



# Wellness Minute

Health Information You Can Use On Your Path To Wellness



## What's YOUR Transit Time?

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One of the best ways to measure gut health is to measure transit time. Transit time is the time it takes for food to travel from mouth to rectum. The healthy range should be between 12 hours and 24 hours. That means, if I eat food at 12:00 for lunch, it should be exiting at 12:00 tomorrow.

A simple concept, but if we think about it for a second, if we allow undigested food to sit in a heated environment the process of fermentation begins, and food byproducts, both good and bad, begin to rot and putrefy. Yeast begins to grow, and gas increases from the fermentation. Many metabolic byproducts are dumped into the intestines to be removed from the body, but if those substances

stay in the body too long, they get reabsorbed. Bile acids, if allowed to sit in the colon too long, can irritate the lining of the bowel and its function.

Hormone byproducts, for example, should exit the body as intended. If they are allowed to sit in the colon for extended periods of time, they can be reabsorbed, which increases the potential for estrogen related cancers. We know that the ratio of certain estrogens is a good predictive indicator for breast and ovarian cancer.

Both the lymph system and the small intestine empty into the large bowel, and if the bowel is sluggish, so too is their ability to perform their functions.

Pioneers in the field of natural medicine have long since claimed that, “death begins in the colon.” The longer I am in this field, the more I realize that statement is true. Consider that 70% of the immune system is located in the bowel. The bowel is really like a garden and produces many important B vitamins, short chain fatty acids, as well as trillions of bacteria that complete digestion. But just like a garden can produce vegetables, that same soil can produce massive amounts of weeds which choke the life out of the vegetables.

How can we maintain a healthy environment for our bowel? Or in keeping with our analogy, how can we maintain healthy soil for our garden?

This is a transcript from a “video magazine” we send out each week called the Wellness Minute. If you're not getting our Wellness Minute videos each week, sign up at the front desk.

One of the key things we can do is to keep things moving so that stagnation or fermentation will not dictate our garden's produce. The beauty of this preventative strategy is we can monitor ourselves, and it costs relatively nothing. This low tech in-office monitor procedure has huge pay offs in a person's longevity and quality of life.

Here's how easy it is. Use a unique marking agent that will be seen in the stool at a predicted time and see how long it takes to come out. Of course, you want to make sure you are not allergic to the substance because that will either delay or accelerate the transit time. I like to use corn, beets, or charcoal tablets that can be purchased from health food stores.

Here's an example of how to eat the agents and what you will see: ¼ cup of organic non-GMO corn mixed with pastured scrambled eggs, expect to see the yellow corn kernels; 3 or 4 whole red beets as a salad with some form of protein, expect to see a deep red in the stool; and 5-10 grams of charcoal in capsules or tablets on an empty stomach, expect to see a black stool. Note when the agent first appears and when it last appears. If the agent comes out

in less than 12 hours, it's a signal that the transit time is too short and that nutrients are not being absorbed. 12-24 hours is the optimal transit time. More than 24 hours indicates that the transit time is too long.

Let's do the basics first and retake the test in 2 weeks and watch the progress. The beauty of the test is that it can be done at home. What are the basics for maintaining healthy transit time? Drink more water, chew your food till it is a liquid, and increase fiber foods that you know you are not sensitive to: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes. Decrease foods that will slow transit time: processed foods devoid of life and fiber.

I encourage people to "eat foods that will rot or spoil, but eat them before they do" and "eat as much color as you can" for the phytochemicals and flavonoids. And let's not forget to increase movement to 30 minutes a day, a combination of walking, dancing, bicycling, climbing stairs, or whatever brings life! And of course, bring your wellness clinician into the picture if your transit time is less than 12 hours or more than 24. Your clinician can help get you back on track with healthy options.