

# HEALED PEOPLE, *Heal People*

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Eating the right foods is essential to avoid problems such as constipation, heartburn, and symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Here's a tummy-friendly diet to aim for.

Fill up on fibre to prevent constipation

It's a good idea to try to eat more fiber or roughage, as most people in the UK do not get enough. A diet rich in fiber can help digestion and prevent constipation.

Aim for the recommended dietary intake of 30g of fiber a day.

For a healthy bowel, you need fiber from a variety of sources, such as:

- wholemeal bread
- brown rice
- fruit and veg
- beans
- oats

Some people find that cereals and grains cause bloating and irritable bowel syndrome. If that's the case, get your fiber from fruit and vegetables instead.

Drink plenty of fluids to aid digestion.

It's important to keep drinking, especially water. It encourages the passage of waste through your digestive system and helps soften poo.

Fibre acts like a sponge, absorbing water. The fiber cannot do its job without fluid, and you'll get constipation.

Drinking a glass of water with every meal is a good way to ensure you're getting enough fluids. Avoid caffeine drinks, as they can cause heartburn.

Read about water, drinks, and your health

Cut down on fat for a healthy gut

Fatty foods, such as chips, burgers, and fried foods, are more challenging to digest and cause stomach pain and heartburn.

Cut back on greasy fried foods to ease your stomach's workload.

Try to eat more lean meat and fish, drink skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, and grill rather than fry foods. Go easy on spice to avoid tummy troubles.

Many people love spicy food because it does not bother their digestive system. Others find their tummies upset when they have spicy food.

It's not just scorching hot foods like chilies that trigger heartburn. Milder but flavourful foods like garlic and onion can also cause it.

If spicy foods give you heartburn, stomach pain, or diarrhea, go easy on them in the future.

Avoid them if you already have a problem like heartburn or an irritable bowel.

Beware gut symptom triggers.

Some people find particular foods cause them problems. Acidic foods, such as tomatoes, citrus fruits, salad dressings, and fizzy drinks, can trigger heartburn, while wheat and onions may cause irritable bowel syndrome.

And suppose you cannot digest lactose (lactose intolerance), the sugar in milk. You'll develop wind and diarrhea after drinking milk or eating dairy products, including cream, cheese, yogurt, and chocolate.

Avoid foods and drinks that trigger your digestive symptoms. Keep a food diary to track which foods cause your symptoms.

Choose the right drinks to ease digestion.

Caffeine-containing drinks, such as coffee, colas, tea, and some fizzy drinks, boost acid in the stomach and can lead to heartburn in some people.

Fizzy drinks generally tend to bloat the tummy, which can also lead to heartburn.

To reduce the likelihood of digestive problems, choose drinks that are not fizzy and do not contain caffeine, such as herbal teas, milk, and plain water.

If you cannot do without your coffee or tea, limit your intake to 1 or 2 cups daily.

#### Probiotics

Probiotics are so-called "friendly bacteria" that are also found naturally in the gut.

There's some evidence that they may be helpful for some conditions, including helping irritable bowel syndrome. But there's little evidence to support other health claims about them.

Probiotics are available as supplements from health food shops or in live yogurt, which is an excellent natural source.

If you want to try them, it's best to take them every day for at least four weeks to see if they work for you.

If you have an existing health condition or a weakened immune system, talk to a doctor before taking any probiotic supplements.

**\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.**

#### Resources:

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/digestive-health/good-foods-to-help-your-digestion/>

Image RossHelen from Canva Pro