

Fixing the Leaks

Natural Approaches to Healing Leaky Gut Syndrome



Many people in natural health think that colon cleansing will solve all colon problems, but solving the problem of leaky gut isn't the same as doing a colon cleanse. A cleanse is focused on detoxifying the colon, while solving leaky gut is primarily about reducing inflammation and promoting tissue healing and repair.

There are some similarities between colon cleansing therapies and natural therapies for leaky gut, but there are also some important differences. Here are seven steps you can take to reduce intestinal inflammation, promote healing and stop intestinal leakage.

Step 1. Avoid Intestinal Irritants

To get rid of intestinal inflammation, we need to stop consuming substances that irritate and damage the intestinal membranes. For starters, we need to avoid foods that are loaded with food additives. We also need to eliminate food allergens (wheat, corn and dairy products being the most common culprits). Diets high in refined sugars and simple carbohydrates (bread and pasta) will also contribute to intestinal inflammation.

We should also exercise caution with drugs that may damage the intestinal membranes, including NSAIDs, antibiotics, corticosteroids and birth control pills, using them only when absolutely necessary. Drinking purified water will also help, as chlorine and other chemicals in water can contribute to intestinal inflammation.

Step 2. Bind Irritants and Toxins with Fiber

Think of fiber as your intestinal security guards. Fiber can protect your colon from toxic or irritating substances you are unable to avoid. It not only binds these substances, reducing intestinal inflammation, it can also directly soothe and "cool" existing irritation.

Fiber has lots of other benefits, too. It feeds the friendly bacteria that inhabit the digestive tract. (These bacteria also help protect the colon from toxins.) Fiber also increases colon transit time, holds moisture in the colon to encourage proper elimination, and absorbs materials released from the liver through the bile (like excess cholesterol) to clear them out of the body.

So, step two is to increase the amount of fiber in the diet. The best way to do this is to eat more fibrous foods (whole grains, legumes, leafy green vegetables, whole fruits, etc.). One can also take fiber supplements such as **Psyllium Hulls Combination** or **Nature's Three**. With irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or other severe inflammatory conditions, the best fibers

are **Everybody's Fiber** or just straight bulk **Slippery Elm**

because it is very gentle and healing. Always drink plenty of water when taking any fiber supplement.

Step 3. Improve Colon Transit Time

Colon transit time is the length of time it takes for material to travel from one end of the alimentary canal to the other. In a healthy colon, this should be about 18-24 hours. To test your own colon transit time, eat a food that "dyes" the stool (like beets) and see how long it takes for the color to show up in the stool and be eliminated. If it takes more than a day, then you have a sluggish colon transit time.

You're not alone if you have a problem with this. The average colon transit time of most people in North America is 72 hours. This means the waste products of food sit too long in the digestive tract, which allows them to ferment and irritate the intestinal lining. Increasing colon transit time moves this material through the bowel faster so it doesn't inflame the intestinal lining.

Health Problems Associated with Leaky Gut Syndrome

- Abdominal discomfort
- ADHD
- Allergies
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Autism
- Autoimmune diseases
- Bloating
- Candida
- Celiac disease
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Depression
- Dermatitis
- Diarrhea
- Eczema
- Environmental illness
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Food allergy
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Memory problems
- Multiple chemical sensitivity
- Pancreatic insufficiency
- Psoriasis
- Sinus Problems
- Skin rashes
- Toxic feelings