just eat - away from devices, news, or distraction. Give your brain and body the support needed for digestive processes.
- Breathe - before starting to eat
- Chew chew chew - Thorough chewing improves nutrient absorption, reduces bloating, gas, and constipation
- Stop when 80% full – It takes 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain it is full. Eat too fast, and you are likely to overeat and overwhelm your digestive system.

Befriend your body. Forget the “diets”, social media trends and outside noise. Tune in to how *you* feel. Connect the dots between what you eat and how you feel - physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Be kind to yourself - Dietary changes may take time; consistency is key. Make one change at a time, practice it daily until it becomes a habit. Then build a new habit.

If you experience persistent digestive issues, please consult a healthcare provider for evaluation and guidance.