

The following suggestions are not meant as prescriptions for treatment. Clinical practice and research have shown the following steps may improve digestion, immune function, and help reduce fatigue. Contact your primary health care provider for specific recommendations.

Food as Medicine

Buy the best quality –least processed food you can afford. Your body cannot provide the energy you need without the proper nutrients. Whole foods are preferable to vitamins and supplements. The best foods to buy organically are meats, dairy and selected fruits and vegetables. See the following websites for additional information about organic foods:

<http://www.foodnews.org/pdf/walletguide.pdf>

<http://www/organicconsumers.org>

For your digestion:

Chewing food well and not drinking while eating helps improve digestion by reducing the energy needed to digest food. Chew your food 21 times before swallowing. Eating fresh garlic as often as possible and including at least one serving of steamed or raw greens daily may help immune function and provide necessary vitamins and minerals..

Apple cider vinegar may aid digestion by stimulating hydrochloric acid production prior to a meal.

¼-1tsp of apple cider vinegar in a small amount of water prior to each meal will stimulate acid production.

Fresh ground organic flax seeds may be added to cereals, shakes, stir fries, rice etc. to aid elimination and hormone balance.

Human acidophilus may help absorb nutrients from food more effectively.

For your kidneys:

Water. Most adults benefit from drinking at least 2-3 liters of filtered or spring water daily to aid elimination and circulation.

For your skin and lymphatic circulation:

Hydrotherapy. Ending a shower with a cool water spray for 15-30 seconds may return blood flow to your internal organs and stimulate your senses.

Dry skin brushing. Using a light fiber brush or natural sponge, light skin brushing prior to bedtime may stimulate circulation and help “prime” the immune system for healing.

Castor oil. Castor oil rubbed on the abdomen may help to stimulate the immune system and support liver functions. Often this can be done in conjunction with a heating pad or other heat source, such as Flax Pax.

For Relaxation: Take at least 10-15 minutes daily for yourself:

Healing visualization. While in a relaxed environment, breathe in healing energy and exhale tension. Picture your body in its optimal state of health and realize only you can achieve that level of well being.

Deep breathing. Practice “abdominal breathing” by placing a hand on the lower abdomen and watching your hand rise. Breathing in with your stomach muscles helps get oxygen to all cells and relieve tension.

Movement. Move your muscles daily. Find your favorite aerobic and anaerobic exercise and establish a routine.

Sleep. Healing occurs while you sleep. Every hour of sleep before midnight is worth 2 hours after midnight. A good night’s sleep will improve your memory and help balance your hormones. Going to bed at the same time each night and getting up at the same time every day may help you balance your stress reactions during the day.

Play. Do something FUN every day. Laughter is essential for stress management and a healthy heart.

Important Nutrients.

Magnesium-for calcium absorption, energy, heart and relaxation of smooth muscles.—particularly for muscle cramping, heart support and tenseness. Often a ratio of 1.5 x the amount of calcium (up to bowel tolerance) is beneficial.

Good food sources: dried figs, almonds, black-eyed peas, halibut, mackerel, garbanzo beans, and soybeans.

B-vitamins-for stress management, nervous system, brain function and fatigue.

Good food sources: animal proteins such as meat, liver, eggs, dairy and some enriched grains and legumes. Leafy green vegetables are good sources for folate.

Essential fatty acids omega –3/omega –6 for hormone balancing, nervous system and cell-to-cell communication. Non-contaminated salmon oils are particularly beneficial.

Good food sources: salmon, anchovy, sardine and mackerel fish oils, ground flax seeds, evening primrose oil, borage oil.

Protein for proper brain function and metabolic processes. A guideline

is at least 20grams of protein at each meal as long as kidney function is adequate. This is particularly important for breakfast. Pregnant and breast-feeding women need more protein on a daily basis.

Good food sources: almonds, nut butters, whey protein powder, soy products, animal meats, etc.

Calcium-for women at risk of osteoporosis. Often at 800 mg. daily. Ensure your supplement contains vitamin D and boron to ensure proper metabolism. Good food sources: collards, baked potato (with skin), dried figs, almonds, chicken, eggs, soybeans, milk, yogurt, canned sardines and canned salmon.

Supplements vs Whole Foods.

My personal bias as a clinician is **to use whole food sources as nutrients instead of supplements** unless :

- there is an identified deficiency in nutrients or co-factors.
- the digestive process is impaired.
- the absorption process is impaired.
- the body is weakened or stressed for whatever reason.

Evaluating Supplements.

For any supplement you purchase, ask your practitioner the necessary daily dose of the important components you need. Then ask the supplement company to provide you with an independent assay of their product. (This is an independent chemical analysis of what is in the supplement.) If the company cannot provide this assessment, question their commitment to providing a quality product. After you receive the independent assay, calculate the daily cost of the supplement to provide you with the amount of the component your practitioner recommends. You can obtain the best quality and value supplements using this method.

You should notice some “difference” after you have taken a supplement for a specified period of time (typically a minimum of three months.) This may mean a reduction in symptoms, more energy or an improvement in lab values. If this is not the case, you need to ask your practitioner to evaluate your treatment recommendations. The biggest challenge is not to take a supplement because “one of your friends or family has taken it.” We all have slightly different physiology, and taking responsibility for your health means choosing the right foods, supplements and lifestyle characteristics that work for YOU!