

DIGESTION and the importance of healthy eating.

In the years which I operated my clinic in Wolverhampton, the most frequently occurring dilemma were poor digestion and bowel dysfunction, back pain and heightened stress.

Every one of us experiences normally occurring stress conditions at some time in our lives - work pressure and long hours, or no work at all; caring for children or sick relatives and friends - and in the main, if the immune system is strong most people can cope. But after a while the resilience starts to wane and the stress factor increases - there aren't many of us who have not had this experience, and you are fortunate indeed if you have risen above it.

Many people suffer from indigestion or 'heart burn' and constipation, and invariably these things are linked. But few of us know what is really going on.

They are usually treated as an unfortunate inconvenience for which there are a number of apparently effective products on the market, which provide relief - but most of them provide temporary comfort rather than correcting the root cause - even cloaking the cause, so we keep putting off the issue and meanwhile the dilemma actually gets worse.

In all of this, maintaining sound nutrition plays an essential part. The digestive tract, or food tube, is a very sensitive organism lined with villi that are burned up every time you eat something, more so for heavier meals containing meat and fats which are harder to digest and assimilate.

That is why it is so important to space meals out and so allow these organisms to fully recover before eating again. Without this break the damaged villi are unable to cope and the digestive process gradually becomes less and less efficient.

It has often been said that if going to the loo is an unpleasant experience, there is something wrong - similarly with indigestion and 'heartburn' - these are warning signs that shouldn't be ignored.

You also often here that we should eat more fibre, but it is rarely explained that there are several types of fibre, of which some are better for you than others. They fall mainly into two groups - soluble (oats, barley and root vegetables) and not soluble (wheat and corn) and too much of the latter without enough of the former is likely to harm you rather than do you good.

And of course, lots of convenience foods containing fats, salt and sugar - and their substitutes - are positively unhelpful.

If you are suffering a digestive problem, the main need is to look carefully at what you eat and how often, eat more soluble fibre and drink plenty of water, the important thing being to correct the dilemma before it gets more serious.

Helpful Reading from the Library:

Alfalfa; Lecithin; Hiatus Hernia;
What about Fibre; Guide to Healthy Eating