

Module 4 Lesson 1

Transcript

Gut health is one hot nutrition topic and that isn't just because of the actual importance of the gut itself. We now know the gut is connected to pretty much everything else in the body and that the health of the gut is a really good indicator of our entire health as a whole. I can't wait to talk to you all more about this fascinating topic. We're starting off talking today about digestive enzymes. So today, you're going to learn all about what digestive enzymes actually are, who may need supplementing with them, and where you come in with helping clients to promote digestive enzymatic activity. So let's get started. Who would think digestive enzymes, the topic of today's lesson, would be such a popular topic? I mean, as far as hot topics and digestion go, digestive enzymes are way up there. People actually talk about them, at least in the wellness world, a lot.

Don't believe me? Hit your local health food store or stroll down the supplement aisle at your local drug store and you're absolutely going to see rows and rows and rows of them. I got another story for you. Lewis came to my office to see me as a 17 year old getting ready to head off to college. He'd been having severe stomach pains that seem to show no pattern, but they would lay him up with gas, bloating and diarrhea. At first, we thought he may have some sort of residual foodborne illness because he had some travelers' dysentery the summer before. Sometimes this causes a dysbiosis or an imbalance of the gut flora and a three to four week course of a probiotic will clear that up. In Lewis's case, I started him on a probiotic and had him keep a food journal, which he was not so happy to do because it was summer vacation, and what 17 year old really wants to be doing that at that point?

He was looking forward to not doing any homework and just getting off to college. When the probiotic didn't make much of a difference, I took a hard look at his journal, which he did keep, was very proud of him, and started him on an elimination diet. Because he was a teen, it was hard to completely clean out his diet, but it was super, super helpful. One night, he went off plan and had pizza with his friends and his stomach reacted bad. Another time, he had a bowl of cereal and 15 minutes later, he was regretting it. It was obvious by the time he had a scoop of ice cream with his girlfriend that we were looking at lactose intolerance, so I sent him to a GI doctor, confirmed that. And confirmation made. Sure enough, Lewis was severely lactose intolerant. This was easy enough to remedy and he'd popped some Lactaid pills before going in for foods that had any dairy.

Because he was so sensitive, I'm not just talking about milk, but also things made with dairy, like pancake mix, some soups, salad dressings, deli meats, drink mixes, margarine, and a whole host of foods that had been in his diet that may have had trace amounts of dairy in them. Lewis lacked

the digestive enzymes required to break down the lactose in dairy and introducing the enzymes into his gut before he ate dairy was a magic cure. So what the heck are digestive enzymes? Simply put, digestive enzymes are substances in your body that help break down nutrients so that your body can absorb those beautiful nutrients, move them to your bloodstream and use them. Besides testing for pancreatic enzymes in the blood, which is used to diagnose pancreatitis and a lactose tolerance test, we do not really have tests to measure digestive enzymes.

There are prescription medications for people clinically diagnosed as lacking digestive enzymes, but the estimated \$1.5 billion supplement industry, which sells unregulated often unstandardized pills and tinctures may or may not include the enzymes a person may or may not be lacking, and there's no evidence that taking them will help with conditions like IBS and reflux. Loads of people with digestive issues are trying digestive enzyme supplements, which we hope are helpful and not harmful, but we just don't really know yet. Personally besides Beano and Lactaid, there aren't digestive enzymes that I've recommended. If I have a client who really wants to give them a go, I recommend looking for the USP seal on a standardized large company supplement brand.

This is also a good time to recommend a client see a fantastic GI doctor who specializes in this area. I have a handout for you that goes into more depth that you can refer to as well. Here's a summary of what we just went over. Digestive enzymes are substances in your body that help break down nutrients so that your body can absorb those wonderful nutrients. Different nutrients require different digestive enzymes. Lacking or not having enough digestive enzymes can lead to slow digestion, which leads to undigested foods. That can cause gas, bloating and discomfort.

Lacking the enzyme lactase is fairly common, but otherwise, it isn't too common to see digestive enzyme disorders, which typically occur in people with pancreatic illness. If a client complains of discomfort and it sounds like it may be an issue with digestive enzymes, you can start with an elimination diet, which is outlined in TNS level one. This may be an area where you'll need to work with a GI doctor as well if the issue is not as clear cut as it was in the example I gave you. That's it for today. I will see you in the next lesson.