

# CHEWING

## Social Eating Dangers

With the change of seasons well underway we start to be able to expand our food horizons.

Along with the warmer weather comes a natural shift to engaging in more social activities. We go out to eat more and there starts to be a wider variety of seasonal food available.

There is a definite rise in social eating compared to the last few months. We're ready to leave our self-imposed hibernation to reconnect with our social groups.

There are many positives attached to that:

- reconnecting with support networks
- engaging in activities outside of the house
- laughing
- trying new food dishes

There can also be some very real downsides, including:

- heartburn
- indigestion
- constipation
- diarrhea
- upset stomach

We're busy catching up with friends or family. We're gulping down the food and drink. We're laughing and talking and so we forget the first, most important rule of eating – **CHEWING**.

It sounds almost a little too simple and silly to be true but for a lot of people, chewing food thoroughly can solve their digestive complaints.

Digestion begins in the mouth.

Not only mechanical breakdown of food but also by an enzyme found only in our saliva. This starts the chemical breakdown. This means by not chewing we are missing out on the first 2 critical



steps of breaking food down.

Swallowing improperly chewed food can lead to any and all of the following:

- heartburn
- indigestion
- constipation
- diarrhea
- upset stomach

Proper chewing technique:

- close your mouth
- chew without swallowing until the food is the consistency of a purée (this will feel weird and unnatural at first because we are so used to not chewing well)
- if you're having trouble, imagine that you're chewing your food well enough to feed to a baby

Then you can swallow.

It sounds easy but this can actually be quite a tough adjustment to make. More attention will need to be focused on the act and it will take a little longer to eat, but it's well worth the effort. You might also notice a slight aching in your jaw as the muscles get used to doing their job. If it persists see your healthcare practitioner.

Challenge yourself to try chewing properly for 2 weeks and see what happens, you might be amazed!

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