

Leaky gut / Intestinal Permeability

The term “Leaky Gut” is slang for the more formal term “Increased Intestinal Permeability”, which underlies an enormous variety of illnesses and symptoms.

A healthy intestinal lining allows only properly digested fats, proteins, and starches to pass through so that they can be absorbed and used for nutrition. At the same time, the intestinal lining provides a barrier to keep out bad bacteria, foreign substances and large undigested molecules from passing through.

When the intestinal lining is damaged, larger particle size – disease causing bacteria, potentially toxic molecules, and undigested food particles – are allowed to pass directly through the weakened and now permeable cell membrane. The larger unwanted molecules go directly into the bloodstream, activating antibodies and alarm substances (cytokines). The cytokines alert our lymphocytes (white blood cells) to battle the unwanted particles. Oxidants are produced in the battle, causing irritation and inflammation in the digestive system. That is the basis for a condition called increased intestinal permeability or leaky gut syndrome.

We make an intestinal mucus which normally blocks bacteria from moving through the intestinal membrane into other parts of the body, but, when cells are leaking, bacteria passes into the bloodstream and then throughout the body. When intestinal bacteria colonize in other parts of the body it can cause disease. For example, Klebsiella bacteria leaking through the intestinal lining with cause a spinal disease called Ankylosing Spondylitis, or Proteus bacteria causing Rheumatoid Arthritis etc.

How do I find out if I have Leaky Gut?

The best way to determine you intestinal issues are to come in for testing, find out your unique issues and address it with your practitioner.

- Lactose-Mannitol test
- Comprehensive Stool analysis with parasitology
- Food Allergy testing

What causes Leaky Gut?

- Chronic Stress – long term stress changes the immune system’s ability to respond quickly and affects our ability to heal
- Dysbiosis – The presence of a harmful bacteria, molds, parasites
- Environmental Contaminants – daily exposure to hundreds of household and environmental chemicals puts stress on our immune defenses and our body’s ability to repair itself.
- Overconsumption of Alcoholic Beverages – they contain few nutrients but take many nutrients to metabolize
- Poor Food Choices – contribute to an imbalance of good bacteria and improper pH balance
- Use of Medications – use of anti-inflammatory drugs, birth control pills, steroid drugs, chemotherapy will damage the intestinal lining