



## Upper GI: Mind, Mouth, and Stomach Rebalancing Protocols

### Transcript

Let's look at the **4R** process. There are **4Rs** in healing your gut and today's topic is looking at **Replace**, but there are four of them. Last time we looked at **Remove**. We looked at removing the foods and the substances that actually damage your digestive tract and we had the elimination diet and things like that.

The next thing that we are going to look at now is Replace. And Replace is where you are going to go in, and you are going to put back in. The first step you took out the stuff that was hurting, now you are going to put back in the stuff that you are missing, like hydrochloric acid or helping your body to learn how to make more hydrochloric acid, and also the enzymes. We are going to look at replacing, and just aside on the Remove, we looked at removing the external things that are hurting the digestive tract.

What we are going to look at on the next section when we look at digestive further down the absorptive phase, we are going to look at removing some of the pathogens, the organisms that come live down there; so there are two parts to that Remove. Replace is so important, that's what we are working on today.

**Reinoculate** we'll do next time when we look at lower down and that's where you put back in some of the good organisms that should be living there and helping you with digestion and absorption, but are not because they've been destroyed. And we'll look at what destroys that and how you replace that.

And then finally we'll look at the actual **Repair**, restoring the tissues. So before we get to the actual Repair phase, we want to be doing these other pieces so that the Repair holds, right? If you start to Repair something but you keep hurting it, damaging it, it's not going to do much good as if you wait and you stop doing all the other things to it, and then do the Repair so that's the order we are going to do it in. But today we are going to look at Replace.

Let's look at some of the herbs that you can use to stimulate your digestion, and in particular the action of these bitters is to stimulate not only hydrochloric acid in your stomach, but also stimulates pepsin and it stimulates mucus production, and aside from that it also stimulates bile movement and production it's called a cholagogue.

These are really, really valuable. They can stimulate bile, pancreatic enzymes, and hormones.

The **Bitters** are plants basically. They're usually plant substances that are bitter in taste and they trigger a reflex under your tongue and in your mouth that stimulates the digestive tract, that stimulates the stomach, the pancreas, and the liver and gallbladder.

A lot of people just like to replace things, and I'm really strongly opposed to just taking enzymes and just taking things like ox bile or HCL to stimulate the digestion without actually stimulating your own body. You can do them simultaneously. You can give your body what it's missing, but I think you are doing yourself a disservice if you don't also include some of these bitters.

The bitters can **enhance immunity**, they can enhance your ability to fight off pathogenic infections and invasions.

They actually **decongest your portal vein**. Your vein can get clogged from all the waste products it's bringing back from your body tissue to be excreted. They can **decrease varicosity**, like varicose veins. They've got a lot of widespread effects.

They can **calm the nervous system** as well and **stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system**. And we briefly touched on that in our first overview of the digestive tract but that there are two branches of the nervous system, the parasympathetic and the sympathetic.

The sympathetic is the one we know of as the tiger fighting phase, it's where we are running away from danger and we are able to get away, run fast or fight, the 'fight-flight' nervous system. And the parasympathetic is the opposite it's more the calm, it's where healing and repair happens, it's where reproduction happens. It's where kind of calm, fun things, and that's where you go when you do yoga, or meditation or **HeartMath**.

And your digestive tract really works efficiently in the parasympathetic nervous system state but very inefficiently in the sympathetic nervous system state. So bitters can actually trigger a parasympathetic response so then overall enhance your digestion. They can even **lower blood glucose** and that's a real blessing I would say for people who have either diabetes or insulin resistance.

We know now what they do, the importance of them, let's look at some of the common **bitters** and then let's talk about how you can incorporate those into your daily health regime; licorice, hops, milk thistle, gentian, orange peel, dandelion, golden seal and Oregon grape, chicory. Those bitters are things that you can take in a formula like a little tincture formula that you put a few drops under your tongue before you eat.

Use a whole dropperful in your mouth and swish it around to take advantage of that. Something that Europeans have done a lot, the *Swedish Bitters* were popular ways people would mix it with alcohol and go to the bar and get their bitters before going home and having their dinner, help them digest better.

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I'm not sure that with the alcohol it actually completely accomplishes that but the idea is there.

The other way you can do **bitters** is just your **greens**, your green leafy vegetables. These are herbals but in terms of bitters, things like dandelion, kale, mustard greens, arugula and some of the greens in the spring mixes, some of the really sharp ones. They are really good at stimulating all these digestive factors.

What you can do is 15 minutes before your meal, while you are preparing your meal, you can either make a little juice from some of those greens, ounce or two, swish it around in your mouth, hold it there for a while, let it really stimulate and saturate and then swallow it or you can actually take pieces and you could just chew on them and chew really, really well till they're down to practically liquid and then swallow.

That's going to help to stimulate your digestion, and if you do this over time you are going to see a huge difference in how your body digests food. In terms of solving the problems that lie here, we are looking at solving the problems of the low stomach acid. But what if the problem is that the stomach is irritated? And this usually happens as a result of both low and high stomach acid.

When you have low stomach acid, it actually causes more GERD or reflux, because the stomach acid actually keeps the integrity of that sphincter between the esophagus and the stomach. When you don't have enough stomach acid it gets flaccid and it allows regurgitation. We want to be able to look at healing factors for the stomach but these can also be healing factors for the esophagus and the intestines as well.

We have our bitters; we have licorice, we have **slippery elm**. I love slippery elm and slippery elm and licorice are amazing in combination with each other. Slippery elm is basically a bark, it's usually the inner bark, and so you'd look for slippery elm inner bark powder. It comes in a powder, you can put a teaspoon of it in water, it does well in warm water, it doesn't do as well in cold water, it clumps.

If you bring some water to a boil but don't quite bring it to a boil, bring it to maybe a little bit before and pour that into the slippery elm and stir it well, sometimes I'll use a fork to stir it really well; that's a really great way to make a slippery elm tea and slippery elm tea is so soothing.

If you've got an irritating stomach lining or esophagus or even if you have a sore throat, slippery elm can take away that pain really quickly. If you add **licorice** to it, **or** in the case of people with blood pressure problems you add DGL, **deglycyrrhizinated licorice**, which will be the licorice without the component that will raise your blood pressure. Then make DGL and slippery elm into a little tea. The licorice has a nice, sweet taste and the combination of the two is really soothing and healing for the lining.

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With licorice, some people don't like the taste, so you don't have to put that in. Slippery elm is pretty bland, but some people don't like that blandness. So you could put any essential oils that you like that you would find soothing to your digestive tract.

I love putting a little bit of **anise** or **lemon** or **orange**: bitter orange or sweet orange, and then it tastes really good, it's a nice flavored tea. The other way you could do it is you could actually make tea that you really like using a teabag or a loose tea, then put that in a cup and then add the slippery elm to the tea, after you've taken out the teabag out of course so you don't make a mess. That makes a really nice drink that you can take before each meal.

I'm going to recommend as part of your actions for today, to start taking the slippery elm beverage before your meals. If you have any kind of digestive issues I highly recommend that you do that, optionally adding the licorice especially if you've had a long standing and chronic issues.

You can do the **HCL supplementation** and that can actually be healing in fact for the stomach because it allows things to return to normal; the normal amount of stomach acid. **Pepsin**, which is a protease enzyme, a protein-digesting enzyme.

**Lemon juice**, a lot of people think well, if I have an irritating digestive tract, I can't do spicy things, I can't do things that are acidic like tomatoes and lemons and all that. But that's actually just a false thing.

A teaspoon of **apple cider vinegar** in eight ounces of water before a meal can do wonders to help your digestion and soothe the stomach, as well as stimulate the digestive juices.

This is kind of odd, an **extract of black pepper** because we are always told to stay away from black pepper if your stomach has issues because it's irritating. But there are some constituents in the extracts of black pepper that have been found to be healing to the stomach. It's fascinating, isn't it?

**Glutamine**, which is an amino acid, has the ability to go in and restore and basically plump up and fluff up the mucous lining in your digestive tract. It's really good not only for healing stomach, but it's really great for leaky gut, which we'll talk about in our next lesson.

Let's talk about, how do you support your **digestive enzymes** and make your body produce enough so that you can digest your meal?

**Breathe and relax before each meal**, doing your little *HeartMath* thing that we've been taught really goes a long way to getting you into that parasympathetic nervous system state where everything works well.

**Chewing your food thoroughly;** Knowing that it's the only place where mechanical digestion occurs and the rest of it is going to be chemical. It's a good idea to make it easy on your system to digest your food.

If you **drink warm water about half an hour before your meal** that will warm your digestive tract and actually can improve your digestive capacity.

And if you put a little bit of apple cider vinegar or make a slippery elm tea that can help even more dramatically. You want to eat in calm, relaxed state. Not only get in the relaxed state before eating and do your break but stay in the relaxed state throughout the meal.

When **you eat slowly** and you really **focus your attention on the food** you will have much better digestion; you are not distracted, you are not worried about your day, you are not worried about the world and all the things that may be occurring out there.

Incorporating a lot of **living foods that supply enzymes** is a really good idea because when you eat mostly cooked foods, it draws upon your body's ability to make enzymes. Living foods are foods that have not been cooked, more specifically living foods might refer to things like sauerkraut and cultured foods that have been fermented and actually increase the amount of enzymes.

Whenever you *culture food*, you make *sauerkraut* or *kefir* or *yoghurt*, you are improving the enzyme capacity and the digestive capacity of that food.

You want to **avoid gluten and dairy**. Gluten and dairy are aggravating and irritating to the lining of your digestive tract. Gluten has the ability to cause inflammation, to get stuck in the little openings between the cells, and to create havoc and actually create things like leaky gut and ulcers and even esophagitis. There have been studies that have associated gluten intolerance in people who have esophagitis and reflux.

**Avoid dairy**, the protein casein in dairy is *like a glue*. It's actually used as a glue in some glue manufacturing and it gums up your mechanisms and makes it really difficult for your body to do its job.

**Probiotics foods** like *sauerkraut*, *kimchi*, *cultured veggies*, *Kombucha*, *coconut kefir* and *non-dairy yogurt*, all really good for you. We'll be including some recipes in the probiotics learning activity that will give you some really great information about how to make these. We've got some recipes and we've got some resources.

It used to be you had to make your own and now there is lots places that you can get it, you can really find good quality. We have farmers markets and we find them at the local health food stores.

**Cultured vegetables** are great; it doesn't have to be just cabbage, sauerkraut's traditionally cabbage, but the cultured veggies could be cauliflower, beets, green beans, or many other vegetables.

When you culture the foods, you are actually inoculating them with an organism, a good quality organism that helps you to produce more probiotics. And the probiotics help you to have a really healthy digestive tract and stimulates good enzyme production. You want to *avoid sugar, refined carbohydrates and alcohol.*

What I mean by refined carbohydrates is anything where the fiber and the germ has been removed: white flour, white rice, white anything, even some of the gluten-free breads are all loaded with white flour, so you really have to watch that. Flour products are not good anyway especially if you've got excess weight.

And alcohol definitely decreases your enzyme capacity and aggravates your pancreas; so it's not something you want to have at all very often, maybe you have it once a year at a holiday celebration or something.

And then **digestive enzymes** either during or after each meal, you want to take them away from any stomach acid supplementation. If you are taking **hydrochloric acid** as a supplement, you want to make sure that you do that at the beginning part of the meal, and then the enzymes at the end so they don't interfere with each other.

But digestive enzymes you can take. Some people take at the beginning of the meal and people always ask me, 'should I take them at the beginning of the meal, the middle, the end?' I tend to think it's best at the middle to the end, but a lot of folks will forget. If you don't take it right there at the beginning you forget, so if you are going to forget at the middle or the end, then take them at the beginning, as long as you are not taking it with hydrochloric acid.

Let's look at some of the **demulcent herbs** that actually soothe and heal your digestive tract. Well, they soothe the digestive tract, that's one of the things that they do, they provide some of the mucilage, some of them **cooling agents** to help to *soothe* an **aggravated tissue**. They also help to rebuild especially things like **marshmallow** and **slippery elm** and **plantain** and **aloe vera**, they have polysaccharides in them that actually help your body to **produce a better mucous layer**.

Some are **anti-inflammatory**, and some of them are not anti-inflammatory, they're just demulcent; so there is a crossover. Demulcent meaning soothing and I also call them mucilaginous. They **lubricate your digestive tract**, especially if you have hard stools and constipation. Taking some of these demulcent herbs will coat and **soothe your digestive tract** and **lubricate** so that your stool passes through much more quickly and easily. They **nourish** your body fluids and tissue. Demulcent herbs **hold a lot of fluid** and it's really good for people who tend to be dehydrated.

What are some of these demulcent herbs? **Licorice** has been studied over and over again and compared to some of the acid controlling medications for people with ulcers, and licorice **heals the ulcers**, the acid decreasing medication just decreases the pain. When studies have been done (and there have been many) with licorice compared to say *Pepcid* or *Prilosec*, licorice outperformed the medications.

What happens is the *Prilosec* people will have more immediate relief in the short term, within the first week or two they may have more comfort than the licorice ones, but once the licorice has been taken for a while and starts **heal the lining**, the people taking the licorice have much better results and much better relief from the pain.

**Marshmallow** is another one; and you think about marshmallows, those little white things on a stick that you put in the fire, but the original marshmallow is a plant. And the marshmallows that we see in the stores have no marshmallow, no real marshmallow in it. But marshmallow is very demulcent, very 'gooey' so when you add water to it, you can get a kind of thick, pasty like solution, almost a mucous like solution that you can swallow.

**Slippery elm** is very similar. Slippery elm tends in a lot of people to be more specific for the digestive tract and soothing, and marshmallow more for the respiratory system, but it varies so widely that you can try either one and you can vary it and see which one works the best. They're both inexpensive. I buy most of my bulk herbs now at a place called Mountain Rose Herbs. They are on the West Coast and they're very reputable, very good organic, high quality herbs, and very inexpensive maybe \$10 you can get a pound of slippery elm, maybe \$12, I don't remember exactly but it's very, very cost effective.

**Comfrey** on the other hand is a bit rarer, it's not something that I recommend you do on a regular basis. I usually only recommend comfrey for people who have really severely compromised things going on, and the slippery elm and the marshmallow are not really doing the trick, comfrey is really potent at healing tissue. It's usually used more externally, but can be used internally. You don't want to use it long term because it has these chemicals called pyrrolizidine alkaloids, which can actually be damaging to the liver when you take them for too long.

**Irish moss** is an awesome sea vegetable. It looks kind of stringy; it's usually bleached in the sun sometimes making it white, so that you can use it in creamy type concoctions. I've used Irish moss to make cheesecakes and cheeses and nice, creamy dips.

And what it does is, when you soak it, it soaks up a lot of water and then you take it, you rinse it off, you put it in the blender with a lot more water, and you blend it up to make a paste. That paste can be added to smoothies, it can be added to dips and actually cuts down on the amount of fat that you need to add. So say you are making a nut dip, you can put a bunch of Irish moss in there to fill that up and Irish moss has the ability to really **soothe**.

It's especially great for the ***lining of the lungs***. When people have lung problems they take Irish moss and it's really good for that, but it's good for anything at all where you need soothing and healing, it's very demulcent. You just want to avoid getting the flakes of the Irish moss because when you use the flakes and you stir them up in water they don't all get broken down fully and the flakes can actually get caught in some of the openings in the lining of your gut, and it can actually cause some inflammation. We don't recommend using flakes, just the whole pieces.

**Cinnamon**, it's a really great diverse herb because it's good not only for helping to ***soothe*** and ***heal*** and it's ***anti-inflammatory*** but it also helps ***lower*** your ***blood sugar*** and keep that nice and steady.

We've all heard of **chamomile**. Chamomile has the joint effects of ***calming the muscles and the muscle linings*** like of the small intestine and the stomach but it also is very ***soothing*** as well and ***healing***.

**Fenugreek** has a unique type of smell and can be used in a tea, in a formula, and to help ***heal and soothe***.

**Jujube dates** are kind of interesting. I had my first experience with these when I went to a farmers' market a couple of years ago. They had what looked like dates on the table but they looked kind of different, and I was talking to the farmer and he said 'these are jujube dates.' I'd heard of jujube dates I'd just never seen them. They are commonly used in China, they are not anywhere near as sweet as the conventional dates that we think about and they really have a nice demulcent kind of a quality so those are nice to include in a formula for healing.

We've gone through quite a number of things that you can do to heal and soothe your digestion.

I recommend that you review this information, look over the slides, take notes, go back and listen again if you need to and then review the documents that we have on the page related to this lesson to give you more specifics.

I highly recommend that ***before every meal*** you do a pre-meal ritual that's intended to optimize your digestion and your absorption. You need to do this every time you put food in your body because you want to prepare it well, you want your body to receive it well.

You want your enzymes to be just jumping and climbing and ready to help you, you want your lining of your gut to be nice and thick and rich and produce enough acid and have all those little valves between the sections of the intestines, the opening and closing at the right time, just to make this perfect. And so having this pre-meal ritual, which you can do in 30 seconds or less, the first one is ***stop***, just stop. When I was explaining this to someone a couple of weeks ago, I said 'you just need to stop' and she says 'okay stop what?'

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I said 'no, you just need to stop'. She was a mom with a young toddler and she was running a business and doing all sorts of things; I said you just need to stop. This is your time to nourish your body, this is your time to take that external stuff and turn it into fuel that's going to make you either hum or flop on the couch. It's going to make you feel great or it's going to have you doubled over in pain; and the way you approach your meals can have a huge effect.

You can save a lot of money on supplements and things if you'll actually do this before each meal; it's cheap, it's easy and it's quick. **Look**; I know this is like the stop, look, list that you learned when you were little. It's the start, stop and then look, what do you want to look at? You want to look at the food.

You want to look at the magic that's on your plate that you are about to with just the amazingness of your digestive tract turn from these blobs of food, blobs of plants or whatever else you have on your plate and turn it into you. That food is going to turn into you. That protein is going to be used to build a new you, to build your digestive tract, to build your hormones, to make you. Those fats are going to become your cell membranes, so just let's look at what we are putting in and let's really manage what we are putting in given the guidelines we've already talked about.

It's important to have gratitude for that food. It's important to tune into your heart and feel a sense of **appreciation, love and gratitude** for what you are about to do. You are about to take the beauty of nature and put it into your body. After you tune into your heart, you **breathe, fully and deeply**. Just go ahead and do that right now and you'll feel your shoulders fall, you'll feel your neck loosen and know that that same relaxation you feel on the outside, you are feeling on the inside too.

That whole digestive tract is smiling and you can imagine it smiling, you can imagine your whole digestive tract smiling as you feel sincere appreciation for it for doing such a wonderful job of turning this blob of food on your plate into you. So really do this every time before you put food onto your body.

You can do it in 30 seconds, you stop, you look, you tune into your heart and take a deep breath all at the same time, you could put your hand over your heart and just take a deep breath and you could say thank you, thank you for providing that nourishment, thank you body for being able to do the work of taking that and transforming it.

Let's look at an **action plan** for building a really good solid digestion in the upper digestive tract and in our next session we'll talk about how they actually optimize the absorption of the food going into you to make sure that it goes in.

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- Start with the bitters, 15 minutes before your meal.
- Do your pre-meal ritual and do it with love and gusto.
- Take some enzymes at the beginning of your meal, the middle or the end.
- Chew your food thoroughly. Chew, chew, chew.
- Take some gut healing herbs like slippery elm tea or DGL before each meal.

Just simple; a nice ritual while you are making your meal, is to pour yourself a soothing cup of tea, do your bitters, take your gut soothing herbs, ah, do your pre-meal ritual, hmm, dig in, start to eat, you can throw the enzymes in at the beginning or the middle or the end, whatever works with your schedule.

This is your task for the week. Don't worry about all the other stuff, about all the other herbs and stuff, we can work those in later unless you've already got them, you are familiar with them, you can start to use some of the others, fine, but just start with this. Start with this at every meal. You don't want to give your body too much to do at once.

And then I'll see you next time when we are talking about the lower digestive tract and absorption, optimizing your absorption, healing leaky gut and getting control of gut bugs. Thank you so much this is Dr. Ritamarie and have a wonderful day.