

Indigestion

What is Indigestion?

Indigestion, also known as dyspepsia, describes an upset stomach characterized by discomfort in the upper abdomen.

Signs and Symptoms

Abdominal pain; feeling bloated; intestinal gas build-up; rumbling noise in the abdomen; belching; nausea (sometimes retching or vomiting); abdominal discomfort and fullness after eating; and a burning sensation in the upper abdomen.

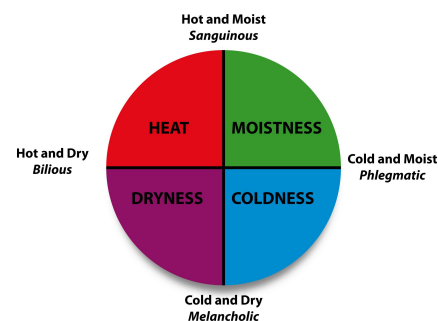
What Causes Indigestion?

Indigestion is often caused by unhealthy lifestyle behaviour, which include: overeating; eating too quickly; eating spicy, greasy, carbohydrate-rich or fatty foods to excess; smoking; excessive intake of caffeine, alcohol, chocolate or carbonated beverages; underlying anxiety; swallowing air due to faulty eating habits; talking while chewing; eating and drinking at the same time; consuming cold foods like dairy and products; consuming gas-producing foods.

Certain medications like antibiotics, pain killers and iron supplements may cause indigestion. It is often a symptom of other ailments such as: constipation, gastritis, peptic ulcers, coeliac disease and inflammation of the pancreas.

The Tibb View on Indigestion

Any food which is not digested properly ferments in the intestines. This produces the gases hydrogen and carbon dioxide. Psychological factors such as stress and anger can disturb the mechanisms that control contractions of the stomach and intestinal muscles. A lack of digestive enzymes in the gut can also cause intestinal problems. Indigestion may be a symptom of imbalance in the stomach or the intestines, mostly due to reduced digestive heat. As there are so many possible causes associated with indigestion, including poor eating habits, a faulty lifestyle and certain medications, it can affect people of all temperamental types.



Management of Indigestion

Treatment and management is aimed at **reducing the qualities** associated with the person's temperament, by implementing a lifestyle, especially diet, that is best suited for the different temperaments. This assists Physis in addressing both the symptoms and the causes of indigestion.

Tibb Lifestyle Factors

Food and Drink

- **Phlegmatic temperament** - eat **mostly Hot & Dry foods** - such as garlic, onion, fenugreek and mustard, **followed by Hot & Moist foods** - like mutton, ginger, turmeric and black pepper, and **Cold & Dry foods** - such as citrus fruit, basil, yogurt and mealie meal and the **least amount of Cold & Moist foods** - like milk, rice, cucumber and watermelon.
- **Sanguinous Temperament** - eat **mostly Cold & Dry foods** - such as yohgurt, citrus fruit, beef and basil **followed by Cold & Moist foods** - like coriander, rice, beetroot and broccoli, and **Hot & Dry foods** - such as garlic, onion, chicken and eggs, and the **least amount of Hot & Moist foods** - like white flour products, sugar, cheese and bananas.
- **Melancholic Temperament** - eat **mostly Hot & Moist foods** - such as ginger, olive oil, turmeric and honey, **followed by Hot & Dry foods**- like garlic, onion, chicken and eggs, and **Cold & Moist foods** - such as coriander, rice, beetroot and broccoli and the **least amount of Cold & Dry foods** - like yogurt, citrus fruit, legumes and tomatoes.
- **Bilious Temperament** - eat **mostly Cold & Moist foods** - such as rice, coriander, cucumber and beetroot, **followed by Cold & Dry foods** - like citrus fruit, basil, yogurt and mealie meal, and **Hot & Moist foods**- such as ginger, olive oil, turmeric and honey, and the least amount of **Hot & Dry foods** - like onion, eggs, alcohol and garlic.

Dietary advice to be followed by all temperamental types

- Consume well-balanced meals containing fibre-rich foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables and whole-grains.
- Eat slowly, and chew the food well and thoroughly.
- Avoid drinking liquids during meals, as this prevents proper digestion. The drink dilutes the digestive stomach juices.
- Avoid lentils, peanuts and soybeans, because they ferment and produce intestinal gas. They also contain an inhibitor of gut digestive enzymes.
- Avoid junk food, bakery products, caffeine, fizzy drinks, citrus juices, fried and fatty foods, pastas, potato chips and other snack foods; red meat, tomatoes, processed foods, and salty or spicy foods.
- Avoid foods containing sugar and simple carbohydrates (white flour products). Concentrate on complex carbohydrates such as whole grain or brown products.
- Eat smaller meals and more frequently.

Other Lifestyle Advice

- Avoid eating when upset, overtired or exhausted.
- Avoid constipation by regularly use of a mild natural laxative.
- Partake in regular moderate exercise, as this increases body heat and so promotes better digestion.

Herbal Remedies

- Drink a ¼ cup aloe vera juice on an empty stomach, first thing in the morning and last thing at night.
- Boil the following in 200ml of water until 100ml remain: ½ tsp fennel seeds, ½ tsp fenugreek powder, about 10 mint leaves, small piece of fresh ginger, and ½ tsp of aniseed. Strain and mix with honey. Drink three to four times per day.

