

The Stressed Gut

How Grandma's Wisdom and Modern Psychology Fix Your
Overthinking



Chapter 1: Overthinking and IBS: How Grandma's Wisdom Beats Modern Anxiety

Have you ever been sitting in your office cabin when you suddenly get a call from your senior or boss? You pick it up, and they say, "There is something important to discuss, come to my cabin right away." Just hearing that, do you instantly get a weird stomachache and feel super nervous? Your mind starts racing with negative thoughts, your stomach starts producing extra acid, or you suddenly feel the need to use the bathroom. Do you know why this happens? It is because of the strong connection between your gut and your brain.

In this chapter, we are going to talk about how your overthinking mind and your gut are closely linked, and what you can do about it.

The Science Bit: Your Second Brain

Science says that there is a connection between our stomach and brain, which we call the **Vagus Nerve**.

You probably read in biology that the brain controls everything. But the reality is a bit different—your stomach has its own nervous system, which is called the **Enteric Nervous System**. Some scientists even call it the "second brain".

When you are overthinking things like worrying about the future or stressing over personal life stuff, your brain sends a signal through the Vagus Nerve, which is directly linked to your stomach. And that is right where anxiety, acidity, that weird stomachache feeling, or even weight issues start.

Another reason for this could be if you ate heavy or oily food at night. If you eat that kind of food, you wake up feeling irritated, anxious, lazy, and with an upset stomach the next morning.

Desi Wisdom: The advice from grandmothers that finally makes sense today

Our grandmothers never had any fancy physiology degrees or medical education. But their traditional home remedies were just as good as any medicine. Their lived experience was the biggest science of all.

Whenever we sit down to eat while angry, annoyed, sad, or heavy-hearted, our elders often stop us and say, "Son/Daughter, do not put food in your mouth while crying or fighting; it will turn into poison, put your life in danger, or the food might get stuck in your windpipe." That is what older people usually say.

We all laugh it off or ignore it, thinking, "What do they know? They don't have a degree or any scientific knowledge." But they actually share the biggest scientific truths that we usually just ignore or laugh off.

When you eat while stressed, your body goes into **fight-or-flight mode**. At that time, your stomach is busy trying to digest food, but instead, your blood flow shifts away from your stomach and rushes to your hands and legs so you can either run or fight! The result: indigestion, acidity, gas, and even more stress.

Real Life Scenario

Let me introduce you to my brother, Rohit. He is 26 years old and works as a software engineer. His daily routine is opening his laptop at 10 AM and staring at the screen until 10 PM.

For the past few months, Rohit has been dealing with an issue where the moment he logs into his office work in the morning, he gets IBS.

He started having problems like **IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome)**—stomach pain and needing to use the bathroom 5–6 times a day. He saw plenty of qualified doctors, and they all just said, "Take this medicine, take that medicine, your stress will go away on its own, just take your pills and stay chill." But how are you supposed to stay chill when you have deadlines hanging over your head?

One day, Rohit went to his grandmother's house and told her about his problem. She went to the kitchen and didn't come back with expensive medicine or complicated tips; she brought a simple home remedy she made herself. Dadi added these two things to his daily routine:

1. Put the phone away while eating.
2. Drink a little homemade digestive drink after every meal—water boiled with carom seeds (ajwain) and cumin (jeera).

At first, my brother laughed, and to be honest, I didn't believe in this remedy either. But as the burning sensation in his stomach slowly started to calm down, that's when I finally started to believe in it. That is the solid desi fix for the gut-brain issue.

Practical Action: What to do starting today?

If you are also struggling with overthinking and stomach issues like my brother, start following these steps right from today:

1. **Mindful eating:** When you are eating your food, first of all, stay away from your phone. Enjoy the taste and aroma, and eat with your heart and mind. Trust me, you will start seeing a difference in just a few days.
2. **The 2-minute Pause:** Whenever you have a stressful meeting or call coming up, take long, deep breaths for 2 minutes beforehand (box breathing: inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, exhale after 4 seconds). This helps with stomach pain, that weird feeling in your gut, and acidity.

Soul-ful Recipe: Grandma's Ajwain-Jeera Magic Drink

A magic drink to calm down both your stomach and your mind. Whenever you feel like you are dealing with acidity in your stomach or overthinking in your mind, just try out this simple drink.

Ingredients:

- 1 glass of water
- 1 small spoon of whole cumin seeds (jeera)
- 1 small spoon of carom seeds (ajwain)
- One-fourth spoon of black salt (kala namak)

How to Make It:

1. Put 1 glass of water to boil in a pot or container.
2. Add the cumin and carom seeds to it.
3. Boil the water until it reduces to about half a glass.
4. Strain this warm water and mix in the black salt.
5. Sip it slowly, just like tea.

Benefits: This drink will soothe your gut microbiome and calm down that heavy mental tension.

Chapter 2: Morning Routine or Morning Trauma? How Your First Notification Ruins Your Day

Imagine this: you wake up early in the morning, but your hand automatically reaches for your phone—just to check notifications, emails, and WhatsApp messages, or to see what is trending on Instagram.

Barely a few minutes pass, and your brain goes straight into fight-or-flight mode. It feels like the world is going to end if you do not reply right away, or like everything is about to get completely ruined.

Have you ever wondered why you start feeling this weird kind of anxiety the moment you wake up? There is a whole biological game behind it, combined with certain digital habits that end up ruining our entire day right from the morning.

The science bit: Morning cortisol spike and screen addiction

Biology says that whenever you wake up in the morning, your body releases a hormone called **cortisol** (which we also call the stress hormone). This hormone is released naturally.

Do you know why this hormone is actually important? Because it gives us energy for the entire day. But the problem starts when you wake up and immediately begin checking phone notifications, emails, and messages, and end up stressing yourself out.

The result? Your stress peaks even before you reach the office. When your day starts with panic, you can just imagine how the rest of your day is going to go.

Desi Wisdom: Morning water and the first ray of sunshine

You have probably heard elders say that the morning time is the calmest and most pure, and how your day starts gives you a clue about how your entire day will turn out.

Their rule was pretty simple:

"As soon as you wake up in the morning, put your feet on the ground, drink some water, and sit out in the fresh air or sunshine for a bit. Don't even touch your phone in the morning!"

Modern science agrees that if you drink 1 to 2 glasses of normal or lukewarm water right after waking up without brushing your teeth, it acts like a reset button for your stomach. All the toxins that build up in your stomach overnight get flushed out. Plus, whenever you sit out in the morning sun for just 10 minutes, your body's internal clock gets set properly, which also helps you sleep better at night.

Real life scenario: Morning rush and ruining your stomach

If you look at your own routine, it probably goes something like this: setting an alarm, hitting snooze, waking up in a rush, and even while getting fresh, constantly thinking about what is going to happen at the office. For breakfast, you either just grab some tea and biscuits or skip eating altogether and rush straight to work.

This is not just eating food; it is pure torture for your body. When you eat your morning meal in this chaotic way, do you really think your stomach will stay fine all day? Not at all. Instead, you will feel acidity, gas, and a heavy head for the entire day.

What is the solution? If you take a little rest and eat your breakfast with a calm mind, your mood, stomach, and energy will all stay good.

Practical Action: 3 Small Steps to Make Your Morning Better

1. **The No-Phone Morning Rule:** If you want to feel good for your entire day, first of all, stop touching your phone as soon as you wake up, because your mental peace is much more important than your notifications.
2. **Copper Vessel Water:** Keep water in a copper vessel overnight, and drink that water while sitting down peacefully as soon as you wake up. This cleanses your stomach.
3. **Desi Breakfast:** Instead of having biscuits or black coffee with your morning tea, it is much better to choose a breakfast that is soothing and full of energy.

Soulful Recipe: Grandma's Energy Booster Daliya

If you want to eat something good that is packed with energy and keeps your mood happy, definitely try out this old traditional remedy once.

Desi Ghee and Jaggery Daliya

Ingredients:

- 3-4 spoons of broken wheat (gehu ka daliya)
- 1 full spoon of desi ghee
- Jaggery (gud) to taste
- 2 glasses of water or milk
- A few soaked almonds and raisins

How to Make It:

1. Heat 1 small spoon of desi ghee in a pan or kadhai.
2. Add the daliya to it and roast it until it turns light golden brown (until a nice aroma comes out).
3. Now, add water or milk to it and let it cook until the daliya becomes completely soft.
4. After turning off the stove, mix in jaggery (gud) according to your taste (make sure not to add jaggery while the stove is still on, otherwise the milk might curdle).
5. Top it with chopped almonds and raisins, and enjoy it nice and warm.

Benefits: This will provide fiber to your gut, smooth out your digestion, and adding desi ghee and jaggery increases your natural serotonin (the happy hormone), which is the main secret to keeping your energy high all day long.