

Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle
Doctor of Acupuncture Medicine



A HEALTHY GUT IS A HEALTHY BODY
**A Balanced Acupuncture Medicine Approach to Restoring Health and
Overcoming Common Digestive Disorders with Natural Remedies**

It's All About Your Gut!:
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and Overcoming Common Digestive Disorders
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I hope you are ready to jump start your body back to health!



The program introduces effective ways to use food as medicine. Discover healing rice congee (porridge), smoothies, and essential oil protocols that are a great way to begin healing so that you can start feeling better now!

From eating the right food to mindfulness, movement, and purpose, find the best path to a healthier and happier you.

Dr. Michele Arnold Pirtle

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Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle

Total Health Acupuncture
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Total Health Acupuncture
Poway, CA 92064

www.wellwithdrmichele.com *For inquiries contact Dr. Michele Arnold*

at michele@acupuncturecenterinc.com

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Please consult with a licensed health professional to address specific health concerns you might have. Always tell your health practitioner all medications, vitamins, supplements, essential oils, herbs, or birth control you are taking.

Contents

Introduction	1
Acupuncture Health Rules.....	5
About Bowel Diseases	7
Common Questions	12
Essential Oils	
Morning Healing Drinks.....	
Green Blender Drinks	
Drink Your Probiotics	
Rice Water Recipe	
Congee, An Asian Healing Porridge.....	23
Digestive First Aid	
Food Combinations, and How to Eat	
This is Not a Restrictive Diet but a Healing Diet.....	
About Fiber Foods	
Daily Menu Plan	
Tools to Stay in Remission	
5-Element Patterns-Your Body Constitution	
Five Element Theory and the Essential Gut Diet	
Review and Closing Thoughts	
Sources and Image Credits	
About the Author	

Introduction

What if I said to you that you can find a way out of the never-ending stomach or abdominal pain, discomfort, cramping, diarrhea, constipation, acid reflux, hemorrhoids, bleeding, dehydration, doctor visits, and fear?

My program is based on years of working with patients with YOUR PROBLEM! In truth, I have learned what works by trial and error, lots of research, and the feedback from my patients. My patients have taught me that everyone is an individual, and that is why the foundational diet of Traditional Chinese Medicine works so well.

People have the same basic nutritional requirements, and same physiology. Most do well on the foundational diet with a few tweaks here and there depending on individual patterns of disharmony.

First, let's heal your intestinal lining, improve your natural healthy gut bacteria, improve production of digestive enzymes, stop pain, stop diarrhea, or resolve constipation. Let's improve your energy levels. We will slowly introduce a healthy balanced diet over 10 weeks. Of course, it may take some people longer, and some people may heal quicker. It depends on the severity of your condition.

This is where I can help. As an expert in Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine I am here to guide you along the way. This Book can be used by you stand alone, or alongside the Healthy Gut Healthy Body 10 -week online course.

This program is a balanced Acupuncture Medicine approach.

Acupuncture Medicine is also known as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It has been practiced for thousands of years, thus there is a lot of experience from clinical trial and error. The effects on the human body for enhancing health or treating illness have been observed testing a myriad of different herbs, spices, and foods over time for many people.

A healthy diet not only depends upon what you eat or don't eat, but how you cook it, how much, how often, and how you eat it.

Start with A Great Foundation. Dietary principles are based on a core foundation that is balanced. Most people do well on the Chinese Medicine foundational diet. This is referred to as the Healthy Spleen-Qi diet in Acupuncture Medicine, but we can call it an Essential Gut Diet. Since each person has different needs, for optimal results you can easily tailor your diet with addition and subtraction of foods for your unique situation.

The goal is to enhance one's health and vitality. As opposed to Western medicine, the foundation of this approach is to support the body's natural self-healing mechanisms and abilities.

In this program you will discover the secrets of healing food recipes. You will use ingredients that you may already have in your own kitchen and pantry. There are foods found in your local grocery store that when used correctly, they become superfoods.

I will introduce you to green smoothies, healing rice porridge, teas, and essential oils.

It's All About Your Gut

There is a digestive first-aid section for some of the most common complaints like acid-reflux, constipation, stomach upset, nausea, diarrhea, and more. This can be your go-to section whenever the need arises.

There is a 10 -day daily food menu plan along with daily essential oil routines. Using this plan as your guide you will begin to heal your digestive system. The ultimate goal is to take you to a place where you can enjoy a greater variety of foods without any digestive upset. The benefit of this is improved health in general so that you can live a more productive, happier life, longer.

As a doctor of Acupuncture Medicine for over 20 years, I am happy to share my experience, and research with you. You are not alone...

The CDC reports that in 2015, an estimated 1.3 % of US adults (3 million) reported being diagnosed with IBD (either Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis). This was a large increase from 1999 (0.9 % or 2 million adults).¹

IBS affects between 25 and 45 million people in the United States according to The International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders.²

From U. S. News, "The American College of Gastroenterology reports that "more than 60 million Americans experience heartburn at least once a month and some studies have suggested that more than 15 million Americans experience heartburn symptoms each day." Simple heartburn becomes GERD when it happens two or more times per week... Up to 20 % of the population may suffer from GERD."³

Today there is more and more knowledge about how gastrointestinal problems affect the whole body. There is a connection between our brain, mental health, skin, joints, hair, kidney health, liver disease, cardiovascular, respiratory, bone health, immune system, and cellular health such as cancer and tumor growth.

An article from Harvard Health discusses the gut-brain in connection with anxiety and depression. This shows that Western medicine acknowledges how important gut health truly is.⁴

These connections I just mentioned were in fact always known in ancient Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine. The digestive system is known as the Spleen-Pancreas and Stomach Meridian. It includes the whole alimentary canal from the mouth to the anus.

It is considered our center of health. When out of order it can affect other body systems.

In many cases when someone is seeing me in my clinic for acupuncture whether it is for a gastrointestinal issue, acne, psoriasis, eczema, arthritis, joint pain, muscle tension, anxiety, insomnia, or fibromyalgia, most often the focus is on the spleen and stomach channels. These give the best results.

As an acupuncturist I have helped so many people find balance and achieve remission through dietary plans per their constitutional patterns.

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Many people seek my care for pain relief and are surprised that I also specialize in digestive health.

I have found that combining the use of essential oils enhances results.

I am proud to offer you this book as a way for you to have everything you need all in one place. You can learn about essential oils, and food healing methods that are easy to apply. I have made sure that you can find most foods in your local grocery market, and in your pantry.

Food should taste good, be easy to digest, and well-absorbed. My goal is for you to improve all your necessary bodily functions so that you can eat, pee, poop, sleep, and move without difficulty.

To Your Health and Healing,
Dr. Michele Arnold Pirtle

1. Data and Statistics (cdc. Gov)
2. Irritable Bowel Syndrome IFFGD
3. GERD: Symptoms, Causes and Treatment | US News
4. The Gut-Brain Connection - Harvard Health

Acupuncture Health Rules

**A Balanced
Acupuncture
Medicine Approach
Time Tested Over
Many People**

These healthy rules apply to children as well as adults. They are meant to be followed for a healthy lifestyle. It is not just what you eat, but how you eat. Once you are in remission stage, continue to add in more and more nutritious foods. The Acupuncture healthy food rules will help you achieve longer lasting good digestion, and metabolism.



Food is Dose Dependent

Most food can be used therapeutically depending on quantity (dose dependent), frequency, season, and needs of the person.

Follow the 80/20 Rule

Fill your plate with 80 % dark leafy greens and vegetables, 20 % proteins and good fats. Stop eating when you're 80 % full. Leave a little on your plate. Don't go back for seconds.

Portion Control

Use portion control. Use Your fist, and hand to size portions. Meat portion is the size of your fist.

Keep a Positive Outlook

Positivity can only help. Find ways to help you deal with stress more effectively, like a hobby.

Enjoy Sunshine

Enjoy the sunshine 2 - 3 X per week.

Don't burn! This is important for natural vitamin D.



Drink Between Meals

Do not drink large amounts of liquid with meals. Not only does liquid dilute stomach acid it makes it harder for your stomach to break down food. It also overwhelms the spleen Qi. It is best to drink a small cup of warm tea, miso soup, or broth with meals than cold iced water.

It's All About Your Gut

Eat in a Calm State



Take time out for relaxation. Enjoy meals in a calm state, don't eat standing up or while working or reading.

Eat a 3:1 Ratio

Coffee, black tea, sugar, meats, milk, and grains are considered concentrated foods, and are acidic.

Counteract by eating 3 servings of alkalizing fruits, vegetables, green tea, and dark leafy greens for everyone serving of acidic foods.



Eat the Rainbow

Most meals should provide a balance of 5 flavors (bitter, sweet- bland, spicy, salty, and sour), natures (warming, cooling, cold, or hot), plus have the array of five colors (red, green, orange- yellow, purple- dark, white- tan).

Sleep Well



Regular sleep patterns; go to bed and wake at the same times every day.

Crowd Out Junk Food

Crowd out eating processed refined sugars, high fructose corn syrup, Agave, polyunsaturated vegetable oils, corn oil, soybean

oil, canola oil, safflower oil, cotton seed oil, & grains such as white flour and most white rice products.

Eat Real Food

Eat only organic non-GMO foods. Consume non-GMO organic soy only in traditional Asian forms of Tofu, Miso, Tempeh, Natto, or Tamari. Read Labels!

Don't Eat Late

Don't eat 3 hours before bedtime.

Chew Well, Eat Slow

Chew food thoroughly, eat slowly, it takes 20 min. for your stomach to know it's full.

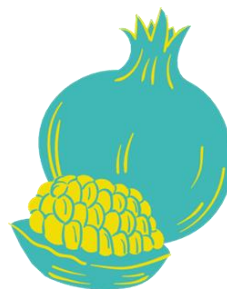
Move Your Body



Walk at least 10,000 steps per day equal to 5 miles.

Most Food Should be Warm

80% cooked, 20% raw for those with healthy digestive function. For those with poor digestion, keep cold and raw foods to no more than 5%.



About Bowel Diseases

Western science along with Chinese Medicine both confirm that a healthy gut is necessary for our immune system. In addition, there are more neurons in our gut than our brain, and we also know the gut and its hormones affects our brain, emotions, and behavior.



The musculoskeletal system depends on digestion for healthy movement and relaxation. Our guts extract the vital nutrients we need from our food and drink to nourish our joints, bones, and muscles. Healing the gut is important for living a productive, healthy, long life.

We will introduce a foundation to clear inflammation, heal your intestinal lining, build your gut micro flora, and resolve your symptoms. There is a daily routine using essential oils, and food menu plan per your 5-element pattern. Your 5-element pattern is a constitutional guide based on the dietary practices of Ancient Chinese Medicine. You will be able to choose your 5- element pattern from a simple list of signs and symptoms. First, let us look at understanding bowel diseases.

5-Element Pattern is Your Body Constitution

We cannot of course predict all idiosyncrasies. That is why keeping a food journal is so important. Everyone is different, and two people with the same Western Medicine GI diagnosis do not necessarily have the same 5-element pattern. Some foods that may aggravate one person will not aggravate another. Following the foundational diet per your 5-element pattern will help you achieve the best results without aggravations. Some people are hot body types, while others are cold or deficient. You will learn about Body constitutions later.

References

What is Inflammatory Bowel Disease? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). March 22, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ibd/what-is-ibd.htm>

The Facts About Inflammatory Bowel Diseases. New York, NY: Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America; 2014. <http://www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org/assets/pdfs/updatedibdfactbook.pdf>

About Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

The CDC states inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a term for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis that are characterized by chronic inflammation, ulcers (sores) of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Prolonged inflammation results in damage to the GI tract.

Some common symptoms of IBD are:

Persistent diarrhea, Abdominal pain, cramping, Rectal bleeding/bloody stools, Weight loss, and Fatigue. As the disease progresses, you may start feeling fatigued and even develop anemia. You may also experience nausea from constant irritation of the GI tract. In addition, you may start experiencing symptoms outside of the GI tract. These symptoms include, eye pain, fever, joint inflammation and pain, red skin rashes and bumps or mouth sores (aphthous stomatitis).

It's All About Your Gut

Complications Abscess or fistula

An abscess occurs when deep ulcers create a pocket of pus. Symptoms include fever, pain, and swelling. If an ulcer breaks through to a nearby organ, it creates a tunnel called a fistula. A fistula between the colon and the vagina can allow bacteria into the vagina. A fistula to the bladder can cause chronic urinary tract infections. One that reaches the skin can create external sores. Fistulas and some abscesses are often treated with surgery.

Bowel Obstruction

Inflammation can make the inside of the intestine so narrow that nothing can pass through. Doctors call this “bowel obstruction.” It causes digesting food and gas to get stuck in the digestive tract. The symptoms include severe cramping, nausea, vomiting, and a swollen belly. Bowel obstructions are treated in the hospital. If the obstruction does not clear on its own, you may need surgery.

Stages of IBD

Severe

You are experiencing painful urgency and frequency of bowel movements with diarrhea, and/or blood. With UC there may also be pus, or mucus in your stool. Possible dehydration, fever, chills, night sweats, and weakness. You may have been recently hospitalized. It is most likely difficult to study, work, sleep, or play. Symptoms disrupt your daily life. At this stage, you may not be able to tolerate many foods. At this stage, inflammation occurs often, and your body tissues are at risk of permanent damage.

In some cases, surgery is necessary to remove the damaged portion of your intestine.

Moderate

Your symptoms have improved significantly. Your energy is improved. You may still be experiencing some symptoms of intermittent loose stools, diarrhea, pain with diarrhea as well as additional symptoms and complications. These may include fever or anemia. There may be fever, chills, or night sweats. You can take care of yourself, drive, and work. At this stage you may be able to tolerate some fiber, but you may still have some difficulty digesting foods very high in fiber or fat.

Treatments to stop diarrhea intended for people with mild to moderate disease will not provide symptom relief.

Mild

You are feeling stronger and are becoming more comfortable eating a greater variety of foods. You still have occasional mild abdominal pain with mild diarrhea or loose stools, mild urgency, and no bleeding. There is only occasional mild bloating or discomfort. You can eat, sleep, poop, and pee without much difficulty. You can take care of yourself, work, play, drive, and sleep.

Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle

With mild to moderate Crohn's, you may experience diarrhea or abdominal pain, but you will not experience other symptoms or complications.

You can move, eat, and drink as normal, and the disease has a minimal impact on your quality of life. In some cases, you will not even require treatment. However, it should not be ignored to avoid a sudden flare-up in symptoms.

Remission

Your bowel movements are well controlled and solid without blood. You do not have abdominal pain, cramping, or urgency. Your energy levels are normal, and you can work, play, eat, sleep, and take care of yourself. Continuing to take care of yourself will help you remain in remission.

How is IBD Diagnosed?

IBD is diagnosed using a combination of endoscopy (for Crohn's disease) or colonoscopy (for ulcerative colitis) and imaging studies, such as contrast radiography, barium X-ray, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), or computed tomography (CT). Physicians may also check stool samples to make sure symptoms are not being caused by an infection or run blood tests to help confirm the diagnosis.

Differences between Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis

Crohn's disease can affect any part of the alimentary canal from the mouth to the anus. It most often affects the portion of the small intestine before the large intestine. Damage can infiltrate through several layers of the intestinal wall. Damaged areas can be patchy around areas of healthy tissue. As inflammation continues, patients may develop a right lower quadrant mass or fullness that mimics appendicitis. The mass is palpable during physical examination. Some patients may experience intestinal stenosis and partial obstruction characterized by severe colic, abdominal distention, and constipation and vomiting. Pus, mucous and blood may be present in the stool if the rectum is involved. Chronic cases of stenosis and obstruction will lead to scarring, luminal narrowing, and stricture formation. In severe cases, abdominal fistulas and abscess may develop, causing fever, painful abdominal masses, generalized malnutrition and muscle wasting. Fistulas may remain in the gastrointestinal tract, or they may invade the surrounding areas such as the stomach, peritoneum, and urinary bladder. Though rare, cancer has been observed in chronic Crohn's patients.

Ulcerative colitis (UC) occurs in the large intestine (colon) and the rectum. Damaged areas begin at the rectum moving their way up the colon, and they are continuous as opposed to patchy. Inflammation is present only in the inner most layer of the colon. In UC it is more likely than Crohn's to also have pus or mucus in the stool. If the patient has such complications as toxic colitis or toxic megacolon, immediate hospitalization is required. In addition, serious complications such as massive hemorrhage, free perforation, or fulminating toxic colitis require immediate surgical intervention.

How Does Western Medicine Treat IBD?

Medications such as aminosalicylates, corticosteroids (such as prednisone), immunomodulators, and the newest class approved for IBD—the “biologics”.

It's All About Your Gut

Several vaccinations for patients with IBD are recommended to prevent infections.

Severe IBD may require surgery to remove damaged portions of the gastrointestinal tract but because of advances in treatment with medications mean surgery is less common than it was a few decades ago. Since Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis affect different parts of the GI tract, the surgical procedures are different for the two conditions.

What are the Causes of IBD?

The exact cause of IBD is unknown. A defective immune system is thought to be one culprit. A properly functioning immune system attacks foreign organisms, such as viruses and bacteria, to protect the body. In IBD, the immune system responds incorrectly to environmental triggers, which causes inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract. There also appears to be a genetic component—someone with a family history of IBD is more likely to develop this inappropriate immune response.

About Irritable Bowel Disease and Diverticulitis

Irritable bowel disease (IBS) is not an inflammatory bowel disease. Although, it shares some of the same symptoms. IBS is not caused by inflammation and the tissues of the bowel are not damaged the way they are in IBD. Western Medical Treatment is also different.

Diverticulosis like IBS is a muscular problem, manifesting as a herniation or pouch in the wall of the colon. When these pouches become infected it is diverticulitis. Symptoms may include bloating, cramping, pain, constipation followed by diarrhea.

About Celiac Sprue

Celiac sprue is also not an inflammatory bowel disease. The CDC explains that it shares similar symptoms along with inflammation of the digestive tract. However, the cause of celiac disease is known and is very specific. It is an inflammatory response to gluten (a group of proteins found in wheat and similar grains). The symptoms of celiac disease will go away after starting a gluten-free diet, although it usually will be months before the full effects of the new diet will be reached.

People with Celiac Sprue lack the digestive enzyme to break down the protein gluten. It is thought to be a genetic or auto-immune response to gluten. Gluten is found in wheat, rye, and barely. The inflammatory response from eating gluten type grains damages the small intestine resulting in poor digestion and malabsorption. It is also thought that prior damage to the small intestine triggers an inflammatory response to gluten. Gluten is in countless processed foods, and even stamp and envelope adhesives, medicines, and vitamins. It can be found in traditional methods of preparing foods, herbs, sauces, and dressings. Soy sauce, salad dressings, condiments may contain gluten. Even trace amounts can trigger an inflammatory response.

What are the symptoms of Celiac Disease? Symptoms of celiac can include failure to thrive, gas, recurring abdominal bloating and pain, chronic diarrhea, and constipation. It is easy to understand how it is often misdiagnosed as IBS since these are the characteristic symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome. The average length of time between the onset of symptoms and

Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle

a diagnosis of celiac in America is five to ten years. Therefore, the statistics of Americans with Celiac Disease is only 1%.

What is the treatment for Celiac Disease?

The only treatment is to become 100% gluten free. That means to eliminate all foods that are made from or contain wheat, rye, and barley. Some people with Celiac can tolerate oats if they are not processed in the same facility as gluten-grains. This prevents cross-contamination. The label should say, "Certified Gluten-free". Alternative choices are tamari, a gluten-free soy sauce, and soluble fibers rice, potatoes, oats, quinoa, root vegetables, tapioca, amaranth, buckwheat.

How is Celiac Disease Diagnosed?

There is an initial blood test to test for antibodies to gluten. If the results are positive, a small bowel biopsy will follow. You must make sure you continue to eat foods with gluten, such as breads and pastas before you have tests for gluten antibodies. If you avoid gluten before being tested, you may get a false negative test result.

What if I am both Celiac and I have IBS or IBD? You must follow a 100% gluten-free diet and stick to a diet for IBS or IBD as well. The Essential Gut diet will help you eat proper amounts of insoluble, and soluble fiber foods. Also, develop good eating habits to chew well, and eat slow.

What happens if I am Celiac Sprue, and I continue to eat gluten foods? Your health will deteriorate with more serious problems. You risk osteoporosis, central and peripheral nervous system diseases, pancreatic diseases, internal hemorrhaging, gall bladder, liver, and spleen disorders, gynecological disorders, and an increased risk of certain types of cancer, especially intestinal lymphoma.

Upper GI Disorders and GERD

IBD and IBS are lower Gastrointestinal (GI) disorders. I mention this because you can have both a lower and upper GI problem. Some upper GI disorders are gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), achalasia, Cyclic vomiting syndrome (CVS), Dyspepsia, Dysphagia, Gastroparesis, Globus, Sphincter of Oddi dysfunction. Common symptoms among these are heartburn, difficulty swallowing, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, problems in the passage of food, any combination of these symptoms. Many other disorders can affect the digestive tract. Some can have symptoms that may be like or overlap with gastrointestinal functional or motility disorders. A foundational diet can help many other GI disorders besides IBD. However, some whole foods, herbs and spices that can help IBD or IBS may aggravate upper GI disorders. In this case, you will need to use alternatives. Some suggestions will be given in the daily menu plan. It will also help for you to eat per your 5-element pattern.

Common Questions

Common questions when suggestions seem different than popular thought.

What about the popular FODMAP Diet?

This is not the FODMAP diet. In this diet we are only restricting the fructans that have been shown to help people reduce inflammation so that the lining of the gut can heal. Once healed these foods can be slowly introduced giving the body time to learn how to process them again.

Why should I add foods back into my diet that were triggers for me?

Your body will begin to adapt to the food, and to make the enzyme necessary to break the food down. The key here is to start with small amounts, and to increase foods in your diet gradually. This will help tremendously to increase your body's enzyme production. It takes different enzymes to digest carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. How you eat literally affects what you can digest without difficulty.

For instance, as you eat more soy or other beans, your GI tract will adapt to larger amounts of raffinose and become more adept at handling the complex sugar.

Wouldn't it just be easier to continue to restrict foods?

No, because this will set your body up to become more and more sensitive. There will be less and less nutritious foods that you will be able to tolerate.

Should I Avoid Gluten?

The short answer is yes if you have been diagnosed with celiac disease, and no if you have not. While many people with IBS are intolerant to wheat bran, and whole wheat, this is not at all the same thing as the total gluten intolerance caused by celiac. It is possible to have BOTH celiac and IBS or IBD, but it is also common for celiac to be misdiagnosed as IBS.

Gluten Free is a Fad!

I understand that many people say they feel better on a gluten free diet, so they do not want to bother to get tested. They are also afraid of experiencing symptoms again by introducing gluten back into their diet. This would be necessary to have accurate antibody test results. That is your choice. However, I cannot tell you how many patients of mine have become gluten free in hopes to cure their IBD or IBS, or even many other ailments like arthritis. They insist that they are better. It is a kind of psychological hope that I don't quite understand because they do not appear healthier, the complaints remain the same, or maybe only very slightly improved. I think it is worth it to know for sure because then they are putting themselves on an unnecessary restrictive diet, and they are missing out on many nutritious foods. The problem for some of these people may not be Celiac Disease, but improper eating habits, poor food combining, insufficient soluble fiber, and they still eat processed foods, and refined sugar. If you are eating muffins gluten free or not, you will still look like a muffin! Just my observation. You know your body best. So, if the gluten-free diet resolves your health complaints,

Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle

and you look and feel better listen to your gut. Continue to be gluten-free Celiac diagnosis or not.

How is Wheat or Bran Intolerance Different than Celiac Gluten Intolerance?

While whole wheat, with its outer layer of bran, is more nutritious than refined wheat it is very high in insoluble fiber. The insoluble fiber is a trigger for IBS, and it may cause inflammation in the gut damaging the mucosal lining of IBD.

Why Should I Eat White Bread When I Have Weak Digestion?

When the outer bran layer is removed from whole wheat you get white flour (the regular "all-purpose" kind). This white flour is used for baking breads, cakes, dough, muffins, etc.). Although this is still wheat flour, it is not whole wheat flour.

White flour is soluble fiber. Soluble fiber has a soothing action upon the gastrointestinal tract. It is the key component of the IBS diet for both diarrhea and constipation. Contrary to popular belief white breads are safe staples for IBS and IBD. Choose sourdough or some French breads. Toasting the bread reduces its glycemic index if you are watching your blood sugar. Read the labels because you want the one with the least ingredients. You may be able to tell if it is whole wheat because it will have little brown flakes, and the label will say 100% whole-wheat. For most crackers, pretzels, etc. only white flour is usually used. Exceptions are likely to be noted right on the label as "whole wheat" or "whole grain". You want to avoid High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS), emulsifiers, thickeners, colors, preservatives, and added protein isolates.

Will I Be Able to Eventually Add in Whole-Wheat Breads and Whole-Wheat Products to My Diet?

Once you are following the food combining rules with eating insoluble and soluble fibers together you may be able to slowly integrate whole-wheat into your diet. Once your digestive system is stable you might try whole-wheat pastry flour. It is very finely milled, and it may be more tolerated. Eating soluble with insoluble foods can be like eating a white dinner roll, and then a half of a whole wheat dinner roll that will help minimize reactions. Remember, there are other whole grains besides whole-wheat. So, if you find that you just can't tolerate whole-wheat no matter what you will still be able to enjoy whole grains. Choose brown rice, quinoa, amaranth, millet, steel-cut oats, oat groats and rolled oats, or buckwheat/kasha/soba noodles (buckwheat is not wheat it is a fruit or grass). *Instant oatmeal is processed, and likely not a whole grain.

Why is it Recommended to Eat Starchy Foods? Won't Starchy Foods Make Me Gain Weight?

The answer is NO! By eliminating high fat foods such as refined sugar, candies, baked goods, cookies, muffins, pies, cakes, cupcakes, frosting, chips, red meats, dairy, alcohol, and fried greasy foods you will lose weight. You will also improve your blood sugar levels as well. Both soluble fiber and insoluble fiber, are calorie-free because they pass through the body undigested, and they are also quite filling. One important difference between the two types of fibers is that soluble fiber tends to slow digestion while insoluble fiber speeds it up. In other words, if grains or legumes remain whole, such as beans, brown rice, or whole barley, the

It's All About Your Gut

starch is broken down into sugars much more slowly. In fact, some are not turned into sugar at all but reach the large intestine intact. These are called resistant starches. You can't get fat on broccoli and sweet potatoes!

What If I Need to Gain Weight?

The nice upshot to this is that for people with IBS who are underweight will be able to gain weight and maintain it. They will be able to eat more food without the fear of pain, diarrhea, or constipation. When the lining of the intestine heals, they will also be able to absorb more nutrients from their food and drink allowing them to gain weight.

What is the Difference in Nutrition Values Between White and Brown Rice?

Source: Whelan, C. Medical Reviewer, Butler, N. Healthline. Brown Rice vs. White Rice. Sept. 29, 2018. Brown Rice vs. White Rice: Nutrient Comparison (healthline.com.)

All white rice starts out as brown rice. During a milling process the husk, bran, and outer germ layer are removed. Much of the nutrition is removed, but it increases the shelf life. To remedy this problem white rice is fortified with fiber, vitamins, and minerals. The refined grain is also polished to appear more palatable. Both are carbohydrates, but brown is considered a whole grain.

If we compare 1/3 cup of long-grain varieties of both brown and white rice keeping in mind these values could be different depending upon the manufacturer, and that white rice most likely has been fortified with additional nutrients:

Brown rice has 1.1 g of fiber vs. .2 g fiber white rice.
Protein brown rice 1.83 g vs. 1.42 g white rice.

Carbs of brown rice 17.05 vs. 14.84 white rice.
Sugar brown rice .16 g vs. .03 g white rice.
Saturated fat brown rice .17 g vs. .04 white rice

Brown rice does have fewer calories than white rice, but not by a large amount. In a cup of brown rice, you will get around 218 calories, while white rice has just around 242 calories in a cup. That is only a difference of 24 calories per cup full of cooked rice, which is about one portion of rice.

Brown rice takes a bit longer to cook than white rice. It can take 45 to 60 minutes to cook brown rice and white rice 20 minutes. It is so much sturdier. If we imagine our stomachs as our cooking pots, it is easy to understand why people with poor digestion find it hard breaking down brown rice compared to white rice. So, if you have good digestion choose brown rice. If you have poor digestion eat white rice until you strengthen your digestive system.

What About Starchy Tubers and Grains Like Rice, Potatoes, and Pasta?

White rice, and pastas are not your high fiber and nutrition sources. They should be thought of as the plate your other high fiber and nutritious foods are served on. They are the vehicle

Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle

allowing safe passage of harder to digest insoluble fibers. These foods help fill you up, and make you feel satisfied reducing the bad habit of overeating.

The fiber and nutrient content of brown rice compared to white rice is not that much anyway as you can see from the previous question.

Your fiber should come from your fruits, legumes, beans, nuts, seeds, vegetables, and dark leafy greens. To make my point, let us look at how much fiber navy beans supply.

Navy beans supply 9.2 g of fiber in ½ cup. We can see that they are a better choice for increasing our fiber intake than either white or brown rice.

You should not be eating a bowl of rice brown or white by itself anyway.

This can explain why blood sugar levels spike quickly when you eat a bowl of oatmeal, or white rice by itself.

Source: Campbell, M. How Much Fiber Is in Navy Beans? Healthy Eating. Retrieved from How Much Fiber Is in Navy Beans? (sfgate.com).

Will Starches and White Rice Raise My Blood Sugar?

First, starchy foods are complex carbohydrates that have a higher starch content than other non-starchy vegetables.

They tend to be the most soluble and digestible form of carbohydrates. Humans make the enzymes necessary to break down starches.

Humans do not make the enzymes to break down fiber, soluble or insoluble.

We need the gut bacteria to do that. Soluble fiber also stabilizes blood glycemic levels because it regulates the rate at which food leaves the stomach.

Complex carbohydrates contain oligosaccharides and polysaccharides. These are longer, more complex chains of sugar molecules. It takes the body longer to digest complex carbs than to process simple carbs. Some complex carbohydrate foods contain fiber, vitamins, and minerals and take longer to digest. This means they have a less immediate impact on blood sugar, causing it to rise more slowly.

As I mentioned earlier, eat smaller servings of rice, pastas, breads, and tortillas as the plates with higher servings of fiber rich foods. Some grains and foods might be higher on the glycemic index (GI or GL glycemic load) causing blood sugars to rise more rapidly.

However, they can also come down very quickly. What is most important to know is that most foods are not eaten by themselves, so even if you have a high GL food, eating it alongside foods that contain plenty of healthful fats, fiber, and lean protein can dramatically lessen any potential blood sugar swings.

The Essential Gut diet incorporates a careful balance of all food groups with necessary adjustments per your dietary needs, and 5-element pattern.

It's All About Your Gut

Second, some starches will be added into your diet, and some will be avoided depending upon your 5- element pattern.

The best choices of grains, starchy soluble fiber, proteins, greens, veggies, and fruit and those to avoid per each type are given.

If you have diabetes, or you are pre-diabetic you will have deficiency of yin-fluids. You may also have a combination of either a Qi-energy deficiency, yang-cold, damp-heat, or a phlegm-damp pattern. If damp, you will avoid eating fruit until you reverse the diabetes. When blood sugar levels remain healthy for six months you can begin reintroducing them. If you are diabetic be sure to check your blood sugar levels, and to speak with your dietician or doctor.

What is the Difference Between Complex Carbs and Simple Carbs?

Complex Carbohydrates are made up of fiber, starch, and sugar.

Simple carbs are just sugar. They are made up of molecules consisting of a single monosaccharide or of two monosaccharides linked together, called disaccharides. Glucose, fructose, and galactose are monosaccharides. The disaccharides include lactose, sucrose, and maltose.

Any sugar that is not used right away is converted to fat and stored. Therefore, eating foods with lots of added sugar can contribute to weight gain.

Foods to avoid that are simple carbs are concentrated fruit juices, sugar, brown sugar, high fructose corn syrup, glucose, fructose, and sucrose.

There are nutritious foods with simple carbs that you should eat like fruit, dairy if tolerable, some types of grains, and some types of vegetables.

Honey and maple syrups are simple carbs, and they have nutritious value when eaten sparingly.

The Terms Carbs or Carbohydrate is Misused?

It is because these words not only make you think of processed low-quality white flour and white flour products, soft white sandwich breads, bagels, cookies, cakes, pies, doughnuts, muffins, pastries, and other sweet baked goods, cereals made from refined grains and highly sweetened, crackers, hamburger or hot dog buns, pancakes and waffles, pizza dough, and rice snacks, but healthy carbs as well. Unfortunately, they have become synonymous with all breads, all pastas, all rice, whole grains, as well as the starchy tubers potatoes, sweet potatoes, and squashes. People are afraid of carbs and starches because they do not understand what they are, and that you need to eat them.

What are Complex Carb Examples?

The healthiest complex carbs are:

- Whole grains such as brown rice, wild rice (not rice, but a grass seed), steel-cut oatmeal, whole-grain (rather than pearly) barley, bulgur (which is made from cracked wheat), and faro.

Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle

- Grain-like foods such as quinoa (a seed) and buckwheat (a grass).
- Starchy vegetables including potatoes, sweet potatoes, and corn.
- Non-starchy vegetables such as leafy greens, and everything from asparagus to zucchini.
- Beans and legumes like lentils, kidney beans, and chickpeas.

What About Mediterranean Dishes Served with Pasta?

Pasta is often considered to be high in starch, but there are other factors to consider.

Starch molecules in pasta are so tightly packed that only about half is rapidly digested when the pasta is cooked al dente or slightly firm. Cooking time and the thickness of the pasta greatly affects the glycemic index.

Additionally, when some cooked starches, such as certain types of potatoes and rice, are cooked and cooled, a small percentage of the starch takes longer to digest because they become more resistant starches.

Pasta stir-fried with fresh vegetables, and beans is very healthy and lean.

Again, I have seen the weird psychology from people who don't want to change their belief system because they get their nutrition info from watching a small glimpse of a news piece. I have known people who will avoid pasta because they watched a segment on the news from a doctor or other health practitioner explaining how unhealthy pasta is. This same person will avoid the plate of stir-fried veggies with pasta or rice because he believes it is fattening, but he will eat fast-food, pizza, beer, chips, fried chicken wings, and meats.

Can I Have Dessert?

Most people with IBS or IBD do not have problems with plain refined sugars like white or brown baking sugar. Safe dessert recipes depend on a low fat, dairy-free foundation. For those that are diabetic it may be best to skip sugary desserts altogether.

Should I Drink Meal Replacement Drinks or Protein Powders?

First, I believe real food is always better than anything isolated, concentrated, or synthetic. It is best to get vitamins and minerals from a wide variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, and nuts. There are many nutrients in whole foods that cannot be extracted into pills or powders.

Second, vitamins, minerals, protein powders, meal replacements, and protein bars may have ingredients that make IBD or IBS worse. You will need to read the labels, and trust that they are transparent.

There could be artificial sweeteners, colors, growth factors, dairy proteins like whey or casein, milk fat, caffeine, artificial flavors, preservatives, emulsifiers, thickeners, inulin, fructose, corn syrup, corn, soy, soy isolates, polyunsaturated oils like soy, corn, canola, palm, peanut oil, etc.

Third, there is evidence that many protein powders have high concentration levels of heavy metals such as mercury and lead. Plant protein powders from pea, hemp, and others are worse than those from animal products like whey. Heavy metals are naturally occurring in the soil,

It's All About Your Gut

and the plants absorb them. When the proteins are concentrated and isolated from the other plant macronutrients the metals become even more concentrated.

You can find out which brands are the best and which are the worst by going to consumer reports. Plants naturally absorb what is in the soil. Naturally occurring heavy metals become even more concentrated when making concentrated powders of single ingredients, and plants.

Even if a certified organic product claims to be organic, organic fertilizers must be tested for having heavy metals in them.

According to a study done by the Clean Label Project, out of the 134 of the top-selling protein powder products tested, many of those protein powders tested for having high levels of toxins, including heavy metals. They detected 70% of protein powders with lead in it, 74% detected levels of cadmium, and 55% detected levels of BPA (which is used to make plastic). Arsenic was also detected in these protein powders.

See <https://www.eatthis.com/scary-hidden-ingredient-protein-powder/>

Should I Take Nutritional Supplements like Vitamins, Minerals, Amino Acids?

First, read the entry above about protein powders and meal replacements drinks. I would say the same thing that it is always best to get your vitamins and minerals from real whole food.

Nature intended for you to consume food in WHOLE form because all the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and enzymes together work synergistically to give your body the nutrition it requires for optimal health.

Your body only absorbs a small percentage of an isolated form of a vitamin and/or mineral and it utilizes even less, so the bioavailability is greatly affected. You get the best bioavailability in whole food form.

There is evidence that many supplements stalked on shelves do not contain the ingredients, nor to the amount stated on their labels. You can read about this here <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/herbal-supplements-targeted-by-new-york-attorney-general/>.

Plus, most of them are not digested or bio-available making them useless. Brett Seagrott in his article, “The Bioavailability of Nutritional Supplements”, writes, “Some experts believe that due to damage from stomach acid only 10-15% of the active ingredients actually get into the blood stream. Other experts would of course disagree. More research is needed!”

He also states, “High quality supplements are formulated to allow much higher levels of bio-availability than cheaper, mass produced vitamin and mineral products. This is because they are science based and use more sophisticated manufacturing processes. This is one reason why they cost more (but work better!)”. You can read this article here <https://www.nutritional-supplement-truths.com/bioavailability-of-nutritional-supplements.html>. If you have a brand that you trust, is transparent, and is bio-available then there are times that supplementation can really help.

Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle

- Pregnant women, and even women who might want to get pregnant, should be taking folic acid supplements to help prevent serious birth defects in their babies.
- People over 50 years of age can benefit from B12 supplementation sublingually or injected because absorption of this vitamin in the digestive tract becomes less efficient with age. You cannot absorb Vitamin B12 from a tablet or pill.
- HIV-positive patients should take a multivitamin with vitamin C, zinc, vitamin D to boost immunity and slow the rate of disease progression.
- If you are found to have iron deficiency anemia you would need to take an iron supplement along with vitamin C rich foods to aid in absorption.
- It has been shown that vitamin D3 supplementation helps with absorption of calcium needed for healthy bones and teeth, seasonal affect disorder, D-3 may help with reducing the likelihood of skin, breast, and colon cancers, among several others though the research is inconclusive. Recently, it has been thought to help prevent complications of Covid-19.
- Digestive enzymes for people with gastrointestinal disorders like IBD and IBS because they often lack necessary enzymes to digest food.
- Probiotics can be beneficial to re-introduce a healthy gut flora to those with difficulty breaking down fiber. A healthy gut microbiome has been shown to promote a healthy immune system too.

Will I be Getting Enough Protein if I Don't Add Protein Powders into My Smoothies or Water?

For most people, the answer is YES! Protein deficiency is extremely rare in developed countries, even for those on strict vegan diets. Most Americans get plenty of protein. What is important is a balance between proteins and carbs in your meals.

People who don't get enough usually have an overall poor diet and are not consuming enough calories. Certain populations are more at risk such as the elderly and people with cancer because they may have trouble eating as much protein and calories as they need.

Severe malnutrition from lack of protein is called kwashiorkor, and a hallmark sign is the bloated belly, and stunted growth in children. It's more common in developing countries, especially with children, or after a natural disaster.

Other signs of protein deficiency are muscle wasting, muscle fatigue, tiredness, skin, hair and nail problems, edema in hands and feet, weak bones and fractures, fatty liver (Fatty liver is a common condition in obese people, as well as those who consume a lot of alcohol, the reason why it occurs in people with protein deficiency as well is unclear), increased severity of infections, more difficulty healing, lower immune response, increased appetite in mild forms, and decreased appetite in more severe forms. These signs can also be from other disorders.

If you have signs of protein deficiency have your blood tested to be sure before you start packing in the protein because consuming too much dietary protein can do more harm than good.

It's All About Your Gut

How much should the average person eat per day depends upon age, and activity level. Athletes may need more. Children need more protein necessary for growth.

The Recommended Dietary Allowance for protein intake is 46 grams per day for women and 56 grams for men.

In the example below you can see that the goal is easily met with a total of 50 to 53 grams.

Most people eat a lot more than this so I am sure the protein totals will be much more.

-an egg for breakfast (6 grams)

-6 ounces of plain Greek yogurt at lunch (18 grams)

-a handful of nuts for a snack (4–7 grams)

-a cup of milk (8 grams) and 2 ounces of cooked chicken for dinner (14 grams).

Too much protein has been linked to serious health issues including heart disease, cancer, strokes, hypertension, and osteoporosis.

Popular ingredients for blending healthy smoothies may include a variety of fruits, veggies, leafy greens, nuts, water, milk-based product, legumes, oats, or nut milk. If adding kefir, yogurt, or milk you might see that there is protein already in those ingredients. The other plant-based ingredients have protein too!

What is interesting is that many people are using a plant-based protein powder from hemp, soy, or pea instead of milk-based proteins casein from whey.

Why the Need for Extra Protein?

Does it make sense to add extra protein when we are drinking green smoothies to help our body detox from a diet too rich in proteins, fats, and sugars?

Due to the advertising hype of the meat industry, and special diet proponents like Paleo and Atkins we can't let go of the belief that we need more protein. The advertising hype also began with the body building industry, weightlifting, and gyms. Protein became synonymous with healthy.

We forget why we are blending green drinks in the first place and wreck it by adding protein powders, a processed food!

If you would like to learn more, I like an explanation I found.

Read Johanna's Green Reset blog, May 31, 2012, where she explains how green smoothies are naturally rich in protein. She writes, "They are chock full of amino acids because greens contain lots of amino acids. Your body uses these amino acids to produce protein. The more greens you eat, the more amino acids that you provide your body with."

Dr. Michele Arnold-Pirtle

Dark green leafy vegetables contain similar or larger amounts of amino acids than the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA).

However, because of the confusion between vegetables (roots) and greens, we are told that vegetables, including greens, are a poor source of amino acids.

Dr. Joel Fuhrman wrote in his book, *Eat to Live*, “Even physicians and dietitians... are surprised to learn that ... when you eat large quantities of green vegetables, you receive a considerable amount of protein.”

Go to [How Much Protein Do We Really Need?](http://HowMuchProteinDoWeReallyNeed.com) | [Green Smoothie Recipes That Rock!](http://GreenSmoothieRecipesThatRock.com) (green-reset.com).

Should I Avoid Milk and Dairy?

Milk, especially cow's milk can be a trigger for IBS, and IBD. Often it is the lactose, a type of sugar that is difficult to digest if you lack the enzyme lactase.

Some fermented milk-based foods like yogurt and kefir can be helpful for some people with lactose intolerance. The high probiotic content aids in the digestion.

A milk allergy is an allergy to the protein casein, and whey. Individuals who have an allergy to milk should always avoid milk and milk-based foods.

If milk, or yogurt do not cause problems for you, then you can eat them in moderation once your gut is healed.

Should I Avoid Fat?

Fat is a trigger for IBS, and IBD. Foods with difficult to digest proteins, and fat are red meats, dairy, egg yolks, fried foods. If you have developed a tolerance level with these foods, you can slowly add them in. I would recommend eating them in moderation with pulsing them in and out of your diet to avoid a dependency as well toxic triggers.

Good Luck on Your Healing Journey!

I have tried to answer as many questions as possible about the Acupuncturist's Essential Gut diet to achieve a healthy gut and healthy body.

I am sure there may be more unanswered questions. If so, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at: Email: michele@acupuncturecenterinc.com

Facebook page: @livingwelldrnichele.

Holistic health courses, workshops, and community: www.livingwelldrnichele.com

Acupuncture Clinic in Poway, CA: www.acupuncturecenterinc.com

Examples of single oils not ingestible are Wintergreen, Cedar Wood, Arborvitae, Cypress, Birch, Black Spruce, Blue Tansy, Citronella, Eucalyptus, Jasmine, Lemon Eucalyptus, Magnolia, Manuka, Neroli, Ravensara, Rose, Spikenard, White Fir, Douglas fir, or Siberian fir.

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Congee, An Asian Healing Porridge



What is it?

Congee is eaten throughout China as a thin soup or thicker gruel.

Generally, you add 3-6 times the amount of liquid to rice, depending on the desired thickness. I use medium or long grain rice, but you can also use short grain. It takes about 1 cup rice to 6 cups or 9 cups liquid. You can always add more liquid if you need to. Use less if you prefer it thicker.

How to Cook It

Traditionally water is used, but for more flavor you can use broth. You can also use any other grain besides rice. Ideally, you would cook the congee for up to 4-6 hours on low heat; a crockpot works very well for congees. It is said that the longer a congee cooks the “more powerful” it becomes. However, you may find that 25-45 minutes is enough. It should be the consistency of oatmeal, where the rice is mush, and has completely broken down.

Benefits

A congee is easily digested, and the nutrients are easily assimilated, thus it fortifies the blood, and Qi- energy, strengthens the Spleen-pancreas digestive-Qi, harmonizes digestion, is moistening, cooling, and nourishing.

If you have difficulty digesting fiber, cooking white rice in this way will make it very easy to digest. With weak digestive fire white rice is best. Do not substitute with brown rice until your symptoms have resolved and your digestion is strong. Wild rice is very sturdy, and generally is not cooked as a congee. Wild rice is for people with strong digestion.

When moving from low fiber to higher fiber foods remember to gradually introduce them to minimize digestive upset. After a few days or weeks your body will adjust.

The liquid can be strained to drink as a supplement for infants or for those with serious illness.

It's All About Your Gut

By itself, rice cooked with water is very bland. This is best for infants, when ill or recuperating from illness or surgery.

Other desired therapeutic benefits for food therapy can be achieved by the addition of appropriate vegetables, grains, meats, or herbs. It can be made with foods for their cooling effects or more warming effects.

How to Eat?

Start out with a small 1/4-cup portion of the new food. Continue to gradually increase to 1-2 cups according to your tolerance level.

How to Store It

It can stay refrigerated for a few days. If it thickens while in the refrigerator, add an appropriate amount of broth or water when reheating.

Flavorings and Toppings

The addition of garnishes or toppings add color, texture, and taste. Explore different toppings once you have some improvement in your symptoms with stronger digestive fire. Try some toppings that you can tolerate. You may still have some difficulty digesting foods very high in fiber or fat. In that case, and for those experiencing urgency and frequency of bowel movements, pain, or patients who have recently been hospitalized eat a plain congee without toppings. At this stage, you may not be able to tolerate many foods. In particular, the texture of the food is important. This phase emphasizes soft-cooked or pureed food using a blender, depending on your personal tolerance. When you are ready you can try hard boiled eggs, mussels, clams, nuts, seeds, fried shallots, fresh herbs, cilantro, basil, green onion, chive, celery, fish sauce, chili paste, a drizzle of tamari, or sesame oil. It can be seasoned with white or black pepper, sea salt, ginger slices, minced garlic, sea vegetables, pickled greens, or pickled vegetables. For breakfast, or a sweeter taste try cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, red dates, goji berries, fresh blue berries, maple syrup, barley, or rice malt. You can choose to sauté garlic, ginger and mushrooms in olive, sesame, or avocado oil until mushrooms have softened before adding the rice and liquid. Stir in greens and other quick cooking vegetables in the last hour or minutes of cooking time.

Recipe

Step 1. Add 1 Cup organic white rice to pot.



Step 2. Add about 3X the amount of water than regular cooking rice. This is about 6-7 Cups of cold water.

Step 3. Add a pinch of sea salt if desired.

Step 4. Add 1-2 Cardamom pods if desired. Cardamom helps mitigate, gas, bloating, acid reflux, leaky gut, and aids in regulating blood sugar levels as well as blood pressure. Alternative is to add a teaspoon of baking soda.



Step 5. In the slow cooker it takes about 4 hours on high. Check occasionally to add water if it's getting too thick. On the stove top this can take about 25 minutes, to 45 minutes or up to 1 hour on low. It depends upon the amount of rice, water, and temperature of flame.

Step 6. The rice will be mushy when finished. With the consistency like oatmeal. Rice congee is now ready to eat!



Step 7. Add toppings if desired. Try organic 100% maple syrup, honey, walnuts, black berries, goji berries, hemp seeds, or a drop of lemon or cinnamon essential oil.

RICE OR BARLEY WATER: Add a handful of barley or white rice to a pan A

