



**PETALUMA PEOPLE  
SERVICES CENTER**

Nutrition News You Can Use - July 2021

## **Digestive Wellness**

The human body undergoes numerous changes as we age. Anatomical changes in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract can cause an onset of digestive symptoms like dyspepsia related to GERD, diarrhea, constipation, bloating, and flatulence. Contributing factors to changes in the GI tract include oral health, lifestyle, diet, medication use, motility or anatomical alterations, and hormonal shifts.

### **Oral Health**

Digestion of foods begins in the mouth. Food is chewed with the teeth into smaller pieces, which increases the surface area of food in the mouth. Salivary enzymes are mixed with the food in your mouth and begin to break it down. Thorough chewing of foods and the addition of salivary enzymes are the first steps of digestion, without these steps, foods enter the intestines in larger pieces which can cause problems.

### **Lifestyle**

A decline in physical activity, alcohol intake, and stress can exacerbate GI symptoms. Getting the recommended amount of physical activity, avoiding alcohol, and reducing stress may help prevent gastrointestinal issues.

### **Recommendation**

- Get moving – increase physical activity
- Drink plenty of fluids (water/tea/decaf coffee)
- Avoid taking NSAIDs, opioids and proton pump inhibitors
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- See your doctor regularly and get regular lab work
- Take a multivitamin with minerals daily to help prevent deficiencies
- Eat a well-balanced diet consisting of plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables

Petaluma People Services Center is dedicated to improving the social and economic health of our community by providing programs that strengthen the dignity and self-sufficiency of the individual. Our core services include: Senior Services, Counseling, Youth Programing including Mentor Me, Housing, Employment and Petaluma Bounty Farms.

www.petalumapeople.org      **707-765-8488**

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