**Dr. Liz Lipski’s Top Ten Tips**

**to Improve your Digestive Health**

1. **Stay Hydrated.** Our digestive system and body don’t work efficiently when they’re like a dry sponge.

How can you expect to have easy bowel movements and remove waste from your body without fluids? Making sure that you get plenty of water every day is one of the most promising routes to digestive wellness.

2. **Exercise Regularly.** A fitness routine is a good idea for everyone, but for those with digestive issues it’s especially helpful. Exercise increases circulation while massaging and toning your entire digestive system. Aim for 20-60 minutes of activity at least 3 to 4 times a week.

3. **Add Good Bacteria to Your Diet.** It’s the life in food that gives us life. Add probiotic and prebiotic laden foods to your diet. Probiotic rich foods include: Add some yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchee, cultured vegetables, unpasteurized olives and pickles, amasake, black tea, raw milk cheeses, natto, raw vinegars, traditionally made sourdough breads and tempeh. Prebiotic rich foods include: asparagus, bananas, chickory, eggplant, fruit, garlic, green tea, honey, Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, onions, peas, yogurt, cottage cheese, and kefir. You may choose to add a probiotic supplement to your routine.

4. **Get your fiber.** The daily recommendation for dietary fiber is 25 grams per day. If you are like most people, you get about half of that. Fiber helps regulate your digestive system. Try such fiber-rich foods as legumes (all beans except green beans), whole grains (brown rice, whole wheat, bulghur, millet, buckwheat, rye, barley, spelt, oats), vegetables and fruits.

5. **Slow Down and CHEW!** Your teeth are part of your digestive system, too. When you use them to thoroughly mush up your food—think mashed potatoes—the rest of your digestive system doesn’t have to work overtime.

6. **Cook at Home.** When you prepare foods in your own kitchen, you have better control of the ingredients and cooking methods, so you can make foods that are healthy and easily digested. An added bonus: cooking is also nurturing and rejuvenating.

7. **Try Fermented Foods.** Fermenting or culturing makes foods more digestible by actually “pre-digesting” them for you. The most common fermented foods are cultured dairy products, like yogurt, sourdough bread, pickles and sauerkraut.

8. **Cook Foods Well.** When you’re sick, you naturally turn to soups and stews and well-cooked foods—they’re so simple that your system can digest them easily. But don’t limit these foods to when you’re ill; include them as part of your regular diet. For sweet desserts, try poached pears or applesauce.

9. **Eat Smaller Meals.** Skipping meals or waiting to eat until you’re famished can lead to overeating. You’ll find that eating smaller meals with healthy snacks in between aids your digestive system.

10. **Know Your Food Sensitivities.** It’s estimated that 10-20% of us have food sensitivities, which can cause far reaching symptoms including: bloating, cramping, heartburn, indigestion, gas, stomach pain, chronic headaches, depression, inability to concentrate, aching muscles and joints and low energy levels. The most common food sensitivities include: wheat, uncultured dairy products (like milk), eggs, citrus, pork and beef.

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