**5 food swaps that will help keep your gut smiling**

Our bodies are funny things. One day we can be right as rain, then one small change throws everything out of sync. Digestion problems are all too common. We might not discuss them much, but we’ve all experienced some form of discomfort at some point. Food is one of the main culprits and is often behind digestive distress, which can make for a pretty miserable time if you have a work lunch, family dinner or night out with the girls planned.

Good food – foods that love your body – enable your digestive system to work more efficiently, however bad food - or more specifically food that simply doesn’t suit you – can cause diarrhoea, bloating, stomach cramps and nausea, and leave you feeling utterly lethargic.

If you’re feeling less than your usual self, try our five easy food swaps to bring inner calm to your sensitive stomach…

1. **Swap dairy products**

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Dairy can be extremely hard for our bodies to digest, mainly because of the sugar lactose found in dairy products. When lactose isn’t digested properly, it results in gas and bloating (often called lactose intolerance)[[1]](#footnote-1). And if you consume too much lactose, it goes into the large intestine and can cause diarrhoea.

**For Soya products**

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Gone are the days where soya products were solely for vegans. Soya is now a much-loved alternative to dairy, with millions of people worldwide reaping the benefits of soya’s high protein, vitamins, minerals and insoluble fibre content. Gentler on the tummy than dairy, soya is a healthy substitute.

1. **Swap acidic fruits**

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Citrus fruits such as lemons, limes and oranges can cause stomach irritation because of their acidic nature[[2]](#footnote-2). If your tummy isn’t happy, try swapping them for something less acidic until you’re feeling better.

**For raw vegetables**



Snacking on carrot sticks and celery is a great way to keep hunger pangs at bay. Vegetables are universally known to love the body and are one of the main sources of fibre, which as we all know, is important for proper bowel function.

1. **Swap your morning coffee**

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When we feel sluggish, it’s all too easy to reach for the coffee pot to give us a lift. Unfortunately for those of us who love our morning latte, caffeine can lead to stomach aches and heartburn[[3]](#footnote-3). As caffeine stimulates gastrointestinal tract motility, it makes food move more quickly through your system. If consumed in excessive amounts, caffeine can cause diarrhoea[[4]](#footnote-4).

**For a green smoothie**

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Blend ½ an avocado, a handful of spinach, an apple (cored) and 1 cup of apple juice or almond milk and voila! You have an energy-boosting, tummy-loving breakfast drink ready in minutes[[5]](#footnote-5). The spinach will help boost your iron levels, making you feel just as awake as three cups of coffee, while the avocado, apple and almond milk will all count towards your five-a-day – helping to promote healthy digestion.

1. **Swap white bread**

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Processed foods such as white bread lack fibre, which is vital for healthy bowel function. Processed foods often contain preservatives and artificial colouring too, which can cause sensitivities and allergies to rear their ugly heads.

**For super seeds**

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Wholegrain bread may be the one that shouts “healthy” when you’re doing the weekly shop but seeded bread is also a great choice. Containing even more vitamins, minerals and healthy fats than wholegrain[[6]](#footnote-6), a seeded loaf is one of the easiest swaps to make.

1. **Swap spicy foods**

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If you’re experiencing an upset tummy, you’ll want to avoid food choices that stimulate the digestive system. Spicy foods are prime culprits. As they are prone to irritating the digestive tract, spicy foods can cause additional upset when our tummies are already feeling delicate.

**For ginger**

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If you find that chillies and spicy foods are causing stomach problems, try experimenting with ginger for flavour instead. Ginger is an aromatic, natural ingredient that actually helps with digestion. If you’re feeling nauseous, ginger can also help relieve the symptoms and help[[7]](#footnote-7) you on the way back to good gut health[[8]](#footnote-8).

1. http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/lactose-intolerance/Pages/Introduction.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://umm.edu/health/medical/altmed/condition/gastritis [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/news/20100322/brewing-gentler-java [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.iffgd.org/site/gi-disorders/functional-gi-disorders/diarrhea/common-causes/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/browse-all-recipes/spinach-smoothie-recipe [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.nutrition.org.uk/nutritioninthenews/previous-facts-behind-the-headlines/bread.html [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://umm.edu/Health/Medical-Reference-Guide/Complementary-and-Alternative-Medicine-Guide/Herb/Ginger [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. https://umm.edu/Health/Medical-Reference-Guide/Complementary-and-Alternative-Medicine-Guide/Herb/Ginger [↑](#footnote-ref-8)