

THRIVING TIMES; Your Health and Wellness Dispatch

December 2025 Banish the Christmas bloat

Simple steps for a happier gut



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

Indulgence is part of the festive season, but rich foods and overeating can wreak havoc on digestion, leaving you feeling bloated and uncomfortable. On average, we consume around 6,000 calories on Christmas Day – that's in the region of two to three times the recommended daily intake!

There are a variety of reasons why the holidays create more tummy troubles than the rest of the year:

- You often eat more than you usually would, putting pressure on the digestive system.
- You might be drinking a lot more when you eat – whether it's prosecco at a party or red wine on Christmas Day – and this dilutes stomach acid, making it harder to properly digest your food.
- More rich, creamy foods than you're used to can trigger heartburn or reflux or else make IBS symptoms worse.

Though festive food and drink can be tough on the digestive system, it doesn't have to be this way. Just follow my expert tips to trouble-proof your tummy this Christmas.

USE YOUR SENSES

<https://linktr.ee/uniquewellth.coach>

The first step in the digestive process is often overlooked, but it's a really important one. Known as the cephalic phase, it's triggered when you see or smell food. You are literally whetting your appetite.

When you start thinking about the lovely meal you are going to prepare, you are getting your digestive juices flowing. The enzymes in your saliva help you break down your food more easily, so, when the time comes, your body is actually ready to start digesting food before you have even put food on your fork – never mind actually put anything in your mouth.

It may sound an incredibly simple step – and it is – but these days we are often so busy that we don't make the time to think about our food in this way. If you find you're always eating on the go, stuffing a sandwich in your mouth at your desk or having a TV dinner, this is a vital step you are missing out on. Try spending a few minutes simply thinking about your meal before you eat it – it gets those digestive juices flowing.

CHEW YOUR FOOD

Remember what Mum used to say? Well, she was right! Chewing your food (the second phase of digestion) is key when it comes to good gut health. With proper chewing, you are mechanically breaking down the food into smaller pieces, so that there's a greater surface area and the digestive enzymes can get to work more easily, doing their job.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

And the bad news? If you're not chewing properly, it's highly likely that you're not digesting your food properly. And that means you won't be absorbing the vital nutrients either. Not chewing also means the food you eat takes much longer to break down, and, as it hangs around in your digestive system, it can start to ferment, causing uncomfortable wind, gas and bloating.

There's no need to count your chews – just chew until your food is soft enough that you couldn't tell what it was if you had to spit it out. Another sign you need to chew more is if you start to see undigested food in your stools.

BALANCE YOUR STOMACH ACID

Sales for heartburn tablets are skyrocketing because so many people wrongly assume that their digestive troubles are because of too much stomach acid. But the truth may be the total opposite! Getting older, experiencing stress and some over-the-counter medications can make your stomach acid levels drop to the extent that you don't produce enough to digest food sufficiently.

Why is this important? The stomach acid you produce not only kills any bacteria in the food you are eating; it also breaks down the protein in your meal. If you're not properly digesting the protein element in food, it can start to ferment, creating gases that force up the oesophageal sphincter muscle (a type of muscle flap) and what little stomach acid there is can escape. So, that burning feeling, especially if accompanied by smelly gas, can be a sign your digestion isn't working as well as it should be.

Try a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in water before meals – but avoid supermarket versions meant for cooking.

There are people who genuinely produce too much stomach acid and, if you try the apple cider vinegar trick and it seems to make things worse, you can neutralise the acid by taking a little bicarbonate of soda.

TAKE A DIGESTIVE ENZYME 'SUPPLEMENT'

Digestive enzymes break down our food into nutrients so our bodies can absorb them. But as we age, we naturally produce fewer of these helpful enzymes. You can counteract this by increasing your intake of foods that are higher in them – eating a small portion of pineapple or papaya before a meal may help.

TIME OUT

It's important to space out your meals so the digestive system actually gets a chance to rest. This might require some self-discipline, if your house is routinely full of bowls of nuts or endless boxes of chocolates.

Eating every three to four hours is a good benchmark to aim for, and gives the body enough time to completely digest the previous meal and have a break before you put it to work again. Of course, there will be days when your eating routine falls out of whack, but don't beat yourself up. Just try and get back on track the following day.

WALK IT OFF



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

When you walk shortly after you've eaten, magic starts to happen. A gentle walk after eating helps reduce blood sugar levels, lowering insulin – the hormone responsible for fat storage, and stops those energy crashes and sugar and carb cravings. Just 15 minutes can make a big difference. Walking can also help you digest your food better, according to research. This is because a gentle walk increases the speed at which the food moves through the digestive system. This can ease bloating and reduce discomfort.

Go ahead - try these tips out for yourself this Christmas and see if any of your symptoms improve. If you have been struggling with digestive problems for a while, let's talk about what and how you're eating. I can help you understand what might be going on in your gut and take greater steps towards a resolution.

If you'd like some inspiring twists on traditional recipes drop me an email and I'll send some over.

And if you're ready to start the New Year the right way, there are a couple of places still available. To secure yours book your complimentary [WELLth check](#) call now and be ready for 2026 to be the year you take back control of your health and feel like yourself again.

Best wishes for the festive season.

