

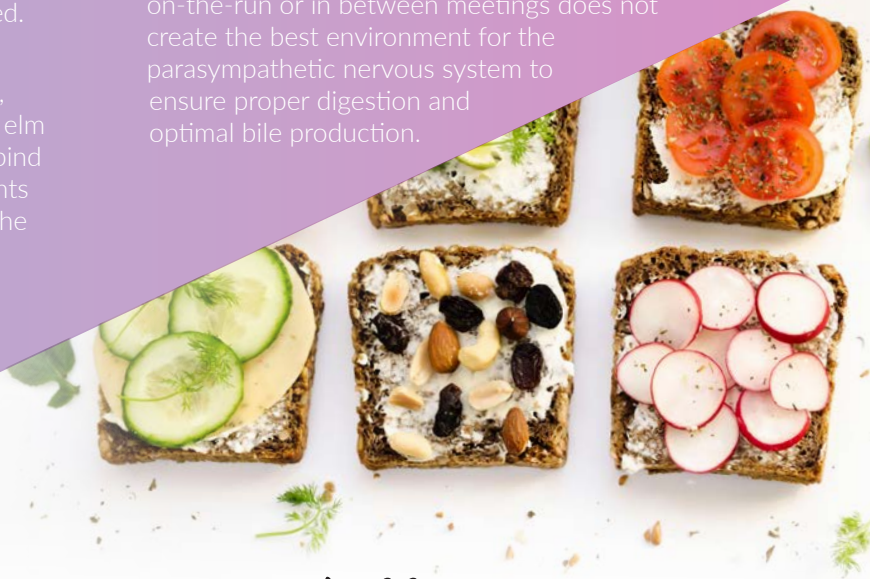


7 lifestyle & dietary habits for *Healthy liver & gallbladder functions*

EAT RIGHT FOR *healthy digestion*

We all know that healthy eating is important. The Mediterranean style of eating is possibly the most healthful dietary principle and is sometimes also called an “anti-inflammatory” diet. However, if we want to go a little further and make this more specific for healthy liver and gallbladder function, we would include the following:

- **Bitter foods in meals**, such as apple cider vinegar, sauerkraut, pickles, rocket, lemons, or anything else that would trigger the salivary response. Consuming bitter foods with meals, or better yet before meals, prepares the stomach for the food you are eating, and triggers stomach acid production. Stomach acid creates the correct acidic pH needed to trigger bile release once the partially digested food hits your small intestine to complete successful digestion of proteins, fats and carbohydrates.
- **Eat fermented foods** (unless told not to by your healthcare practitioner) such as sauerkraut and kefir to get all the prebiotics and probiotics you need for healthy gut function and to keep the gut microbiota balanced. This will ensure healthy bile and liver function.
- **Don't skip on the fibre.** Fibre from plant vegetables, flaxseed meal and mucilaginous fibres from slippery elm are important to keep the bowel moving; they also bind to toxins for elimination from the bowel. This prevents toxins from being reabsorbed into circulation from the small intestine where bile deposits them.
- **Ensure that meal portions are not too big.** Smaller portions are easier to digest and take less stomach acid and bile to complete this process, thus putting less pressure on the gallbladder.
- **Ensure meals contain a balance of fats, carbohydrates and proteins.** Don't follow low-fat diets long term, if at all, as this will most certainly affect gallbladder function in the long run.
- **Try not to snack in between meals and have a break from eating** for 1.5 – 3 hours to allow the digestive system to rest, and for the small intestine to undergo detoxification which helps to clear toxins out of the digestive tract as well as prevent dysbiosis.
- **Make sure you sit and eat your meals in a peaceful environment**, maybe with family and friends. Eating on-the-run or in between meetings does not create the best environment for the parasympathetic nervous system to ensure proper digestion and optimal bile production.



DON'T SWEAT THE *small stuff*

Learning techniques or changing thought patterns to help you rethink what is important and what isn't, is a powerful step for you to improve digestion and detoxification. Getting stressed about every little thing will dysregulate your autonomic nervous system and create long term problems with digestion and detoxification. This is one reason why some people 'feel' stress in their stomach. Don't be one of them.

DON'T SKIP ON *sleep*

Sleep is very important to keep our circadian rhythms regulated, and these circadian rhythms are very important for the regulation of our gut hormones and bile acid production. So next time you think of staying up late to watch a show or to work, remember that you are changing hormone patterns in your body and affecting your digestion for the next day.

MAKE TIME FOR DOING THINGS *you love*

Engaging in hobbies or activities that you enjoy or that relax you is important for stress reduction and to get you out of that sympathetic dominant state that prevents proper digestion from taking place.



FEED YOUR *Biochemistry*

The methylation cycle is an important part of making bile to keep your gallbladder working the way it should and your liver detoxifying. Eat plenty of green leafy vegetables to provide adequate Folate and to support the methylation cycle. Likewise, if you are vegan or vegetarian, you may consider taking Vitamin B12 in supplemental form to help support methylation as well. Discuss this with your healthcare practitioner. Drinking vegetable juices is a great way to support this cycle as it contains many minerals required for enzyme function, as well as betaine in beetroot that is a crucial ingredient for healthy methylation and liver detoxification. So why not include in your routine, every now and then, a juice containing beetroot, celery, cucumber, carrot, a leaf of kale and a green apple?

CLEAN UP YOUR *environment*

We all know that we need to reduce our exposure to toxins as much as possible. Today, it is very hard to be completely 'clean' and you'll probably never be able to achieve this. You just have to do the best you can. Environmental toxins can come in the form of herbicide and pesticide sprays in your garden or on your food (if you don't buy organic), but also from new furniture and the off-gassing that comes from it. Make sure that household cleaning products and personal care products are as clean as possible and contain minimal chemicals if at all. Check your work environment for possible exposure to any chemicals and take steps to protect yourself as much as you can.

CONSIDER YOUR *medications*

Drugs, whether legal or illegal, over-the-counter or prescription, are all cleared by the liver and gallbladder. Taking medicine on an occasional basis for acute symptoms is probably not a big problem but being on regular medications for prolonged periods of time may put extra pressure on liver detoxification systems. Does this mean you should stop taking your medications? Absolutely not! But it is good to be aware of the potential impacts, so that you can take steps to relieve the pressure on this system through other means, such as cleaner eating and reducing chemical exposure.