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*how to*  
**NATURALLY**  
*improve*  
**DIGESTION**

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# CONTENTS

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ABOUT ANNETTE	03
THOUGHTS, FEELINGS & BELIEFS	04
YOUR BODY – THE BIG PICTURE	05
FOOD INTOLERANCES & HOW THEY AFFECT US	06
INFLAMMATORY FOODS	09
HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOUR BODY	12
SIMPLE STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS	13
SIMPLE NUTRITION TIPS	14
SIMPLE PHYSICAL TIPS	16
MORE HELP IS AVAILABLE	17

# HOW TO NATURALLY IMPROVE DIGESTION

## ABOUT ANNETTE

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Annette began working in the health and fitness industry in 2009 and opened her own training studio with her husband in 2012. Both devoted to improving the health and wellness of their clients, they began to invest heavily to expand their knowledge to help their clients achieve better long lasting results.

Annette personally used to suffer with a lot of digestive issues. Over the years she attended a number of nutrition and biochemistry courses and seminars which has resulted in her being able to heal her gut and reintroduce most of those foods she originally had to avoid, if/when she chooses to consume them.

What Annette is most passionate about now is helping her clients understand just how powerful their bodies are when they create the right environment to heal; physically, mentally and spiritually.

Annette now works online and from her studio near the Yarra Valley of Melbourne, Australia specialising in coaching, applied muscle testing and forensic healing to help clients understand what has been blocking them from seeing change and helping them address that from the root cause of the issue.

She has a diploma in Forensic Healing and uses these powerful healing modalities to provide personalised help for each client who journeys with her.



# WHAT YOUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS & BELIEFS HAVE TO DO WITH YOUR POOR DIGESTION

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Everything in the body is interconnected. Take for example your stomach. This is where the energy is stimulated when you experience stress, worry or anxiety.

The stomach stores worry and stress. When the stomach meridian is balanced there is a sense of calmness and trust. When the meridian is out of balance, the meridian pathway which begins in the face and jaw area tightens and reduces the flow down the front of the body. When the flow of energy is reduced, foods are not easily digested, resulting in indigestion and further stress on the body.

Feelings of anger, sadness, frustration, loneliness and jealousy have the same impact. When the body senses any emotion or feeling that doesn't allow it to feel loved, safe and supported, the cycle of dysfunction begins.

We can hold negative belief systems. For example, a child who grows up in an abusive household may hold a negative belief system around what peace is. They may feel that peace comes from sacrificing their own happiness, just to keep others happy, therefore never actually being able to fully embrace all the benefits that come with creating a truly peaceful lifestyle. Further to that, as an adult they may find they lack clarity because as a child they were exposed to violence or verbal abuse but then told by the same parent that they are loved.

**If you would like to know what negative life pattern is behind your current digestive issues**, please [email me](#) now with your current age and I will personally respond with the emotion that runs the negative life pattern impacting your digestion along with the age it was embedded. *See page 17 for more information*

Our thoughts, feelings and beliefs all stem from things we were exposed to as a child and when we hold onto those thoughts, feelings and beliefs, our normal reaction, or the "pattern" we had been creating affects not only our health but our relationships, finances, spirituality and so on.

When we suffer with digestive issues, we often look for bandaid fixes, because sometimes that's all we know, but opting for the cover up plays down your bodies intelligence in the way it's communicating with you to move forward in your life. So what are your digestive issues telling you?

# YOUR BODY - THE BIG PICTURE

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Your body is unique. It's why a solution that worked for someone you know can provide very little to no relief for you. Our bodies are fluid filled machines, moving and mixing chemicals with precision and coordination all day long.

Biochemically, no one person is the same. It's estimated that there are over 500,000,000,000,000,000 (500 quadrillion) biochemical processes that happen in our body per second, 24 hours a day.

Your nutrition impacts directly on your biochemistry. Anything you consume, whether that be foods, medication, supplements, fluids, all of these things alter your biochemistry.

The same applies for our thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

Because the body functions on a molecular level, it doesn't take much to disrupt balance, which can result in a negative change.

The environment that we create or allow ourselves to operate within can disrupt the optimal functioning of pathway signalling and systems in your body.

It is my wish for you as you work through this workshop that you identify ways you can improve digestion by supporting your mind, body and environment naturally.

You are powerful and your body is so incredibly intelligent when you create the right environment for it to function in.

Let's do this!

***“Do not turn your attention elsewhere in your search for the truth, for it is nowhere else to be found but within your body.”***  
**Eckhart Tolle**

# FOOD INTOLERANCES AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE BODY

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All food choices are emotional. We often use the term “emotional eating” and refer it to a negative behaviour but the truth is, all our food choices are emotional.

If we focus on having a high value on health because we want to watch our children’s children reach special milestones and live a long, happy life then we become more mindful of the foods we consume. If we like to feel good, be active and perform well, we want to consume foods that allow us to function optimally. On the other hand, if we haven’t yet had a reason to truly value our health, or we are disconnected from our core values or living a life out of alignment with our souls purpose, we tend to emotionally eat from a negative perspective.

Confusion of not knowing what is healthy is to be expected when we pay attention and believe the advertising of large corporations who have a large budget to entice, persuade and sell their products to us. Suddenly we begin thinking that the cereal fortified with protein is a good substitute over protein in its most natural form, for example a breakfast containing unprocessed foods like eggs, oats, seeds and fresh plant foods.

What’s the difference between a bowl of fortified cereal high in sugars with other man made ingredients or a bowl of chia seed pudding for breakfast? Try it and see how your body starts responding.

When it comes to foods though, there are many reasons why intolerances flare up. It can be due to an already inflamed digestive system, not having enough variety in your diet and over consuming the same food over and over again, stress or your body simply not being able to properly digest those foods due to compromised enzymes.

So when it comes to nutrition and a person suffering with digestive issues, the first thing we want to do is clean up our food intake. This step alone, can take a long time to implement properly but doing so while you work on reducing other forms of stress within the body and energy field will mean your efforts won’t go unnoticed by your body.

There are many symptoms linked to food intolerances. Remember, symptoms are your bodies way of communicating with you.

Those symptoms may manifest as a:

### **Digestive Response**

- Irritable bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Leaky Gut Syndrome
- Irritable Bowel Disease (IBD) – Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn’s Disease
- Gas
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Cramping
- Indigestion
- Nausea

### **Skin Response**

- Rashes
- Dermatitis of any kind
- Eczema
- Angioedema
- Hives
- Psoriasis
- Acne

### **Respiratory Response**

- Asthma
- Congestion
- Excess Mucus
- Sinusitis
- Rhinitis
- Pharyngeal irritations
- Chronic or Intermittent Cough
- Ear Nose & Throat (ENT) illnesses of any kind such as ear infections, tonsillitis, sleep apnea

### **Head & Body Response**

- Fatigue
- Mental Fog
- ADD/ADHD
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Mood Swings
- Insomnia
- Head Aches
- Chronic Systemic Inflammation
- Muscle / Joint Pains
- Dark Circles Underneath Eyes
- Hay fever



It's important we pay attention to these signs to help the body work toward wellness. Reaching for a tablet or ointment to mask the real issue may eventually lead to something bigger manifesting in the body.

Hormonal conditions and auto immune diseases can also be triggered by food sensitivities.

IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) is one of the most common diagnoses to come from inflammatory foods and high stress levels. IBS is also the starting point for more serious diseases and it's common for those who suffer with it to also suffer from anxiety, depression and chronic fatigue syndrome. IBS is twice as common in women and typically occurs before the age of 45.

Leaky gut is now also being recognised as an underlying cause of autoimmune conditions, inflammatory skin conditions and digestive symptoms.

Foods is where we need to start when we want to address our health issues, however, unlike allergies where symptoms are almost immediate, food sensitivities often produce delayed reactions sometimes as long as 36 hours later but in some cases, even up to 8 days later.



Photo by Brenda Godinez on Unsplash

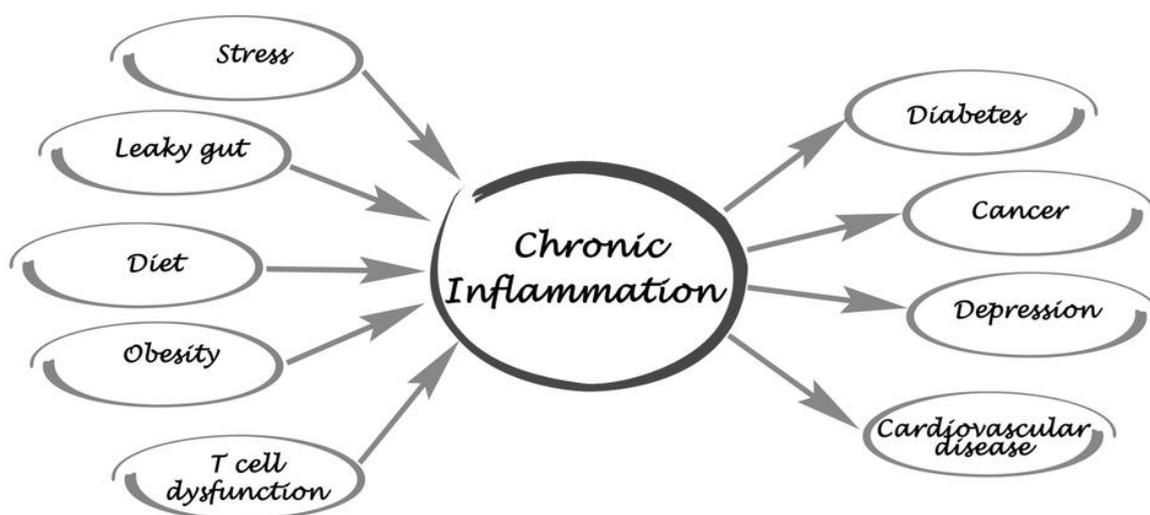
# INFLAMMATION AND FOODS THAT CAUSE INFLAMMATION IN YOUR GI TRACT

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Inflammation is fluid. It floats around the immune system and settles wherever stress impacts the body, which is why the way it affects each person can be so varied; from skin conditions, hormonal imbalances, niggling joints or connective tissue injuries that won't heal, not to mention autoimmune diseases and gut issues.

Our health is dependent upon the way we manage inflammation.

Inflammation is found in all chronic disease. Diseases such as lupus, inflammatory bowel disease, multiple sclerosis, type 1 diabetes, graves disease, hashimoto's thyroiditis, rheumatoid arthritis, cardiovascular disease, as well as allergies and food intolerances.



If you see signs of food intolerances, it's important to make changes and track how your body responds to help you identify what foods need to be eliminated from your diet. Sometimes it needs to be long term, other times, temporarily.

Digestion on average takes about 18-24 hours so if you're consuming foods that are causing inflammation in your body on a daily basis, your digestive system is constantly being placed under a lot of stress.

The cells in our body are always being reproduced. As I understand it at this point, the lining of our intestines renews every 3-5 days, so by completely removing inflammatory foods, we speed up this healing process.

The body is always working toward wellness but think about the overload of consuming years and years of cereal for breakfast, a sandwich for lunch, a sneaky biscuit for afternoon tea and meals containing pasta or made from wheat flour, day after day after day. The common overloading ingredient here is gluten. The intestines get to a point where the lining just can't keep up eventually results in what's commonly referred to as leaky gut. Gluten by the way isn't the only thing that can cause leaky gut.

Leaky gut causes the most chronic inflammatory responses in the body. If you suffer with leaky gut, you may even find that injuries are slow to heal. This is because you've got a flowing immune system and our immune system is affected by consuming foods that are unhealthy for your body.

To help improve GI tract health and digestion, the first thing you need to do is eliminate the foods that are causing irritation in the gut and replace them with high vibe nutritional foods.

When it comes to high vibe foods, we need to think in terms of nutrients, choosing nutrient dense foods over processed foods that contain chemicals and other nasties that cause disruption in the body.



The most common inflammatory foods are sugar, gluten and dairy but there's more.

However just replacing gluten with a whole lot of processed gluten free foods still containing sugar, chemicals and other fillers isn't recommended when it comes to improving your gut health.

The same applies for replacing dairy with fake dairy alternatives, if you don't digest dairy well.

You need to choose what is the right way for you to succeed in this journey. If you would like personalised help with this, you can book in for a virtual coaching session and work out a plan that's right for you.

If you choose to consume a gluten free, dairy free food, make sure it's occasionally and not a regular part of your daily choices.

For best results, avoiding all processed foods and switching to a diet consisting of quality protein sources and rich in plant foods (organic, even better!). This is especially important if you're suffering with many symptoms or want to see results fast.

Other digestion disruptive foods that are also of high importance can include soy, processed meats, some vegetable and seed oils, nuts, legumes, eggs, corn and anything that has been processed or manufactured (think of foods that come to you in a packet and contain unknown ingredients on the packaging label) plus alcohol.

An IgG test is one of the most common ways of testing for what foods. I personally used Applied Muscle Testing for the clients I work face to face with but the simplest and cheapest way you can find out what foods are affecting you in a negative way is to keep a detailed food diary and log everything you consume over the course of 7 days, then do the work to completely eliminate the foods causing a negative response from your diet by replacing them with healthier alternatives.

Note: If symptoms of inflammation still persist after addressing nutrition and stress management, please see your Doctor to rule out other issues or the need to address a build-up of toxins stored in the body.

It does also pay to always look at the energetic reason why the body is not functioning optimally too, we can do this using energy healing modalities. My preferred method is Forensic Healing and this can be done in virtual sessions in your own home.

***“The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.”***

***Ann Wigmore***

# HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOUR BODY

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The autonomic nervous system (ANS) is made up of the intrinsic, sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems play two key roles in the body. A flight or fight response (sympathetic) or rest and digest response (parasympathetic).

One sends blood away from our digestive system to our limbs to help us fight for life, while the other diverts the blood to our organs and helps us digest our food correctly and get adequate rest.

Health problems occur when one system becomes dominant.

A fight or flight response is a stress response, which can be brought on by stressful situations in our environment, work, relationships, financial issues, illness etc. Our body doesn't know the difference between being stressed because we are running from a bear or stressed from a deadline at work. It knows fight or flight or rest and digest.

When we are in a state of sympathetic overload we stop being able to digest our food correctly. This often causes digestive issues such as constipation, diarrhoea or bloating. We also stop achieving restful and rejuvenating sleep, which causes a range of physical and emotional challenges too.

Signs of being in sympathetic overload include feeling extremely sensitive, stressed, emotional or exhausted to name a few.

The great news is we actually do have the power to train our parasympathetic nervous system and we can assist the body with digestion even when life, around or within us, is stressful.

***“A diamond is just a piece of charcoal that has handled stress exceptionally well.” Unknown Author***

# SIMPLE STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS

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If you work in a stressful job, in any type of stressful relationship or feel your body is under stress due to medications or health issues, browse over the following tips and pick something you can implement on a regular basis.

## TIP 1: TAKE UP AN ACTIVITY THAT WILL RESTORE CALM TO YOUR BODY

Here are some great ways to help your mind and body unwind.

- Walking for a minimum of 20 minutes (preferably outdoors)
- Other exercises (if recommended)
- Wim Hof Methods
- Headspace, Smiling Minds, Meditation
- Grounding/Earthing (Feet in contact with the earth)
- Stretching
- Take up a Hobby
- Losing yourself in music
- Sauna
- Float Tank
- Yoga
- Visit a beach, forest or river
- Hot Stone Massage
- Reiki
- Gratitude Log, Journaling
- Epsom Bath
- Light Cardio (HR 120-150BPM)
- Get some sunlight daily
- Implement the Me/Us/Them model
- Other (list your preference here) .....

## TIP 2: MINDFUL BREATHING

When we are stressed, we drastically reduce or freeze our digestive fire (gastric juices). The body can't be in fight or flight mode and do a thorough job of digesting food at the same time. One thing will win over the other and the winner will always be the stress response because the body prioritises survival over digestion.

Mindful breathing, deeply and slowly, encourages the parasympathetic nervous system to take over, telling our body we are in a safe space and able to 'rest and digest'.

Try doing this before meals (and as often as you remember after eating) to relax your nervous system, digestive organs and muscles for a smooth and complete transition of food from one end to the other.

Diaphragm breathing is a great way to do this. Seated or lying down, breathing in for the count of 5 seconds and out to the count of 5 seconds for as little as 5-10 breaths.

### **TIP 3: CONNECT TO YOUR SOUL**

Take a few minutes to get yourself into a relaxed meditative state, focusing on your breath. Ask your body what you can give it as a form of nourishment or love today.

## **SIMPLE NUTRITION TIPS**

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Here are some tips you can work through to help you improve your digestion! Pick one, apply it and then move on to another while keeping up the habit of the previous tip/s. They are not in any specific order. You know your body, mind and lifestyle, choose your own adventure and go for it!

### **TIP 1: FIND OUT WHAT FOODS ARE CAUSING DIGESTIVE DISRUPTION**

See a health professional who can help you with this. An IgG blood test is a good start. For my clients, I use Applied Muscle Testing because it not only helps identify what foods need to be avoided but can also show you how that food is affecting your body. If you are starting at scratch and would like to work through this yourself, start tracking your foods for 7 days. [You can download a food tracking template here.](#)

The following foods are worth paying particular attention too:

- Gluten is not only found in breads, pastas and baked goods, it's also found in sauces, spreads, lollies, alcohol, spice mixes, even corn flour and soy sauce. So always check the ingredient labels.
- Dairy includes milk, cheese, yoghurt, cream, chocolate and for some, butter may need to be avoided too but please don't replace with margarine as these can be worse when it comes to improving gut health.
- Soy can be in a variety of foods. It includes soy milk, tofu, tempeh, soy flour, soy sauce.
- If eggs are one of the foods that cause you digestion discomfort, you can replace these in baking with a mix of flaxseeds or chia seeds with water.
- When reducing sugar, be mindful of hidden sugars in the foods you eat. Sugar is also added to many cereals, fruit juices, canned fruit, tomato sauce and protein bars.

- Grains and legumes are another common group of foods to be mindful of so watch how your body responds after consuming these foods.
- Nuts too can cause digestive issues so pay attention when consuming those too.
- For some, coffee isn't the cause of disruption but if your gut lining has been damaged, avoiding coffee may be beneficial too.

Note how you feel when you consume these foods, particularly how you think and feel in the hour or two after eating.

Depending on the severity of your food intolerances and other measures you take to help repair your gut health, you may be able to reintroduce the foods you need to avoid in due time. If you would like more personalised help, [email me](#) to book in for a virtual or face to face session with me.

## **TIP 2: EAT A NUTRIENT DENSE DIET**

Once you know what foods are contributing to your poor digestion, go through your fridge, pantry and cupboards checking all the ingredient labels to ensure you replace or avoid these foods. Swapping them over for clean and fresh nutrient dense foods.

Nutrient dense foods are fresh foods that are grown and as close as you can get to wild caught. The low calorie noodles that sound like a great alternative to pasta often contain little to no nutritional value so again, read the labels to ensure your choices are always energy sources your body can utilise as fuel and recovery sources. If you would like examples, you can [download this guideline](#).



# SIMPLE PHYSICAL TIPS

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Some things you can physically work on implementing to help your body digest foods are:

## **TIP 1: ENGAGE YOUR SENSES**

Digestion starts with sight. When we see and smell food our body starts to release gastric juices and signals get sent out all over the GI tract to get ready to receive and process food.

To be mindful of your eating, be in the moment, connect and engage your senses. Plate your food nicely and take a moment to appreciate how it looks and smells.

## **TIP 2: CHEW YOUR FOOD**

Sounds silly right but how much are you chewing your foods before swallowing? To help eliminate stress in the digestive system, chew your food until it turns into a semi liquid matter. Your stomach and small intestines can only do their jobs efficiently if you do yours properly in the mouth. This is a must do for those who are prone to bloating after eating a meal.

## **TIP 3: GET MOVING!**

Exercise done right can be a great way to improve digestion. This means training in a way that doesn't add extra stress on your autonomic systems. Every muscle is linked to our sympathetic or parasympathetic nervous system. Too much emphasis on one more than the other leads to chronic tension. Wellness occurs when the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are balanced.

## **TIP 4: ALWAYS REACH OUT FOR HELP!**

Your car needs to be serviced by a mechanic, even the best coaches in the world have mentors. You are not alone. Don't aim for perfection, aim for progress. If you would like personalised help to bring about a long term lifestyle change, [reach out to me for help!](#)

## **TIP 5: CELEBRATE YOUR WINS**

Acknowledge and celebrate your progress. Always aim for progress, not perfection. I love to see clients making positive changes in their life so if you're sharing on social media hashtag #annetteshepherdcoaching and I'll cheer you on too or reach out via social media and let me know!

# MORE HELP IS AVAILABLE!

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Your body holds the answers! If you're missing those answers, sometimes you just need someone to help draw them out for you.

A [Forensic Healing session with Annette](#) will help you release stored energy that is causing disruption in your body. Your session will be based upon the incident that relates to your current digestive issues.

Sessions are available online or face to face at Annette's studio in Lilydale, Victoria, Australia.

For more information [email Annette at annette@assistpt.com](mailto:annette@assistpt.com)

Annette works as a mind body coach offering workshops and mentoring using a mix of healthy lifestyle coaching, nutrition guidance and personal development.

If you would like to follow Annette on social media you can find her on:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/annetteshepherdempoweringyoutube/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/body.mind.soul.wellness/>



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