

Volker's Story – The Bowel Man

I find it very funny that Americans are so scared of their bowels. Where I come from, this is not the case. What's going on in the gut is taken very seriously, and doctors and nurses are very interested in the information they get from asking people about their digestion. Why, we have whole spas devoted to nothing but bowels.

The silence is especially odd to me given how many alcoholics have problems with diarrhea, constipation or both. For me it was both. But every time I've been in any group setting and talked about this subject, people start squirming or averting their eyes. So I decided that I would do all the shy people a favor and talk about this subject because even the ones who are averting their eyes might get constipated sometimes.

Here is the story of the bowel man: When I woke up from alcoholism, I admitted I had serious digestive problems. My doctor called it "irritable", an understatement I assure you. I knew from childhood indoctrination that if I did not take care of my inflamed guts, I would not get well. I read several books on the subject, worked with a physician, and consulted a real expert, my mother. Every individual is different, but here are things you can do to fix your gut.

Eat gentle foods like fruits and vegetables and things that cause no pain. Some people can eat grains, some can't. Some people can eat meat. Some can't. Some feel good on raw food; some don't. You'll have to experiment.

Avoid fried foods. They are not gentle.

Ask your mother to make homemade sauerkraut (this is a reasonable request in my family), the juices are very good for the digestion.

Avoid sugar of every kind, it feeds the organisms that are growing inside there. If you feel stuffed or bloated, you are feeding them and they are making you fart.

Avoid anything made from flour or ground grain, like bread and pasta, and see how you feel. These too may feed the organisms inflaming your guts.

See if stopping milk products for a month helps. If dairy is causing the problem, this will be a huge relief.

Take pro-biotics, the organisms that are supposed to be in there. If you can tolerate yoghurt, have the plain kind with lots of acidophilus. Or take capsules; it will help with the gas and pressure.

Drink the best water you can get.

These are the things I did over time. I still have a delicate digestion, but the pain is gone unless I don't follow my own advice. One other thing: Leave your e-mail address on the table in case someone wants to talk about bowels and is too shy to do so at a meeting.