

Digestive System WOW facts

The link between the brain and the gut

- The gut affects our mood more than we think. Did you know that 72% of people who suffer digestive discomfort from time to time say that it affects them emotionally? 31% say that they're not at their best, 25% say that they're bad tempered and 15% feel unattractiveⁱ
- 95% of serotonin, the body's feel good hormone, is produced in the gutⁱⁱ
- The intestine can be regarded as a sensory organ as it sends messages to your brainⁱⁱⁱ. Did you know that the digestive system is home to up to 100 million neuronsⁱⁱⁱ, more than in either the spinal cord or the peripheral nervous system

Facts about the digestive system

- Almost 80% of population suffer some digestive disorders. Most common symptoms are: feeling bloated, constipation and flatulenceⁱ
- 86% of people that suffer digestive discomfort say that affects them physicallyⁱ
Feel uncomfortable (57%)
Feel tight in your clothes (29%)
Feel fat (27%)
- 75% of people say digestive discomfort is worse in the evening^{iv}
- Digestive discomfort affects twice as many women as men, however men suffer indigestion more^v
- Belly distension can increase abdominal girth –by up to 12cm over course of a day^{viii}

Bloating

- Bloating is the most common digestive discomfort^{iv} and affects 36% of the general population^{vi}
- Bloating is usually absent in the morning and then worsens throughout the day^{iv}
- The adult stomach can expand up to four times its normal size after a large meal holding nearly 2 litres of food^{vii}

Constipation

- Constipation occurs in up to 20% of population, is more common in women and becomes more common as we get older^{ix}
- The final part of the digestion, the transit through the colon, takes 30-40 hours^x. When transit gets slower it can lead to constipation

Flatulence

- The average person breaks wind 15 times a day^{xi} and passes about 600 cc per day but there is great variation, and can be up to 2 litres a day in some healthy people^{xii}

Men generally pass more wind than women - men (average 18 times a day) women (average 12 times a day)^{xiii}

U&A data survey of 9004 women worldwide, TNS 2010 for Danone ⁱDoe-Young and Camilleri; Serotonin: A mediator of the gut-brain connection; American Journal of Gastroenterology, 2000 ⁱⁱH. Ahlman; The gut as the largest endocrine organ in the body; Annals of Oncology 12 (Suppl. 2): S63-S68, 2001. ⁱⁱⁱA Agrawal & P J Whorewell; Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics issue 27; 2008 ^{iv}Chang; Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics; volume 20; 2004 ^vHoughton and Whorewell; Towards a better understanding of abdominal bloating and distension in functional gastrointestinal disorders; Neurogastroenterology & Motility, 2005 ^{vi}Rohrig; 24 Hours: Your Food on the Move; ChemMatters; February 2012

^{vii}Houghton LA, Lea R, Agrawal A - relationship of abdominal bloating to distention in IBS and effect bowel habit; Gastroenterology 2006;131:1003-10 ^{viii}Thompson et al; Functional bowel disorders and functional abdominal pain; Gut;1999 ^{ix}Proano M, Camilleri M, Phillips SF, et al. Transit of solids through the human colon: regional quantification in the unprepared bowel. Am J Physiol Gastrointest Liver Physiol 258:856, 1990. ^xNHS (www.nhs.uk/conditions/flatulence) ^{xi}McKay LF, Eastwood MA, Brydon WG. Methane excretion in man - a study of breath, flatus and faeces. Gut 1985; 26:69-74, Levitt MD, Bond JH. Flatulence. Ann Rev Med 1980; 31:127-37.; Haderstorfer B, Whitehead WE. Intestinal gas production from fermentation of undigested carbohydrate in irritable bowel syndrome. Am J Gastroenterology 1989; 84:375-8. (cited by <http://www.sma.org.sg/smj/4007/articles/4007me2.html>) ^{xiii}http://media.wiley.com/product_data/excerpt/65/04708449/0470844965.pdf



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