

# Formulas For The Digestive System

*Nothing is so overrated as sex, and nothing so underrated as a good bowel movement. - Mark Twain*

## **Methods to support a healthy digestive tract include:**

A focus on whole, fresh organic foods is the foundation of a healthy diet. In most cases, raw foods should be a part of every meal. Meals should include lots of green leafy vegetables and a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits. All edible fiber is healthy, but especially focus on fruits and herbs high in water-soluble fibers such as apples or burdock root. Fruits high in a variety of polyphenols also support intestinal health. Polyphenols are available in colorful fruits with a focus on berries.

Healthy fat is important. Butter should be from grass fed, organic animals. Focus on fats high in essential fatty acids. Omega 3 fatty acids are especially important and are low in the western diet. They are found in cold-water fish and are needed to build healthy cell membranes. Since the intestinal cells are constantly recycled, these healthy fats are necessary to build new cell membranes on a daily basis. Other sources of healthy fats such as fresh nuts and seeds are good to include in the diet.

For meat and dairy, focus on healthy meat and milk from grass fed animals. There are many people who can't digest milk. For these people milk can be a source of ill health. Most people who consume milk do better with goat milk and/or fermented milk products such as live yogurt.

Other sources of protein include organic, whole grains and legumes (soaked/soured), which are also a source of fiber and vitamins.

Collagen is very important for intestinal health. It is especially helpful when a person has a leaky, inflamed gut as it is a necessary nutrient for connective tissue repair. Organic bone broth is an excellent source of collagen.

Daily relaxation, meditation or prayer is as important as what you eat in supporting a healthy digestive tract.

Avoid tobacco smoke, simple carbohydrates, inactivity, alcohol in excess, environmental toxins, food sensitivities and bad attitudes.

## **Contraindications:**

There will always be health conditions that require special diets. The suggestions work for a large segment of the population, but not for everyone. Practitioners need to create individual diets for each person they work with.

## **Additional Suggestions:**

Eat unrefined foods grown biodynamically or organically.

Eat in a joyful appreciative mood in an unhurried manner.

Avoid eating when stressed, working, in pain or with an upset stomach.

Bitter foods or herbs should be eaten prior to a meal to aid digestion.

All fluids are best consumed between meals, especially cold water since it slows digestion.

Avoid refined and processed foods, fried foods, additives, food intolerances or allergens.

Nutrients are usually better to procure from food, rather than supplements.

## **WARNING ABOUT USING ANTIPATHOGENIC HERBS**

Some antimicrobial/antifungal/antiparasitic herb/formula/supplements may kill off some of the protective flora in the digestive tract. This is especially true of some of the essential oils. Although antibiotic drugs are more likely to kill beneficial microflora, using antipathogenic herbs long-term or in high doses can be hard on the gut flora in some cases. The effect of herbs/essential oils on normal flora varies between herbs/essential oils and also depends on the dose. Research on essential oils appears to support the idea that antimicrobial essential oils have a selective antibacterial effect with a higher effect on pathogenic bacteria than beneficial flora. Some antimicrobial herbs appear to not bother beneficial bacteria at all. When used correctly and in the right circumstance, they support intestinal health. However, I have seen essential oil consumption cause disruptions of gastrointestinal health in specific cases. I have additionally seen essential oils disrupt healthy skin flora. It is better to support, and nourish the digestive tract, skin, respiratory system etc. to regain health, and only use the strong antipathogenic herbs when absolutely necessary. These herbs and especially the isolated essential oils should always be used with a practitioner who is skilled in their use.

# ANTIFUNGAL/CANDIDA FORMULA

**Paracress** - *Spilanthes acmella* 20-30%

**Pau d' arco** - *Tabebuia impetiginosa* 20-30%

**Usnea** - *Usnea spp* 15-25%

**Oregon grape** - *Mahonia spp.* 15-20%

**Thyme** - *Thymus vulgaris* 5-10%

**Oregano** - *Origanum vulgare* 5-10%

Two-four drops of either Tea Tree essential oil or oregano essential oil may be added for each ounce of tincture formula for more stubborn cases. Make sure to shake the bottle before taking a dose if essential oils are included in the formula.

## **Actions:**

The herbs in this formula are anti-fungal and most are immunomodulating.

## **Indications:**

This formula is used in fungal infections of the mouth, intestines, anus, vagina, skin and other areas with fungal irritation. It is specific for *Candida albicans*, *Tinea corporis* (ringworm), *Tinea pedis* (athlete's foot) and *Tinea cruris* (jock itch).

## *Acute Dosing*

*Tincture:* 20-60 drops in a little water 3-4 times per day.

*Tea:* 2 teaspoons of herb in one cup of water 3-4 times per day.

*Topical:* I would suggest Tea Tree Essential Oil Salve if you want a topical application although the tincture or tea can be used topically.

*Vaginal Douche:* Make a 32 oz tea. Douche once a day for 7 days. Wait a few days and repeat if necessary. Do not repeat more than 3 times. Discontinue use if there is any irritation. An alternative douche can be made with live yogurt. It can be helpful to use live yogurt on the 8<sup>th</sup> day after the herbal douche is done or a vinegar douche diluted appropriately with clean water. Both will help support a healthy acid environment in the vaginal canal. Yogurt adds beneficial flora.

## **Contraindications, cautions and words of wisdom:**

If using externally, discontinue if skin irritation develops. If the fungus continues to spread or if there is high or persistent fever, consult a qualified health care practitioner. All antifungal/antimicrobial formulas should be used short term for less than one month, unless advised differently under the care of a qualified health care practitioner.

## **Adjunct Therapies To Consider:**

If a fungal vaginitis is present consider [“Vaginal Douche” vinegar](#) formula.

External fungal infections are often indicative of internal digestive tract dysbiosis.

An anticandidal diet is necessary for cases that are not quickly remedied.

Support the immune system with a healthy diet and supplementary vitamins and minerals if necessary.

For external use, see [Tea Tree Antifungal Salve](#)

If there are repeat infections, look for health conditions, lifestyle factors or environmental factors that might predispose the individual to fungal growth. This would include diabetes, systemic use of antibiotics, pregnancy, older age, immunodeficiency, hypothyroidism, zinc deficiency and environmental toxins that affect the immune system such as seen with many mycotoxins.

### **Profiles of herbs used in this formula:**

**Paracress**, *Spilanthes acmella* is used in this formula for its anti-fungal activity and immune system support.

**Pau d’ arco**, *Tabebuia impetiginosa* is an anti-fungal herb with a long history of both internal and external use for fungal infections. It is also an immune modulator.

**Usnea**, *Usnea spp.* is a well-known anti-fungal herb. It is to be used with serious fungal or bacterial infections.

**Oregon grape root bark**, *Mahonia spp.* is an effective anti-fungal and immunomodulating agent. It contains the alkaloid, berberine, also found in goldenseal and gold thread. Berberine has been shown to have strong anti-microbial effects against bacteria, yeast and protozoa. It additionally stimulates normal digestion and tones the gastric system when used in small amounts. Diabetics often have issues with fungal infections. This herb both lowers blood sugar as well as offering anti-fungal activity.

**Thyme**, *Thymus vulgaris* is a strong anti-fungal herb.

**Oregano**, *Origanum vulgare*, is antifungal, antiviral and antibacterial.



**Usnea**

**Oregon grape**

**Paracress**



**Fennel**

**Thyme**

**Oregano**



**Chamomile**

**Geranium**

**Wormwood**

# SIBO - Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth

## Formula/Dysbiosis Formula

**Gold thread/Yellow root** - *Coptis chinensis* 30-40% - Can also substitute *Phellodendron amurense* or good quality *Mahonia spp.* - Oregon grape. An isolated berberine product can be combined with one or more of these herbs as a base also.

**Elecampane** - *Inula helenium* 15-20%

**Ginger** - *Zingiber officinale* 15-20%

**Baikal** - *Scutellaria baicalensis* 15-20%

**Cinnamon** - *Cinnamomum verum* 3-5%

**Cardamom** - *Elettaria cardamomum* 3-5%

**Tip:** In my opinion what people call SIBO is often due to toxins decreasing digestive juices or other causes of decreased stomach acid, pancreatic enzymes and bile. It can also be related to food intolerances, as well as other issues that are better addressed with support and nourishment rather than the use of antimicrobials. There are times where these very issues mentioned, or other issues such as food poisoning, drug side effects, surgeries, or a host of other causes can instigate a chronic situation with “commensal” organism overgrowth and movement upward through the small bowel. In addition, a general dysbiosis can result besides SIBO. A slowed migrating motor complex is a main feature of SIBO and needs to be addressed.

Treating SIBO and decreasing recurrence should focus on the causes (slightly different in each person) and using antipathogenic formulas only when necessary. Combining physical manipulation of the sphincter of oddi, bile and pancreatic ducts, prokinetic herbs to stimulate the migrating motor complex, herbs to stimulate gastric juices, pancreatic enzymes and bile production/flow, a low carbohydrate diet and removal of food intolerances are usually key to treating SIBO. Consider supplementing HCL, pepsin, bile or pancreatic enzymes if deficient, correct sympathetic dominance and quiet dorsal vagal over-activity, support ventral vagal social nervous system and treat any other causes or diseases that contributed to SIBO. Many, but not all food intolerances disappear when the gut is healed. When SIBO is no longer an issue, maintenance of gastrointestinal health is important to make sure SIBO does not reoccur. In some cases, there may be overgrowth of other “commensal” organisms besides bacteria, such as yeast (SIFO).

Overgrowth of commensal organisms invading areas of the small intestine where they are not usually found and dysbiosis in the large intestine are not mainstream ideas in medicine. Even if you don't agree with these ideas, many people have been helped by treatments used for SIBO. This is just one of a variety of formulas I have used. If there is a biofilm, this will not work and you will need to see the section below on “digestive system biofilm buster”.

**Actions:**

This is a formula that enhances motility of the gastrointestinal tract, stimulates the bile production and release of bile and digestive juices in general, decreases inflammation and provides antioxidant activity. It is also antimicrobial and inhibits quorum sensing (process where the pathogens produce and communicate with signal molecules), as well as initial attachment of biofilm colonies. This formula decreases overgrowth of normal bacteria that is thought to unnaturally inhabit the small intestine in SIBO and will keep any pathogenic bacteria from growing while the digestive tract's usual defenses are down. This is for simple SIBO and not for something more advanced, such as pathogenic biofilm forming colonies that can grow over time.

### **Indications:**

This formula is used to treat small intestine bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) and/or dysbiosis when diet, motility support and other digestive support is not enough and there are indications from breath testing and physical signs and symptoms that suggest overgrowth and upward movement of colonic bacteria into the small intestine. It is also useful addressing an imbalance of all general flora in relation to each other.

### *Dosing*

#### **Acute Dosage:**

2-3 capsules 3-4 times per day for 2-4 weeks

#### **Contraindications, cautions and words of wisdom:**

A health care practitioner should always be consulted to confirm SIBO or dysbiosis. Antimicrobial treatments to control excess commensals or pathogens can cause side effects in excess, or if taken too long. This includes the use of antimicrobial herbs for SIBO or dysbiosis, so use other methods first that will assist the digestion back to normal through supportive and nourishing methods. This formula should not be taken for prolonged periods of time. A qualified health care practitioner should determine the appropriate dosage and length of treatment. Practitioners should adjust this formula as needed for their client. Larger doses may be irritating in some people.

#### **Adjunct Therapies To Consider:**

**Diet:** Low Carbohydrate diets such as Specific Carbohydrate Diet (SCD), Gut and Psychology Syndrome diet (GAPS), Low fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides and polyols (FODMAP) Diet (LFD), Cedars-Sinai Diet (C-SD) are examples of helpful diets. People are different as far as the diet that will work best for them.

**Motility:** Recurrence is decreased by keeping the migrating motor complex going. Allow 3-5 hours between meals to optimize migrating motor complex activity. Movement is assisted with the use of prokinetic herbs such as Ginger and other carminatives, 5-hydroxy tryptophan, L-carnitine. Melatonin (regulates gastrointestinal motility with lower doses

accelerating intestinal transit time whereas high doses may decrease gut motility.)

**Stress:** Decrease stress, correct sympathetic dominance, quiet any dorsal vagal over-activity and support ventral vagal social nervous system.

**Carminative Herbs:** Carminative teas between meals are helpful to keep the digestive tract on course and decrease gas and the accompanying pain. These include Ginger, Chamomile, Caraway, Archangelica, Peppermint. These carminatives usually help promote motility, although in excess may do the opposite.

**Restoring Gut Function:** See restorative formula to help restore gut health.

**Biofilms:** See Biofilm Buster formula if there are hard to remove biofilm forming pathogens involved. Can also use n-acetyl cysteine with this formula to help decrease the biofilm formation. Stevia also helps decrease biofilm formation.

Enzymes can be used to break down polysaccharides and the protein used to build biofilm. These are often used in the preventative stage as they don't work so well once the biofilm is formed. Enzymes include nattokinase, serrapeptase, glucoamylase, chitosanase, cellulase, hemicellulase, pectinase, beta-gluconase, protease, peptidase, serratia peptidase, lysozyme, alpha-amylase, alpha-galactosidase, xylonase, invertase, and DNase.

#### **Other Considerations:**

HCL/pepsin if deficient

Pancreatic enzymes if deficient

Some people with SIBO are better with flora replacement and/or use of fermented foods while others will be made worse by this treatment.

Consider bile duct or pancreatic duct manipulation, or sphincter of oddi manipulation with a qualified practitioner if there is physiological dysfunction that demands such an activity.

#### **Contraindications, cautions and words of wisdom:**

This is a strong formula and should not be used on a continual basis, but can be used for the majority of people for a couple weeks and many people for a month. Alter the dosing as necessary for each person's needs.

#### **Profiles of herbs used in this formula:**

**Gold thread, *Coptis chinensis*** is antiparasitic, antibacterial and antifungal. It stimulates normal digestive function and is indicated for atonic and sub-acid states. Berberine, a constituent in gold thread is a choleric shown to triple bile secretion for 1.5 hours and is effective against bacteria, yeast and protozoa. Small doses have a stimulating and tonifying effect upon the gastric tissues. Berberine and some berberine containing herbs have been shown to enhance the activity of various antibiotics against bacteria.

Other berberine-containing herbs can be used in the place of this herb.

Berberine herbs are effective antimicrobials, and while standardized berberine extracts are readily available, research indicates that whole-herb extracts have stronger antimicrobial activity than standardized berberine alone. If using a berberine extract, it will be far more efficacious to use it in a base of one of the berberine containing herbs.

**Ginger**, *Zingiber officinalis* is a warming stomachic, astringent. It is a pungent and a strong carminative that promotes the passage of gas and relieves the pain associated with gas. Ginger stimulates the flow of saliva, supports the normal tone of the intestinal musculature and supports peristalsis. It is also anti-inflammatory, choleric, antimicrobial, antispasmodic, antiparasitic, immunomodulating and anti-emetic. Ginger reduces quorum sensing, biofilm formation and virulence as well. It also acts as a prokinetic to get the digestive tract moving.

**Elecampane**, *Inula helenium* is antibacterial, carminative, antiparasitic, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulating and a bitter tonic. It is warming, stimulating and tonifying to the gastrointestinal system. It stimulates production, and flow of bile. It has been used to treat parasites such as *Giardia lamblia*, *Dientameba fragilis* and *Blastocystis hominis*. It has also shown antimicrobial activity against invasive pathogens such as *Staphylococcus aureus*/methicillin-resistant (MRSA) gram-positive bacteria, yeasts and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. This herb is useful for people enfeebled by long bouts of digestive and/or respiratory infectious disease where these organs need to be brought back to a healthier state.

**Baikal Skullcap**, *Scutellaria baicalensis* in its whole form and the constituent baicelein are used as an antimicrobial. Both have been shown to decrease biofilm formation, to be antimicrobial in regards to a number of different bacteria, viruses and fungi. The herb inhibits quorum sensing, decreases biofilm of various bacteria, and enhances the activity of various antibiotics against bacteria.

**Cinnamon**, *Cinnamomum spp.* has been shown to decrease quorum sensing in bacteria and biofilm production in candida yeast. It is warming, astringent, tonifying to gastrointestinal tissues and adds a nice flavor to formulas.

**Cardamom**, *Elettaria cardamomum* is rich in volatile compounds and has been shown to have antibacterial activity against many microbes, at least in part through inhibition of quorum sensing and reduction of biofilm production. Besides being an antibacterial, it is also antifungal and has been shown to inhibit biofilm production of *Candida albicans*. It has anti-inflammatory activity and acts as a carminative in the digestive tract. This warming herb is commonly used for colic, gas and as a nice flavoring.