

A Warm Belly Is a Happy Belly



Cumin, Coriander, and Fennel Tea

Have you ever been in the middle of exercising and felt that your belly was cold and clammy? The reason is that precious energy has been drawn away from the digestive system, which includes major organs that lie inside our torso, and is being directed to the muscles and other parts of the body involved in exercising.

Roughly 60% of our daily energy goes towards digestion. That's a lot, wouldn't you agree?

Unfortunately, so many of us multi-task while eating, we rush through meals, eat at the wrong time, or skip meals altogether. We really make it tough for our digestive system to work properly.

When it come to the process of digestion, a warm belly is a happy belly.

We've all heard the term "digestive fire". The word for this fire in [Ayurveda](#) is "[Agni](#)". It rules the digestive and metabolic processes in the body and is an extremely important energy.

The [production of hydrochloric acid](#) in our stomach is key. Someone who is adequately producing enough of this acid will feel a slight warmth in their belly at mealtime.

We may take our digestive system for granted, but Ayurveda places an extreme amount of importance on it. In fact, Ayurveda teaches that roughly 80% of all illnesses derive from digestion problems.

Food that isn't properly digested and assimilated into the body creates a substance called "[ama](#)" which is a toxic residue that travels throughout the body wreaking havoc and setting us up for a host of health problems.

No matter what health complaint you bring to an Ayurvedic practitioner, his or her first question will almost always be "How's your digestion?".

The intelligence of our body knows that it needs to stoke the fire before a meal so that it can be properly digested.

Hunger is key to this process. We should feel hungry before a meal. If we're not hungry, then the body hasn't been able to adequately stoke the fire. Given the lifestyle many of us lead in the modern world, our agni often needs extra help.

Here are a few well-known Ayurvedic tips to help warm your belly before eating

- Keep a regular mealtime, as much as possible. The body loves routine
- Our digestive fire is strongest around noon. Eat your biggest meal of the day at this time
- Avoid drinking cold liquids, especially before, during, and after meals – they literally “put out the fire”
- $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. before meals, drink a glass of warm water, with or without lemon and/or ginger. This will hydrate the stomach lining and aid the body in the production of proper amounts of hydrochloric acid
- If your appetite is low, or you're experiencing digestive issues, chew a little slice of ginger with some sea salt, lemon juice (and honey, if desired) before meals. Just thinking about ginger will likely make you salivate, which is a good sign!
- Add more spices to your meals (unless your [Pitta](#) is high). Cumin, Coriander, and Fennel ([CCF](#)) tea is a famous Ayurvedic digestive blend. Sip it before, during or after meals. Turmeric and cardamom are also excellent spices for digestion. Add them to food or make a tea
- Don't eat another meal before you've adequately digested the last one

A low appetite is typical during the spring ([Kapha Season](#)). [Kapha](#), by nature, is slow, heavy, damp, and cold. Not exactly qualities that stoke a fire. Kapha-types (or those

experiencing a Kapha imbalance) often struggle with not feeling hungry at the right time. They generally need to spice things up quite a bit to heat up their bellies.

Again, the intelligence of our body is letting us know that now is not the time for eating heavy foods (like we need in winter) but rather lighter foods that are more easily digested. Click [here](#) for a Kapha-pacifying diet.

Remember, a warm belly is a happy belly!

Much love,
Barbara

A few relevant articles:

[The Importance of Agni](#)

[A Simplified Three-Day Cleanse](#)

[Ama: The Antithesis of Agni](#)

About the Author

Barbara Sinclair is a weekly Writer for CLN. She is an artist and holistic health practitioner with a passion for Ayurveda, the ancient mind/body system of health and longevity. Barbara was able to heal herself from years of fibromyalgia, a chronic pain condition, by adopting an Ayurvedic lifestyle. You can learn more about her by visiting her website barbarasinclair.com. Barbara posts a new article every Wednesday morning on CLN. To read her former articles, click [here](#).

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