



NOURISH

Nature may have the best remedies for indigestion

By Roanne Weisman

WHEN THE TURKEY LEAVES YOU STUFFED

SINCE THE DAYS WHEN OUR ancestors feasted on mastodon, people have been eating too much and then suffering from indigestion, says Glenn S. Rothfeld, M.D., medical director of WholeHealth New England. Then, it was important to eat your fill, he points out, because you never knew when another meal was likely to walk by. Now, feasting around holiday time is more about tradition than nourishment, but that doesn't lessen the bloating, heartburn, gas, abdominal pain, and other problems we suffer as our bodies work to convert the food we eat into the fuel we need to live.

Fortunately, indigestion's long history has given people plenty of time to identify remedies, and nature has provided us with an abundance of herbs, plant-based



WHAT TO TAKE

Bitters	Enzymes	Teas	Herbs
Dandelion Feverfew Hops Yarrow (short-term use only) Yellow dock Milk thistle Artichoke Bitter melon	Amylase (breaks down carbohydrates) Protease (protein) Lipase (fats) Cellulase (fiber) Lactase (milk) Bromelain Papain	Chamomile Ginger Peppermint	Dill Rosemary Fennel
You can use bitters as teas or buy them in tinctures that you mix with water. They should be sipped slowly 10–30 minutes before eating. Holistic practitioner Glenn Rothfeld, M.D., recommends Swedish Bitters, an herbal brew that combines a number of digestive aids. Sipping warm water with fresh lemon juice before or during meals is another way to stimulate the stomach.	Many companies, including Rainbow Light, Enzymatic Therapy, and Garden of Life, make remedies that include all of these enzymes and many more; some combine them with herbs. When buying enzymes, make sure they're active by checking the label for their measures in Food Chemical Codex activity units (such as DU for Amylase) or USP units rather than simply by weight.	Internist Alexa Fleckenstein, M.D., also recommends a combination tea made of ginger, slippery elm bark, marshmallow root, peppermint, and aloe vera.	Steep fresh herbs in a cup of boiling water until cooled. Drink liquids and chew the herbs. For longstanding dyspepsia, botanist James Duke, Ph.D., recommends Iberogast, which combines extracts of clown's mushroom, chamomile flower, peppermint leaf, caraway, licorice root, and lemon balm.