

The Gut-Brain Connection

How Stress, Emotions & the Nervous System Impact Digestion

Did You Know?

Your brain and gut are constantly communicating! This connection, called the gut-brain axis, explains why emotions like stress and anxiety can lead to stomach discomfort. The gut has its own nervous system, known as the enteric nervous system, which interacts directly with the brain.

How Stress & Emotions Affect Digestion

1. **Fight-or-Flight Response:** When you're stressed, your body prioritizes survival over digestion, slowing down gut function. This can lead to bloating, stomach pain, nausea, or constipation.
2. **Increased Gut Sensitivity:** Stress and anxiety can make your gut more reactive, increasing symptoms like cramping and discomfort.
3. **Changes in Gut Bacteria:** Chronic stress can alter the balance of gut bacteria, affecting digestion and overall gut health.
4. **Emotional Triggers:** Feelings like nervousness, excitement, or sadness can activate the gut, sometimes causing diarrhea or stomachaches.

Simple Ways to Calm Your Gut

Movement & Relaxation


- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Tense and relax each muscle group to reduce stress and calm the nervous system.
- Gentle **walking or stretching** after meals can help digestion.
- Try **yoga poses** like Child's Pose or Cat-Cow to relieve gut tension.

Hydration & Gut-Friendly Foods


- Avoid excessive caffeine and processed foods, which can trigger gut sensitivity.
- Eat **fiber-rich foods** (fruits, vegetables, whole grains) to keep the gut moving.
- Drink **plenty of water** to support digestion and prevent constipation.

Breathing Techniques

- Try **Belly Breathing:** Breathe in deeply through your nose, allowing your belly to expand, then exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat for a few minutes to activate the body's relaxation response.
- Try **4-7-8 Breathing:** Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7, exhale for 8. This slows the nervous system and supports digestion.



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quick tips on
keeping your gut
and brain in
balance!



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Your gut and brain work together! Managing stress through breathing, movement, and hydration can help improve digestion and reduce stomach discomfort. Small daily habits make a big difference in keeping both your mind and gut healthy!