



TOPIC OF THE MONTH

August 2013

INSIDE OUT POSTURING, continued.

Marichyasana Series

The Marichyasana series is about the colon. The colon is the “sewer” of our body, if it is not functioning properly the toxins our body is working so hard to eliminate can not get out. Before we learn how the Marichyasana series affects the colon, let’s learn a bit about our colons.

The colon is the last part of our digestive system. Unlike the small intestine, the colon does not play a major role in absorption of foods and nutrients.

However, the colon does absorb water, sodium and some fat soluble vitamins -- the colon’s main function is removing waste from our body, the 2nd important function is the body hydrates itself through the colon.

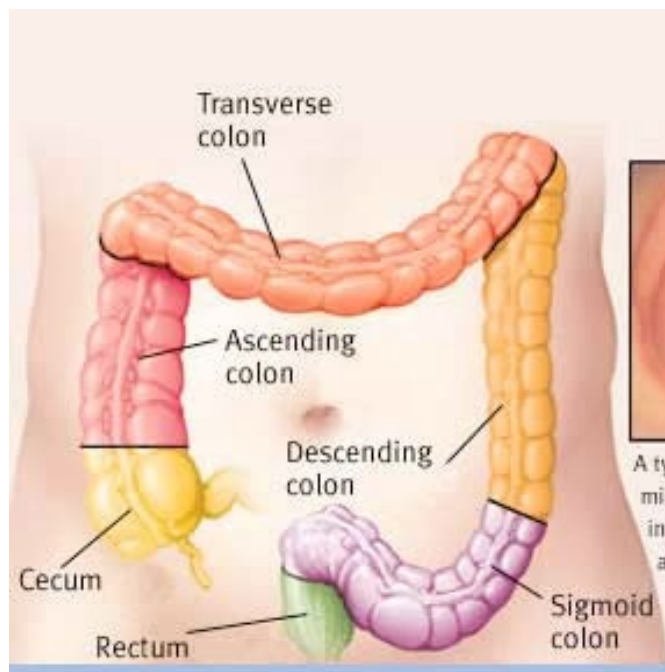
The colon consists of four sections: the ascending colon, the transverse colon, the descending colon, and the sigmoid colon. The cecum, colon, rectum, and anal canal form the large intestine.

Some fun colon facts:

- 🌀 Our colon is about as long as we are tall
- 🌀 The diameter of the colon is about equal to that of our wrist . . .
- 🌀 For every foot of our colon we can store approx. 5-10 lbs. of fecal matter . . .
- 🌀 In extreme cases the colon can back up into the small intestines . . . in this case you could be holding as much as 45# of fecal matter in your body! When the fecal matter backs up to the small intestine you will reabsorb the toxins into your system. The colon does NOT absorb many nutrients except for water and fat soluble vitamins, it is in the small intestine where we absorb our nutrients so when fecal matter backs up into the small intestine there is a higher likelihood of putting toxins back into our system. Now we know where the saying “full of shit” comes from ...

Regardless of how healthy you live, **if you have sluggish bowels your body builds up toxins. Fecal matter builds up along your colon walls (and may not leave for months or years), this build up interferes with some nutrient absorption at a low level** and on a major level leads to issues such as diverticulosis and colon cancer.

The feces that remain in one's system begin to decay, releasing toxins and poisonous gases that seep out into the bloodstream and poison the organs and tissues. The blood stream itself gets





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polluted, preventing it from removing the cells' wastes. So our whole system gets poisoned. This is one of the ways the colon controls the aging process in our body, toxins in the body lead to premature aging. **Going to the bathroom regularly is important. If you have a build up of matter in your colon you generally feel heavy, bloated, and full of wind.**

You can help your colon do its job:

- 🧘 Massage (with our heel in a yoga pose, or hand by massage -- your own or by a therapist). Start massage on your lower right, just inside your hip bone. Massage up the right, around the corner and under your ribs, spending a little extra time on the “corners” of the square our colon makes, in these corners is where matter is most easily trapped, then across the top, and down the left to the hip bone then center toward your navel and downward.
- 🧘 Inversions - Gravity helps move matter in our colons.
- 🧘 Jumping — as on a rebounder, running, athletics, exercise, or in an ashtanga class ;) can shift the matter and re-strengthen the bowel. One of the natural prescriptions for constipation is jumping on a rebounder.
- 🧘 Deep squats help to move matter in the colon downward

Issues around the colon: Constipation and Diarrhea

Starting with diarrhea as I will keep this topic short here, but will go into much more detail on this in later segments.

Diarrhea

Food Sensitivities or Allergies - Chronic Diarrhea, IBS (Irritable bowel syndrome), Crohns, Colitis are all wake up calls to check your diet. Chronic diarrhea is a sure sign you are reacting to a food. The best way to know if a food is causing your diarrhea is to eliminate a suspect food for 2-3 weeks and notice if symptoms change.

Another tool to use is the elimination diet which eliminates a lot of problematic foods for 3 weeks at once, and then you re-introduce one food at a time and watch for symptoms. I have tools, menus, and information on the elimination diet in this [blog](#), scroll part way down to “[How to test yourself for food sensitivities or allergies](#)”. (Before you do an elimination diet you do need to be going to the bathroom daily!)

The most common problematic foods for the colon are gluten and dairy.

Parasites - Other challenges could be parasites, parasites are both an overly exaggerated problem and frequently overlooked or un-diagnosed by a doctor.

Before you start taking parasite meds or herbs, TEST FIRST!! via stool and blood. Loose stools need to be induced to get fecal matter from higher up the colon closer to the small intestine — this is where giardia lurks and is often missed on stool samples. Parasite treatments are not pleasant, and many prescription meds are hard on the liver — you want to test first to identify to make sure



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you have a parasite and what type of parasite you have. You want to avoid treating something you don't have!

If you have been traveling outside of the country and are having digestive issues, always test for parasites first — especially if you have been in less sanitary countries.

Natural remedies are effective for parasites — sometimes more so than medications, many times medications can drive some parasites like amoebas deeper into hiding. Best to try natural remedies first, and then follow up with medication (through your doctor) only if necessary.

SIBO - Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth - SIBO is not in the colon, but closely related. SIBO is an imbalance of your gut bacteria, usually caused by a round of antibiotics, chlorinated water, medications, roundup or pesticides in your food, sugar, and processed foods.

Most people do not realize that roundup is an approved anti-biotic by the FDA! Yes roundup is an anti-biotic and its not only sprayed all over your food but all over your earth ... and we have an anti-biotic resistance issue, do you think this is helping that??? BUY ORGANIC or grow your own. You want to eliminate roundup from your life.

Functional Medicine has a sound protocol for healing your gut from SIBO, it is called the 5R framework. Handout included — see last page. The 5Rs:

1. Remove problematic foods and stressors that effect the gut.
2. Replace - add foods and herbs that help with digestion such as ginger, black pepper, turmeric, digestive enzymes, bile acids,
3. Reinoculate - Using pre and probiotics (more on this coming up below)
4. Repair your gut with nutrients that help to seal and heal your gut lining with things like antioxidants, fish oil, zinc, etc.
5. Rebalance - Adjust your lifestyle especially in the areas of sleep, stress, exercise, and food.

Constipation

While diet is a big factor in constipation, so is stress! You will not have good eliminations if you are stressed, so number one to check if you are chronically constipated is your stress. How can you reduce your stress and learn how to handle it better? [Transform it! Here is a blog on how to do that.](#)

Going to the bathroom ... You want to take out the trash EVERY DAY. It is imperative to have an elimination EVERY DAY, and in healthy folks it can be 2-3x per day. This is how your body rids itself of the toxins you worked so hard to pull out of your system. Sluggish bowels sets one up for skin issues, weight gain, brain fog, bloating, and other digestive issues.

Diet is better than having a colonic

Eating to Clean — Fiber



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Eat foods high in fiber, which sweeps debris from the colon. Such as vegetables, fruits, beans, seeds, nuts . . . getting a mix of soluble and insoluble fiber.

☯ Soluble fiber, found in many foods like brussel sprouts, blueberries, flaxseeds, apples, etc. attract water which makes their soluble fibers dissolve into a gel like substance. This slows your digestion which makes you feel fuller longer and eat less.

☯ Insoluble fiber found in dark leafy greens, celery, carrots, whole grains and other whole foods, like its name suggests does not dissolve and will help food move through your digestive tract a little quicker for healthy elimination. Many whole foods — especially fruits and vegetables contain both fibers and both are necessary and good for you.

EAT YOUR GREENS, not only do greens help to detoxify your body they also clean and heal your digestive tract. Leafy greens are especially important; going beyond spinach and lettuce you will get even more nutrients from greens such as arugula, mustard greens, kale, swiss chard, spring mixes.

☯ Chlorophyll found in green foods like leafy greens, alfalfa, spirulina, etc. are potent greens not only enhancing the healing of your colon; they help the body to obtain more oxygen and draw out toxins. For this reason, chlorophyll is called "the internal deodorant." Cilantro also is useful for this and it is a good chelator of mercury.

Water . . . Another job of the colon is to absorb the fluids out of the matter in the colon along with sodium and the fat soluble vitamins that maybe left in the digestive waste before it leaves your body. Your colon reabsorbs water and these nutrients 8 to 10 times every 30 minutes. The colon takes the waste and breaks it down, then reabsorbs water through the intestinal tract to provide the proper consistency for the waste to pass from our body. The colon stores the food waste until our body is ready to get rid of it.

Probiotics & Prebiotics

Fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, miso, sauerkraut, and pickled vegetables replenish the friendly bacteria needed for a healthy colon, they also help us go to the bathroom regularly. (Biotic means living organisms = Probiotic means Pro Living organisms.)

☯ Billions of bacteria reside in our large intestine. Our cells are 90% bacteria and only 10% human . . . Don't freak out though, theses bowel bugs in return for a warm place to live do a lot of good for our gut. These bowel bugs are known as intestinal flora or microbiota; because like plant life they give fertile soil for our colon and the health of our whole body. We also have harmful bacteria that can invade our body, colon health is basically helping the good bacteria outnumber the bad bacteria.

☯ Probiotics increase the thickness of intestinal mucus, which act like a protective paint to keep harmful bacteria from getting through. Probiotics (good "bowel bugs") compete with pathogenic bacteria (bad "bowel bugs"), thereby discouraging the growth and harmful effects of bad bowel bacteria. These good bugs stick to the intestinal lining, effectively crowding out the bad bugs and preventing them from getting a foot-hold on the intestinal lining.



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☯ The most important benefit of the good bowel bugs is they enhance your intestinal immune defenses. Probiotics enhance the immune function by increasing antibodies in our blood. Antibodies are proteins made by the immune system to fight antigens, such as bacteria, viruses, and toxins. Probiotics help to increase Immunoglobulin A (IgA), which is found in high concentrations in the mucous membranes, particularly those lining the respiratory passages and gastrointestinal tract, as well as in saliva and tears.

☯ The body makes different immunoglobulins to combat different antigens. For example, the antibody for chickenpox isn't the same as the antibody for mononucleosis.

Probiotics use fiber as a prebiotic to help produce healthful nutrients by fermenting some of the fiber in food to form short-chain fatty acids (SCFA's) which nourish the cells lining the colon, stimulate healing of these cells, and reduce the likelihood of colon cancer. These short-chain fatty acids are also absorbed into the bloodstream and travel to the liver where they lessen the liver's production of cholesterol. These SCFA's also inhibit the growth of yeast and harmful bacteria in the gut.

☯ Prebiotics are food our gut bacteria love and feed on. We want our good bacteria to hang around ... and so just like any guest, if you don't feed them eventually they will have to leave to find food. There are foods prevalent with prebiotics, butter being one of them, butter is made from butyric acid, this happens to be our gut bugs favorite food. Other prebiotic foods include onions and garlic, asparagus, dandelion greens, honey, and others. Handout attached at the end.

There is a lot of new and exciting research about our gut bacteria and how they effect everything from your mood to your weight to your blood sugar level.

☯ Increased amounts of beneficial bacteria were found in the digestive tract of thin mice vs. that of overweight mice.

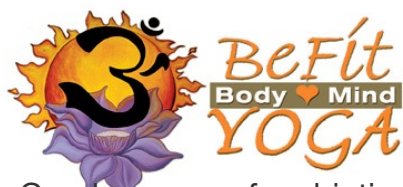
☯ Good bowel bugs balance the absorption of unhealthy sugars improving blood sugar levels

☯ People with more beneficial bacteria have lower rates of depression.

☯ Research is pointing to the fact that the good bowel bugs are environmental and emotional feelers that help us cope, adapt and genetically evolve to our ever-changing world. Our bugs don't just sit there fermenting . . . they are living organisms that communicate with each other and communicate with our body (their host).

☯ Research has been citing about how we manage stress by making 95% of the body's mood balancing hormone serotonin, along with other neurotransmitters, in the lining of the gut. I am fascinated by the correlation between digestion and mood and cognitive health. These little bugs help us be happier by increasing our serotonin.

Have you noticed when you eat something probiotic you go to the bathroom :) This is good . . .



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Good sources of probiotics are fermented foods (better than a pill!) are grass fed full fat yogurt -- plain and whole (no yogurt cups that are more sugar than probiotics), grass fed cottage cheese, miso, sauerkraut, raw cheeses, olives from an olive bar, kefir, kimchee, kombucha, kvass, cultured vegetables (other societies and their use of "pickle"), and many more (see handout attached). Note: some people are sensitive to histamines, histamines are created during the fermentation process, if you are sensitive to histamines you may need to experiment and find a probiotic supplement, however, outside of this I would avoid supplemental probiotics until we learn more about them. Researchers and scientists are making huge headways in this area, but I still prefer to use food.

We are learning now about all the different types of bacteria that reside in our guts — just like there are many different types of vitamins and minerals, there are many different types of gut bacteria that are responsible for different jobs in our body.

Supplements are large amounts of probiotics taken way out of proportion to how we would get them through food, this can cause symptoms too (for example vaginal and/or anal itching). Until we know more, eat fermented foods!

There are some new spore based probiotics that are showing promise, I am still following the research on this though.



How Marichyasana effects your colon

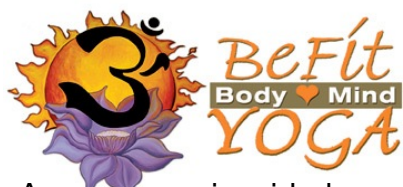
Your colon is so important you get four postures dedicated just to it in primary series.

Marichyasana A & C are preparatory poses for Marichyasana B & D, respectively, where the deeper inner cleansing is done. In Marichyasana B & D we place our left leg in half lotus first, this is for a good reason; our left heel puts pressure on the ascending colon, and our right heel puts pressure on our descending colon . . . if you mix this up you'll end up talking shit all day ;)

Our heel is like a massage for the colon. helping to stimulate the movement of matter so our body can rid itself of toxins. In the research it shows the areas most in need of this stimulation are the "corners" of the colon, this is the area we are aiming our heel for.

As your body allows, the most effective position for your heel will be in line with the inner-hip of your hip bone aiming your heel up under your ribs toward the "corners" of the colon where matter is more likely to get trapped. Then as we bend the 2nd leg into position, it further presses our heel in deeper and up toward the "corners" of our colon. Notice the pictures and the placement of the colon in our bodies.

In my own practice I have noticed to get my heel closer to my colon I need to place my leg further over -- knee towards the midline of my body -- so I am feeling a different stretch in my hip as I work to get my heel closer to my colon.



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A common misguided cue I hear often regarding the marichyasana series is as your body gets more flexible to keep pulling your heel up higher toward your sternum . . . your colon lies on the outer edges of abdomen, so knowledge of your internal body will help you get more benefit from your yoga postures.

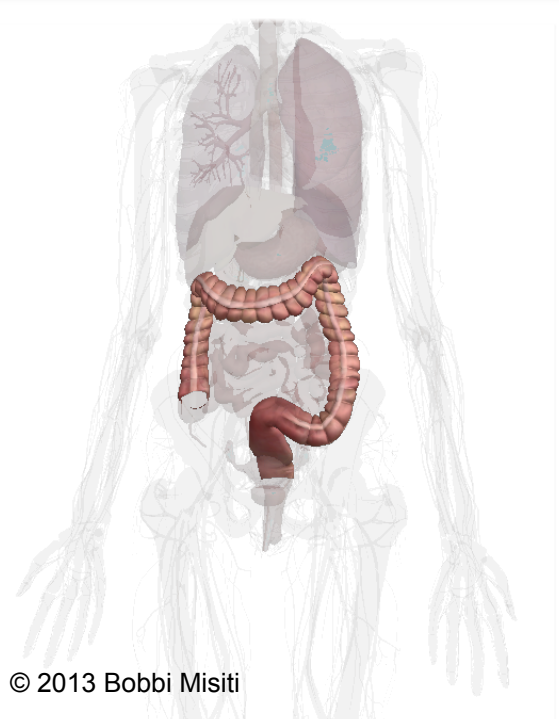
The binding (clasping your hands behind your back) in the Marichyasana Series helps to pull our torso in tighter to our heel increasing the pressure on the colon. It is also therapeutic for the shoulders, but this is only a side effect of the binding ;) If you are unable to bind, don't worry! Don't lose the posture over the bind.

If you can bind easily, as you are able you can "choke up" on your binds -- meaning first you get your fingertips, then as you get more flexible you catch your hand, or sometimes you can catch your wrist.

☯ Sometimes we get too wrapped up in catching the bind and we will lean away from or out of the posture to catch our hands . . . Better to not worry about the bind in this case and lean your gut into your heel.

For more information on how to do the Marichyasana series in your practice please visit the link below and scroll down to Marichyasana A, B, C, or D: <http://www.befityoga.com/philosophy-lifestyle/ashtanga-yoga-poses/>

IN THE EMOTIONAL BODY



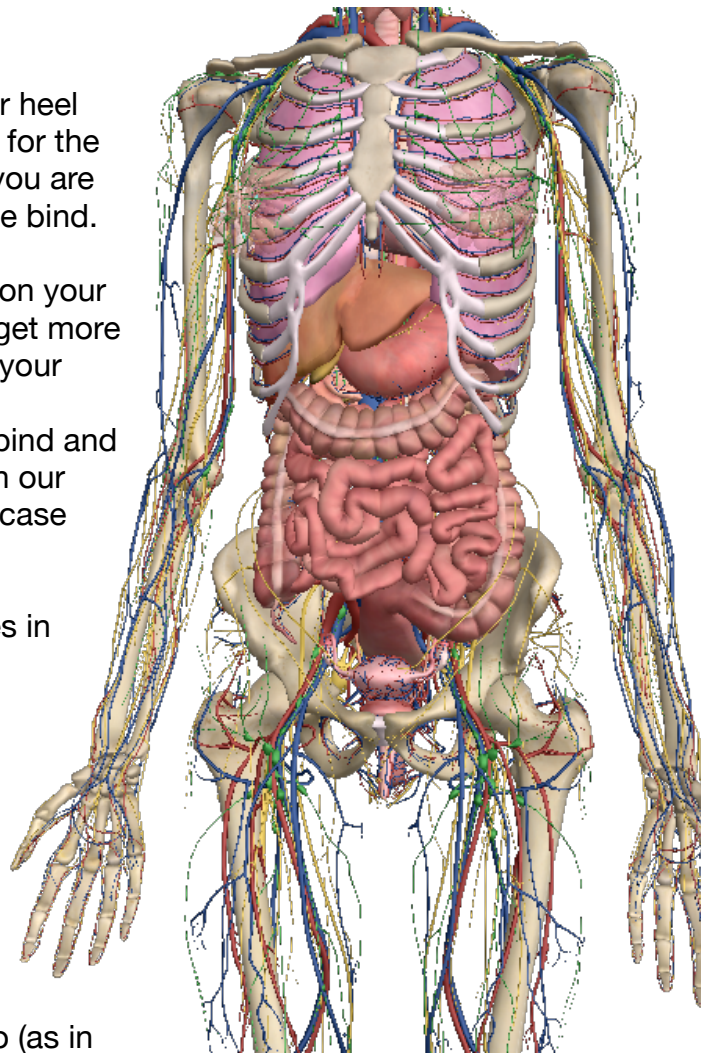
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Our colon represents holding on to the past, or the fear of letting go (as in constipation!).

Disorders of the colon, specifically constipation are linked with our inability to let go of old ideas or belief systems that no longer serve us. Are you holding onto societal beliefs that are not serving you? Sometimes we need to check in with our gut on our feelings, does your belief feel good in your gut? Or are you holding onto an old hurt that its time let go of?

Sometimes constipation is from lack of expression of your ideas or feelings, usually due to a fear of displeasing others or being wrong, or losing someone/something. Try going out on a limb and expressing your true self, more

BeFit Body & Mind YOGA





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often than not you will find people attracted to you for your openness and willingness to be vulnerable.

In the case of diarrhea, you reject ideas too quickly. You may be easily perturbed and find it impossible to digest disagreeable concepts, or even a situation you have to deal with. Since you think what is happening is not good or useful for you - you expel it quickly.

Or sometimes with diarrhea maybe you feel rejected. Are you extremely sensitive emotionally? This sometimes makes us feel rejected even when we are not — or keeps us from experiencing good and new situations. If this is your case, realize that it is most likely the monkeys in your mind holding you back ~ to find out for sure try talking with or asking the person you feel rejected by. You might be surprised at the response and find yourself feeling comfortable in situations that used to send you running for the bathroom.

If you are experiencing symptoms such as constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, or other colon issues; your body is telling you to re-educate yourself about feeding and nourishment -- not just with food for our physical bodies -- but with our attitudes and ideas for our emotional, psychological, and spiritual bodies. There is no spiritual nutrition in fear and self-deprecating thoughts.



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The 5R Framework for Gut Restoration

A properly functioning digestive system is critical to good health. In fact, problems with the gastrointestinal (GI) tract can cause more than just stomach aches, gas and bloating or diarrhea. GI issues may underlie chronic health problems that seem unrelated to digestive health, including autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and type 1 diabetes, skin problems such as eczema and acne rosacea, and heart disease (just to name a few). So in the bigger picture, how can we deal with all that can go wrong “down there”? In Functional Medicine we use a program that goes by the simple acronym of the ‘5Rs’: remove, replace, reinoculate, repair, and rebalance. When applied to various chronic health issues, the 5R program can lead to dramatic improvement in symptoms, and sometimes even complete resolution. The elements of the 5R program are described briefly below.

1. Remove

Remove stressors: get rid of things that negatively affect the environment of the GI tract including allergic foods, parasites and potential problematic bacteria or yeast.

- This might involve using an allergy “elimination diet” to find out what foods are causing GI symptoms or it may involve taking medications or herbs to eradicate a particular bug

2. Replace

Replace digestive secretions: add back things like digestive enzymes, hydrochloric acid, and bile acids that are required for proper digestion and that may be compromised by diet, medications, diseases, aging, or other factors.

3. Reinoculate

Help beneficial bacteria flourish by ingesting **probiotic** foods or supplements that contain the “good” GI bacteria such as *bifidobacteria* and *lactobacillus* species, and by consuming the high soluble fiber foods that good bugs like to eat, called **prebiotics**.

- **Probiotics** are beneficial microorganisms found in the gut that are also called “friendly bacteria.” Use of antibiotics kills both good and bad bacteria. Probiotics in the form of supplements or food are often needed to help reestablish a balanced gut flora. Fermented foods, such as yogurt, miso, and tempeh are food sources of probiotics.
- **Prebiotics** are food ingredients that selectively stimulate the growth of beneficial microorganisms already in the colon. In other words, prebiotics feed probiotics. Prebiotics are available in many foods that contain a fiber called inulin, including artichokes, garlic, leeks, onion, chicory, tofu, and other soy products. Grains such as barley, flax, oats, and wheat are also good sources of prebiotics. Another good prebiotic source is a supplement called “fructo-oligosaccharide” or FOS.

4. Repair

Help the lining of the GI tract repair itself by supplying key nutrients that can often be in short supply in a compromised gut, such as zinc, antioxidants (e.g. vitamins A, C, and E), fish oil, and the amino acid glutamine.

5. Rebalance

It is important to pay attention to lifestyle choices. Sleep, exercise, and stress can all affect the GI tract. Balancing those activities is important to an optimal digestive tract.



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Probiotic and Prebiotic Foods

The digestive tract is home to more than 500 species of bacteria, comprising about 100 trillion bugs altogether. Collectively, they are tremendously important for overall health. We give these bugs a home; in exchange, they do a variety of things for us. For instance, they help digest food, synthesize certain vitamins, and play an important role in immune defense. These bugs also act as a barrier to help our bodies filter and appropriately absorb nutrients from what we eat.

There are ‘good’ bugs called probiotics, which we can constantly replenish. These probiotics also need nourishing food to help them grow. Prebiotics are the fiber-rich foods that probiotics feed and grow on. As an added bonus, a compound called butyric acid is produced when the probiotics break down prebiotic foods in the colon. Butyric acid is the preferred form of fuel for the cells that line the colon, and it serves to acidify the environment as well, making it harder for harmful bacteria to survive.

Two of the main probiotic bacteria that reside in the digestive tract are *Lactobacilli* and *Bifidobacteria*. These can be taken in the form of supplements or included in the diet in the form of fermented (or probiotic) foods. The table below lists examples of common probiotic and prebiotic foods.

In order to maintain colonization in the digestive tract, probiotics must be taken or eaten regularly. General recommendations call for ingesting 1 to 25 billion colony-forming units (CFUs) daily. To put these guidelines into perspective, most store-bought probiotic yogurts contain about 1 billion CFUs per serving. To get the maximum benefit from fermented foods, it’s important to read product labels and choose only those that contain “active, live cultures” and preferentially raw, unpasteurized, perishable ingredients. Organic brands are the best choices, as they are not typically heat-treated after fermentation, so more of the good bacteria are present. Fermented foods can also be made at home. Though the probiotic content will vary by batch, home fermenting is a safe way to ensure that you are ingesting beneficial bacteria, as various cultures around the world have done for centuries.

Probiotic Foods	Prebiotic Foods
Acidophilus milk	Asparagus
Buttermilk	Banana
Cheese (aged)	Dandelion greens
Cottage cheese	Eggplant
Fermented meats	Endive
Fermented vegetables	Garlic
Kefir	Honey
Kimchi	Jerusalem artichokes (sunchokes)
Kombucha	Jicama
Miso	Kefir
Natto	Leeks
Pickled vegetables (raw)	Legumes
Sauerkraut	Onions
Sour cream	Peas
Tempeh	Radicchio
Yogurt (plain, no added sugar, active cultures)	Whole grains
	Yogurt

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