GOODBYE PCOS BLOAT

Supercharged Gut Health Protocol

SUPERCHARGED GUT HEALTH Protocol

Inflammation in your gut lining can cause uncomfortable symptoms like bloating, alternating stool patterns (constipation and diarrhoea), gas and burping. This also leads to poor digestion and absorption of nutrients from foods which can impact our production of hormones, increase insulin resistance and weight gain. This protocol will help to reduce inflammation in your gastrointestinal tract, balance your gut microbiome (good and bad bugs) and improve your breakdown of food so you can be free of the PCOS bloat! We'll work in three steps from the top to the bottom of your digestive system.

Step 1

LIGHT YOUR DIGESTIVE FIRES

Many women with PCOS suffer from low stomach acid, particularly if you have a history of taking the pill. This is a common cause of bloating and indigestion. Food should arrive in your stomach and be easily digested by the high levels of stomach acid. With low stomach acid, food sits undigested in your stomach and begins to ferment, causing gas and belching.

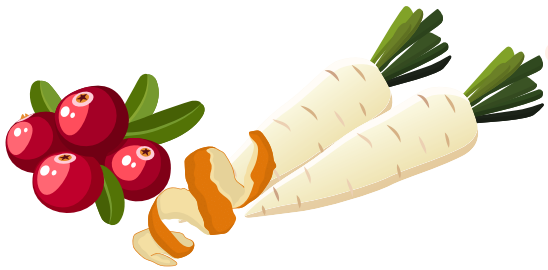
1. Start the day with a small glass of water with the juice of half a lemon or 1 tsp of apple cider vinegar - Drinking this 5-10 minutes before your first meal of the day triggers your stomach to start releasing digestive enzymes and stomach acid in preparation for food. This means that when you start eating your stomach is already primed for digestion and will have an easier time assimilating nutrients in this first stage of food breakdown. Over time if you feel good doing this, you can work up to a full lemon or 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar.

2. Incorporate 'bitter' foods - Foods that stimulate the bitter receptors on the tongue help to stimulate secretion of digestive juices that enhance our breakdown of food and assimilation of nutrients. Great sources of bitter foods to try are:

- Rocket (arugula)
- Dandelion greens
- Brussel's sprouts
- Green tea
- Very dark chocolate and cacao
- Kale
- Bitter melon
- Cabbage



- Radishes
- Citrus peel (e.g. lemon rind)
- Unsweetened cranberries



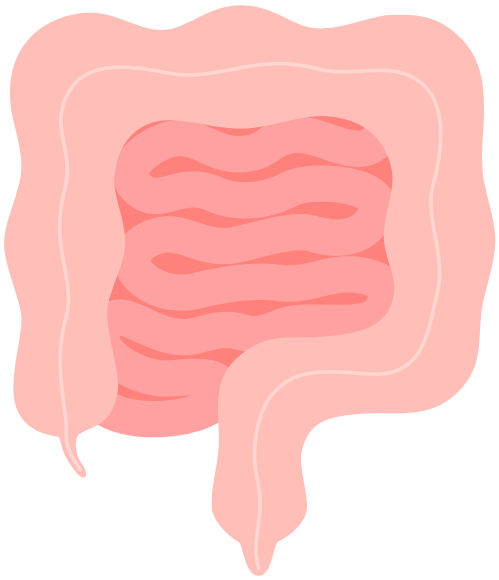
3. CHEW your food - Think about it like this: the only place your digestive tract has teeth is in your mouth! This means if you don't chew your food well before swallowing you are putting a major strain on the remainder of the process of digestion. This can cause bloating, heartburn and stomach pain. Aim to chew each mouthful 20-30 times before swallowing.

4. Consider a short course of digestive enzymes - If you are someone who struggles with producing enough stomach acid and breaking down your food (chronic bloating or stomach pain soon after eating), consider a 4-6-week treatment with digestive enzymes to take the load of your system whilst you work on deeper gut healing. I recommend Thorne Research Plantizyme

5. Avoid NSAIDs where possible such as Ibuprofen as these medications directly weaken your stomach lining and can contribute to ulcer formation. Try natural anti-inflammatories like turmeric or curcumin and ginger to reduce pain and inflammation.

Step 2

HEAL YOUR GUT LINING



In PCOS, chronic inflammation causes damage to the gut lining, weakening the cells and allowing gaps to form. This is known as intestinal permeability. These gaps allow small particles of food and bacteria to escape the digestive tract and enter the bloodstream, triggering an immune response. This further contributes to inflammation, insulin resistance, higher levels of androgens and problems with ovulation. Reducing inflammatory foods and providing nutrients to heal your gut lining will greatly reduce digestive issues and PCOS symptoms.

1. Eliminate inflammatory foods from your diet - excess refined sugar, cow's dairy, alcohol, processed and deep-fried foods and oils contribute to inflammation in the body. Conventionally raised meats are also associated with inflammation because of their high omega 6 content and the use of antibiotics and other hormones in their production. Opt for grass fed and organic animal products where possible and choose anti-inflammatory oils like olive oil, coconut oil, ghee and avocado

Step 2

HEAL YOUR GUT LINING

2. Introduce bone broth - Make your own bone broth or buy from a trusted provider. It is a digestive aid and helps rebuild the gut by providing nutrients that feed the cells lining the gut. Aim for 1 cup daily whilst rebuilding your gut. (I've included my favorite recipe below!)

3. Collagen - this is a component of bone broth that you can enjoy in addition to, or instead of, bone broth. It comes as a tasteless, dissolvable powder which can be added to hot or cold foods. 1 tablespoon once daily is a good dose. I recommend Inner Beauty Collagen Powder. Try adding to your smoothie, tea or a mug of bone broth.

4. Introduce turmeric - the active ingredient in turmeric – curcumin – is a great natural anti-inflammatory agent which helps to reduce pelvic pain, migraines and joint pain, and also works to reduce the gastrointestinal inflammation that causes bloating and an irritated stomach. You can take a high-quality turmeric or curcumin supplement. I recommend Anti-Inflame + Mood.

Step 3

SUPPORT BACTERIA BALANCE

Research shows that women with PCOS have fewer healthy gut bacteria and more unhealthy bacteria than the general population. This microbiome dysbiosis directly contributes to insulin resistance, weight gain and metabolic disorders. Use of antibiotics, stress, poor diet and illness can further imbalance our microbiome over time. Supporting the growth of beneficial bacteria and considering a probiotic where necessary will help to re-establish this microbiome balance.

1. Get your fibre in - particularly if your bowels are moving slowly, aim for 35-45 grams of fibre daily. This means leaving skin on vegetables and fruits, and eating plenty of wholegrains and fibrous veg. If you're not sure how much you are getting, use a tracking app like Chronometer to record your food intake for a few days to see where you're at. If you struggle to hit your fibre target, consider a fibre supplement. I have had great success with many of my clients using partially hydrolysed guar gum powder (PHGG). This fibre will not aggravate SIBO or cause bloating as it does not contain FODMAPs and is great for normalising stool patterns (whether too loose or constipated) by bulking out the stool.

If you struggle with constipation or slow transit time, 1 Tbsp of ground flax seeds or chia seeds daily is a great way to meet your fibre needs – try adding this to your smoothies, mix with yoghurt or make a chia pudding. Note – make sure to slowly increase your fibre intake otherwise it may exacerbate bloating and gas symptoms.

Step 3

SUPPORT BACTERIA BALANCE

2. Consume prebiotic resistant starch - prebiotics are fibres from our food that feed our good bacteria. Prebiotic resistant starch can be found in legumes (e.g. lentils, chickpeas), cooked and cooled potatoes, rice and pasta, unripe bananas and green banana flour

3. Try probiotic-rich fermented foods like sauerkraut and kimchi. These foods naturally contain probiotics and are a great source of extra vegetables and fibre in your diet. Go slowly on these – start with just a teaspoon on the side of your meal and gradually increase. If you experience bloating after a few weeks of eating fermented foods, opt for a probiotic instead.

4. Consider a probiotic that contains strains that are specific to your condition, particularly if you don't tolerate fermented foods. There are so many strains available on the market and each strain is useful for different conditions. Talk to your local health food store or natural health care practitioner about which strain is best suited to your symptoms.

5. Drink enough fluids - our digestive system requires plenty of non-caffeinated fluids to lubricate your stool and keep things moving. If you struggle with sluggish bowels, try upping your water and non-caffeinated fluid intake (this includes herbal tea like that spearmint tea you are now having daily!). A good way to estimate your fluid needs is to multiply your weight in kilograms by 30, then drink this amount of fluid in milliliters. For example a 60kg woman needs around 1800mLs, or 1.8L per day (more if you are exercising or sweating a lot).

Extra Tips

If you are still struggling after implementing the three step protocol above, try these extra tips to get things moving:

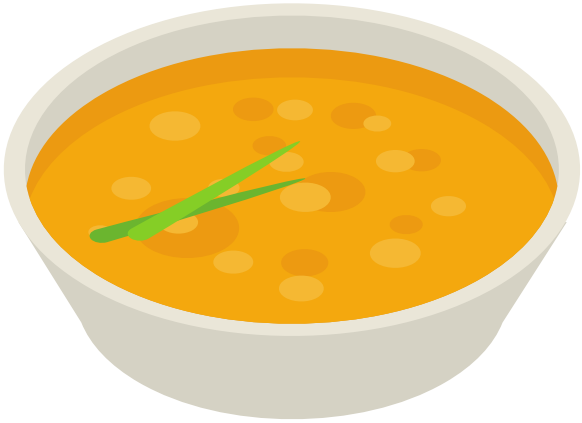
1. **Movement** is important for constipation and sluggish bowels - find a regular exercise routine that you enjoy. Even just a 15-20 minute walk around the block can be helpful to trigger a morning bowel movement.
2. Be mindful of the **impact of stress** on your gut health. Stress has the ability to exacerbate constipation, bloating and loose stools.
3. Make sure you **slowly increase your fibre** intake as a quick increase may exacerbate bloating and symptoms.
4. **Squatty Potty** – The angle created by using Squatty Potty helps your bowels to easily open by mimicking the traditional squatting posture and is particularly useful if you are suffering from constipation. You don't have to buy this brand - any small foot stool will work well.

When to seek extra help?

If you are suffering from severe digestive symptoms (e.g. chronic diarrhea, blood or mucus in your stool, stomach pain/cramping, severe heartburn or nausea) or your symptoms developed suddenly after an infection or overseas travel, I highly recommend consulting a health care practitioner who can assist you individually. In many cases, stool testing and SIBO breath tests can provide valuable insight into the root cause of your symptoms. You will need a qualified practitioner to interpret your results and create an individualized treatment plan.

CHICKEN BONE BROTH

Recipe



Bone broth is an excellent way to support your gut health. It contains amino acids (proteins) such as glutamine and glycine that work to help keep your gut healthy and aid in digestion. Try this simple homemade bone broth recipe. You can simply sip on the bone broth from a cup or you can use it as a base in soups, stews, mash etc.

What you'll need:

- Bones from a whole chicken (organic if possible)
- 2 celery stalks (roughly chopped)
- 2 carrots (roughly chopped)
- 3 cloves garlic (crushed)
- 1 onion (sliced)
- 3 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh herbs (rosemary, thyme, parsley – any you enjoy)

Method:

Slow cooker option

- Place all ingredients in a slow cooker, and fill with water.
- Cook on low for at least 12 hours, up to 24 hours.
- Use a strainer to separate the liquids from the solids

Stovetop Option

- Place the chicken bones into a large saucepan and cover with water.
- Add in celery, carrots, garlic, onion and herbs. Stir in the apple cider vinegar.
- Bring to a low boil and reduce heat to low.
- Partially cover, and simmer for at least 5 hours.
- Strain and store in the refrigerator or freezer.

Important Notes! When bone broth cools in the fridge, it will form a gelatinous consistency. This is normal and a sign that you have cooked the bones long enough to release the healing gelatin and collagen. Once you warm the bone broth again gently on the stove or in the microwave, it will return to a drinkable, liquid consistency. Also, once your bone broth cools, you may notice a solid layer of fat at the top of your jar. This can be removed if you prefer or stirred into the warm broth when heating.