



# Leaky gut

Leaky gut is typically seen as a mystical thing that not many traditional physicians recognize. I disagree. There are several studies that describe the problem and discuss how certain health conditions can occur because of it.

## So what is leaky gut?

Basically leaky gut is when the cells in the lining of your intestines (which are normally tightly closed) spread apart due to inflammation from a lifelong accumulation of medications, stress and poor food choices. In a healthy gut, toxins, bacteria, food, whatever, typically passes through without getting access to your blood stream. In a leaky gut those toxins, food proteins, bacteria, etc get direct access to your blood stream and your immune system. Your immune system recognizes these as foreign and does what it does, fights them with an immune response. Immune responses are necessary with infections but if your immune system is constantly being activated because of "regular" stuff instigating it, bodily inflammation can become rampant. Chronic inflammation can cause/ exacerbate many diseases; diabetes, autoimmune conditions like Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, thyroid issues, heart disease, atherosclerosis, the list goes on and on.

Many times people have underlying food sensitivities that can cause bigger problems with a leaky gut. Say you love green peas, you've eaten them your whole life. They are great with meatloaf and mashed potatoes. They're healthy, right? Well, if you have a leaky gut, that pea protein can be shuttled directly into your bloodstream between the intestinal cells instead of going through the correct process of absorption for your body to use. So that normal protein that hasn't bothered you your whole life can now become an issue to your immune system. Your immune system sees that protein in a different form and yells "stranger danger!" and overreacts by spilling inflammatory factors at it to combat the perceived invader. Chronic systemic inflammation then goes for the weakest link in your body chain. If your thyroid is weakest you get thyroid disease, your gut you get conditions like IBS or Crohn's, your heart and blood vessels you get atherosclerosis, your joints you get arthritis, your pancreas you get diabetes....on and on.

So, "How did I get a leaky gut?", you say. Well that one is not so easy to answer because there are various factors that can lead to it. One is the consumption of a nutrient poor diet, lack of fresh fruits and vegetables, and/or a lack of quality meats without hormones. Other causes can be from exposures to toxins (which are in everything from our deodorant to shampoo to preservatives in our food, etc). Also, medications can lead to a leaky gut. Many times it is an accumulation of lifetime exposures to all of these factors that gradually leads to illness, not feeling your best, being tired all the time, brain fog, etc.

### **So now what?**

To help a leaky gut, you need to start consuming "real" food. Not something you can reheat out of a package. You need to concentrate on organic fruits and vegetables if possible. There are no pesticides and other chemicals on that produce. Eat grass fed, wild caught, free range sources of meat. They don't have the antibiotics and hormones most grocery store meats have. Go on a mission to discover if you have any underlying food allergies/ sensitivities. The most common foods people are sensitive to include peanuts, corn, soy, wheat/gluten, dairy, eggs and artificial sweeteners. Eliminate them all for 28 days and then add them back one at a time for a week each and see how you feel. If you have issues, then you are probably sensitive to that food and you should completely eliminate it from your diet. Although sugar is not a highly allergenic food it is a highly addictive food and steps should be taken to minimize sugar. Sugar is in EVERYTHING and there are a million different names for it. Other things you can do is minimize/eliminate the amount of medicines you take. I'm not talking about prescriptions from your MD, but things like those couple of ibuprofen when your back is a little stiff from too much yard work, that allergy medicine when you feel just a little stopped up, that bit of cough syrup when you get that tickle in your throat. You know the stuff that really doesn't do much to help your discomfort but you take it anyway to be doing SOMETHING. Those meds come with a price and usually it's the death of the good bacteria in your gut and a stressor on your detoxification systems in the liver and kidneys. If they are overworked, they don't work as well when you really need them.

Plain water is a huge help to your entire body. Without adequate hydration, the inflammatory factors can hang around and your body can not run optimally, it limps along. So drink half your body weight in ounces of water a day.

Also, you need to reinoculate your gut with good bacteria. Usually that can be accomplished with a good probiotic and eating "clean".

Bottom line summary is leaky gut can make you sick. You have to be good to yourself and eat good quality food. It's best to not take any extra medication unless it is prescribed by a doctor. Sometimes you can even get rid of prescription meds once your body is humming along. Be a diet detective and do an elimination diet searching for hidden, underlying food sensitivities that can make the problem worse. This is hard to do, but you can do anything for 28 days and you owe it to yourself to feel good, all the time. Add a good quality probiotic, usually the more bacteria per enterically coated capsule the better.

The whole healing protocol can be remembered by the 4 R's : remove, replace, reinoculate, repair. Remove the stress and offending foods. Replace the garbage, processed, high sugar, preservative filled food for high quality food to replenish the nutrients lacking. Reinoculate your gut with good bacteria that has been lost from medications, stress, bad food, and environmental toxins. Repair your intestinal cells and make them less permeable and "leaky" with healthy foods to which you are not sensitive. Supplement with L-Glutamine, the preferred food of gut cells, while healing. Now it's Go Time! Make the changes to be your best.