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The Importance of Proper Digestion and Food Assimilation

By Rita Lambros-Segur, M.H.

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It has been observed that health is the result of what one assimilates, not what one necessarily eats. We accept lots of food into our bodies, but only that which has been properly assimilated can be utilized for rebuilding and repairing cells and malfunction areas. Proper assimilation is acquired by "drinking the solid foods and chewing the liquid food."

This is an old and true axiom. We should thoroughly chew the solid foods, mixing saliva with them until the food becomes a liquid; then we drink it. The liquid foods must be swished (or chewed) in the mouth, then swallowed. The saliva thoroughly mixed with the foods is the key that opens up the doors of digestion. Without mixing saliva with the food, the balance of the digestive juices are not activated for good assimilation. By gulping, "inhaling" or bolting the food down without properly mixing saliva with it, we only get eight to ten percent of its value. By properly chewing we can raise this to forty or forty-five percent. The balance is generally cellulose or indigestible fiber.

We not only receive far better health, but also save money. Food is one of our largest expenditures, and if we can get four to six times better assimilation, this promises superior health and a happier life. With one fourth or one third of the food we have been used to eating, we can receive much more power and energy.

Another must for good health is to slow down the eating procedure, relax and be happy. Discuss pleasant things during mealtime, even laugh a little.

Such foods as soups, gruels, porridges, and purees contain so little solid matter that the bulk, considerable though it may be when the food is eaten, is soon reduced to a very small volume. On this account liquid

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foods are almost always constipating. The only exceptions are those liquid foods which contain much sugar, acids, or fats.

Pasty cereals such as oatmeal mush, are decidedly constipating in their influence, because of their pasty consistency and the little mastication which they receive. New bread, hot biscuits, "noodles," and doughy foods of all sorts are likewise objectionable.

If the above principles are not applied, constipation and/or indigestion can result. Premature old age and death, misery and even crime originate from constipation more than from any other bodily disorder. Constipation is not in itself a disease, but is a symptom, the cause of

which may be disease or simply neglect.

Indigestion is basically poor assimilation or difficulty in processing food in order to get the proper value from it. The use of aluminum-based digestive tablets sold on the market give only temporary relief and aluminum poisoning is a side-effect or after-effect. However, by eating nutritiously and supplementing our diets with a good quality herbal colon formula (not to mention stabilized probiotics), we can set ourselves on a much better path.

One California doctor who advised his patient to restrain his desire for bowel movements at night and "save it till the next morning" so that "he might have a well-formed stool," had not the first conception of the normal function of the colon.

That one bowel movement a day is normal and efficient evacuation of the bowels is another error which is universally entertained. One bowel movement a day is a positive indication of constipation. X-ray examinations of the colon after a test meal shown that in persons whose bowels move once a day the body wastes are usually retained for fifty hours or more. Hurst, of London, and not a few other authorities finding this condition almost universal have been led to regard it as normal. But in this they are certainly in error.

X-ray examinations show that in eight hours from the beginning of a meal the process of digestion has been completed, the digested food has been absorbed, and the unusable residue has been pushed half way through the colon, in other words, is within two and a half feet of the lower opening of the colon. In eight hours the food has traveled more than twenty-five feet or ten times the distance which remains to be traveled.

When the work of digestion is finished and the useful part of the food

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has been absorbed, there remains nothing to be done but to dispose of the indigestible and useless residue by pushing it along two or three feet further. Certainly no good reason can be assigned for the further retention of the waste matters. It is indeed highly absurd to suppose that forty hours are needed to transport the feces two and a half feet when they have already traveled twenty-five feet in eight hours.

Dr. John Christopher, a naturopathic doctor, recommended moving the bowels at least three times a day or after each meal. Four movements daily is a still better rhythm and is easily established by a biologic regimen. When toxic waste matter is left to stagnate in the lower bowel tract, the system becomes polluted with poisonous gases which congest and irritate the surrounding organs, causing adhesions, and other ailments.

The carmine capsule test shows that in most cases in which the bowels move once daily, the waste disposal function is always several days in arrears.

The colon contains the waste and residues of several meals—anywhere from five to twenty or even more, so that there is ample opportunity for the putrefactive process to get well under way. The putrefaction is the source of the foul odor and gases which originate in the colon, and which are not only most offensive to the sense of smell, but as is well known, are also highly poisonous, and may give rise to nausea, "biliousness," loss of appetite, foul tongue, bad breath, dingy skin, headache, Bright's disease, and a host of other grave disorders.

Meat also has become a culprit in the development of constipation, as it encourages putrefaction of the colon both by introducing putrefactive organisms in great numbers and also by providing material which is best calculated to encourage the growth of putrefactive organisms in the colon. Through the putrefaction of undigested remnants of the meat eaten, ammonia and other alkaline substances are formed which paralyze the bowel.

The infection of the bowel which results from meat-eating also gives rise to colitis and causes a spastic or contracted condition of the descending colon, a condition found in the most obstinate forms of constipation.

Most persons who suffer from constipation also habitually drink too little water. Women drink less than men. It is difficult to account for this scanty use of a necessary of life, which costs little and is of such inestimable value to the body. The consequence of a scanty use of water is abnormal dryness of the feces, which delays their passage through the lower

colon, and often causes an actual stoppage in the pelvic colon or the rectum.

Persons who sweat much, either as the result of hot weather, vigorous exercise, or hot baths, are likely to suffer from constipation, unless special care is taken to supply the body with water sufficient to make good the loss. The skin ordinarily throws off as perspiration an ounce and a half of water each hour, or more than a quart in twenty–four hours. By active exercise or sweating baths this amount may be increased to thirty or forty ounces in an hour. The kidneys excrete two to three pints daily. It is evident, then, that care must be exercised to replace the water that is lost through the skin and kidneys.

Of course, one may receive temporary relief of constipation by using an herbal laxative to clear the lower bowel tract, but only lower bowel tonics will get at the cause. With these quality tonics and stabilized probiotics, we feed the eliminative organs and allow them to work on their own and eventually eliminate the use of enemas, colonics and laxatives. The proper procedure is to build up the body, to cleanse it, and see that the bowels work freely.

Editor of the semi–monthly e–zine named, "Your Electrical Body", Rita has studied with master herbalists and naturopaths alike. Endeavoring to follow the precepts of Dr. John Christopher, she has aided numerous folks to enhance their health. Check out her FREEE–zine, FREE Catalog and gift along with an informative ebook offer. <http://www.electricalbody.com/ebook.htm>

Concept of 'Agni' in Ayurveda

By Dr. Shashikant Patwardhan

Being one of the panchamahabhoota, agni (fire) has the characteristic that it cannot exist without a base. In the body it exists in pitta dosha.

Agni is responsible for the following functions:

Digestion – indigestion (Pakti– Apakti)

Vision– absence of vision (Darshanam– Adarshanam)

Degree of heat (Matra– Amatratvamushmanala)

Normal –abnormal complexion (Prakrit – Vikarit varnam)

Prowess– fear (Shaurya– Bhaya)

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Anger – exholoration (krodham– Harsham)

Confusion– clarity of mind (Moha– Prasadana)

For the metabolic processes in the body, there are three main groups of biological factors, probably exhibiting enzymatic functions (agnis).

Jatharagni or Koshthagni:

Present in the pachak pitta. It is responsible for the digestion and the absorption of nutritious substances during this process.

The process of digestion (ahar pachan) is divided in three stages, which collectively is called awastha paka and can be divided in the following.

Amavstha (Madhuravastha) Paka – in stomach

Pachymanavastha (Amlavstha) Paka – in 'grahani' (Duodenum)

Pakavstha (Katuavstha) Paka – in small and large intestine

As the rasa changes in different phase of digestion these phase of digestion are called avsthapaka. At the end of the digestion the digested food have their original rasa which is in accordance with the rasa of the ingested food. This is called as Nistha paka .It is also called popularly as Vipaka.

Madhur rasa & Lavan rasa have Madhura Vipaka, Amla rasa have amla vipaka and Katu, Tikta &

Kashaya rasa have Katu vipaka.

Panchabhutagnis :

In ayurveda it is believed that everything is made up of five elements and so is the body. These five elements are the panchmahabhoota and are responsible for constituting every living being in the world. Agni transforms the Asharir Mahabhoota (external mahabhoot) to Sharir Mahabhoota. Example – When we drink water Jala Mahabhoota (water) dominates and later the water is transformed by Jala Mahabhoota agni to the Sharir Jala Containing five types of biological factors, it is responsible for the processing of the five basic elements into a composition useful to the body.

Dhatvagnis : The third group contains seven types, each for the assimilation of the seven tissues This assimilation takes place successively. From the absorbed nutritious substance, plasma (rasa) is produced first; from plasma, blood (rakta) is formed, then muscular tissue (mamsa), adipose tissue (meda), bony tissue (asthi), bone marrow (majjan) and the reproductive cells (shukra).

Besides performing all the metabolic functions agni takes care of digestion (ahar pachan) and in the absence of ahara it acts on the ama pachan i.e. properly metabolize the improper metabolites. When

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ahar and ama are absence Agni does the function of dhatu i.e. rasa, rakta etc. Digestion of dhatu is a fatal condition in which dhatus are broken down to get energy. The reduction or deficiency of the quantum of dhatu in the human body leads to the disease called 'Kshaya roga'.

In ayurveda it is believed that all the pathology occurs due to the impairment in Agni (Kaya). Hence the correction of Kaya i.e. Agni is called the treatment or 'Kaya Chikitsa' in ayurveda

Agnis are also classified into four categories according to how they manifest in the human being:

Tikshnagni –sharp,

Mandagni – mild,

Vishamagni – irregular, and

Samagni – regular or Balanced.

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author of many books on Ayurveda and is first to publish them in ebook format.Up till now he has written four ebooks – 1. Ayurvedic Cure of Diabetes 2. Home Remedies in Ayurveda 3. Treat Common Diseases with Ayurveda & Yoga and 4. Ayurvedic Principles Revealed He regularly writes articles on various topics in Ayurveda in Ayurvedic health magazines and alternative medicine sites.

Concept of 'Agni' in Ayurveda

Whitetail Deer's Digestive System

Digestive Problems ? Natural Solutions

Natural Health -- The First Law

Treating High Blood Pressure: Tips For Diet Discipline

Complete Library Of Cooking

The Ultimate Rose Garden– Neighbors envy, owners pride!

Control your Headache!

How to become a Chef!

Smoothies for Athletes



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