Three Common Digestive Problems and How to Solve Them
Poor Digestion

• Gas, Bloating, Cramping, Constipation/Diarrhea are all SYMPTOMS of a problem in the digestive system
• These problems can be from relatively minor issues
  – Food intolerance (gluten or lactose)
  – Microflora imbalance or yeast overgrowth
  – Lack of physical activity (common cause of constipation)
  – Poor diet (lack of fiber, nutrient poor processed foods, excessive sugar consumption, etc)
• OR these problems can be caused by more serious or complicated issues
• Today we will look at three common problems of the digestive system and how to solve them – naturally!
Problem #1: Ulcers

• **What is it?** A sore (ulceration) in the lining of the stomach or intestines

• **What are the Symptoms?** Pain in the upper abdomen, usually between meals or at night; the pain goes away when you eat; also: bloating, nausea and heartburn

• **What Causes it?** Infection by the H. pylori bacteria or use of NSAIDS (aspirin or ibuprofen)
If you have an ulcer

• You have probably tried drugs to block or neutralize acid

• Problems with this approach:
  – Antacid use causes acid rebound effect
  – Reducing stomach acid eliminates body’s protective germ-killing defense
  – Contributes to suboptimal levels of iron and B vitamins
  – Many adverse effects associated with long-term use
    • 25% more likely to break a bone
    • 30% increased risk of heart attack when taking calcium without vitamin D as well (think TUMS)

• Blocking or reducing acid may temporarily relieve heartburn but does not solve the underlying problem
How to Heal an Ulcer without Drugs

• Deglycyrrhizinated Licorice
  – Glycyrrhizin, which can cause adverse effects when licorice is used at high doses, has been removed
• Kills H. pylori
  – H. pylori is the bacteria that destroys the lining of the stomach/intestines
• Protects against the damaging effects of aspirin and ibuprofen
• Speeds healing of the mucous membrane lining of the stomach and intestines
• Specialized DGL – does not have to be chewed, effective at low doses
  – Randomized, double-blind, placebo controlled trial
  – Individuals with dyspepsia (upset stomach or indigestion) received 75mg or 150 mg of the special DGL twice daily
  – At 15 days and again at 30 days, participants in both DGL groups showed significantly decreased symptoms, including reduced heartburn, early satiety (that uncomfortable feeling of being “overfull” even at the beginning of a meal), regurgitation, nausea, and bloating.
Probiotics

• Friendly bacteria
• Very effective against H. pylori
  – Suppress its growth
  – Prevent it from adhering to the lining of the intestinal tract
• Increase healing rate of ulcers and strengthen the gastric mucosa
• Additional benefits:
  – Reduce gas and bloating
  – Decrease risk of cancer (especially colon cancer)
  – Helps alleviate constipation/diarrhea
• Key strains: *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Bifidobacterium longum*, *Bifidobacterium lactus*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*
Problem #2: Heartburn

• **What is it?** Stomach acids backing up into the esophagus

• **What are the symptoms?** Burning pain in the chest or throat that gets worse when bending over or lying down

• **What causes it?** You probably think “too much stomach acid!” but that is not the right answer!

• Too LITTLE stomach acid...
  – Food isn’t breaking down properly
  – Fills up the stomach and ferments, which causes
  – HEARTBURN

• The answer is MORE not LESS stomach acid
Stopping Heartburn Naturally

- **D-Limonene (found in the peels of citrus fruits)**
- **Coats the Esophagus**
  - minor burps carry d-limonene from the stomach to the esophagus; protects it against caustic contents that would have otherwise been regurgitated from the stomach
- **Stimulates digestion**
  - Stomach contents move into the intestines promptly – less likely to reflux back out of the stomach so that these esophageal irritants do not promote as much reflux.
- **Protects the stomach lining**
  - provides a barrier in the stomach and esophagus against bacterial infection (H. pylori bacteria)
- **Reduces the amount of gastric juices that reflux back into the esophagus**
- **Many people can feel the difference immediately, and are heartburn free in 2 weeks!**
Sea Buckthorn

• Edible berries are “nutrient bombs”
  – More than 200 bioactive compounds
  – Omega fatty acids, including omega 7
• Relieves dryness and reduces inflammation
• Regenerates skin and mucous membranes
  – Mucous membranes line the stomach and intestines
• Sea buckthorn oil accelerates the healing process of damaged tissues
Problem #3: Intestinal Inflammation

• What is it? Red and swollen intestines

• What are the symptoms? Diarrhea, cramping, fever, weight loss, bleeding; symptoms increase and decrease (wax and wane) in intensity

• What causes it? Unknown, but probably an abnormal reaction of the immune system

• Most common conditions associated with intestinal inflammation:
  • Crohn’s disease (generally the small intestine)
  • Ulcerative colitis (large intestine)

• Almost any digestive problem – from heartburn to irritable bowel syndrome – has some amount of associated inflammation
Natural Anti-Inflammatories

• Curcumin
  – Inhibits inflammatory compound TNF-alpha
  – High levels of TNF-alpha associated with increased intestinal permeability AND inflammatory bowel disease
  – Clinical research: when given in combination with conventional treatment for inflammatory bowel, reduced risk of a relapse in symptoms by 75%
  – Has also been shown to keep inflammatory bowel patients in remission longer and is safe to use with conventional treatments
  – May reduce the need for conventional drugs, especially steroids

• Boswellia
  – Inhibits inflammatory compound 5-LOX
  – Shown in clinical studies to reduce intestinal inflammation associated with colitis, Crohn’s disease, etc.
  – Works well alone or in combination with curcumin
Don’t Forget About Changing Your Diet

• It might be helpful to keep a food log – write down what you eat and why symptoms you have
• You might be able to find your trigger foods if your problem is sensitivity or allergy
• OR just experiment with gluten or dairy free and see how you feel!
What to do for... Ulcers

• Combination of 300 mg DGL and 12 billion probiotics (*Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Bifidobacterium longum*, *Bifidobacterium lactus*, *Bifidobacterium bifidum*) before meals

• STOP smoking

• Address underlying stress in your life—the mind/body connection

• Avoid NSAIDS
What to do for...Heartburn

• 600 mg of a combination of d-limonene and sea buckthorn, once or twice daily
• HCl (hydrochloric acid) with each meal if needed
• Avoid overeating. Chew your food. A lot.
• Stay away from
  – Smoking
  – Excessive alcohol use
  – Soft drinks
  – Acidifying foods
• Favor fresh foods, include some raw and lightly cooked fruits and vegetables every day
• Don’t drink icy cold beverages or eat frozen treats with your meal
What to do for... Intestinal Inflammation

• 725 mg of a combination of bioavailable curcumin and boswellia (with minimal beta boswellic acid content) daily
• Rule out celiac disease
• Keep a food diary:
  – Cut out dairy and gluten and refined carbs, and note how you feel
• Avoid constipation.
  – Plenty of fluids; fiber in the diet, and taking walks or other physical activity.
  – Constipation is like a traffic jam; it slows everything down in the digestive tract. *This increases problems throughout the digestive tract.*
• Allergy testing/screening
• Address any autoimmunity component