

You Are **NOT** What You Eat

*Better Digestive
Health In
7 Simple Steps*



Van Clayton Powel

You Are NOT What You Eat

Praise for *You Are NOT What You Eat*

"... takes us on a journey inside ourselves and provides understanding that is both ancient and cutting edge.

A must read for those who seek total wellness."

*Bertice Berry, PhD, author of *A Year to Wellness**



"... a roadmap on how to improve your energy levels and digestion by following 7 simple rules. What's unique about Powel's approach is the practicality of it all. His easy steps can lead you towards vibrant living."

*Elizabeth Lipski, PhD, CCN, author of *Digestive Wellness* and *Digestive Wellness for Children**



"A very valuable, straight-forward approach to improving digestion. I highly recommend it."

*Dr. John Douillard, DC, author of *The 3-Season Diet* and *Body, Mind & Sport*, Director - LifeSpa.com*



"Who would have thought a book on digestion and our inner workings could be so interesting? The humor and personal stories make this book an easy read, and the steps for improving digestion are simple and practical. I've tried some of the tips and have already noticed vast improvements in my overall digestion."

Pina Belperio, MSc



"I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It is well researched, well organized, and well written. I've learned quite a lot that will be applicable to my own practice."

Dr. Hugh Fisher, MD, Olympic Gold Medalist



"An eating 'primer' which is very much overdue ... large on salient essentials and short on long-winded distractions. It gets to the point and sticks to a lean discussion. A sad fact emerges ... in this age of information, we need to be reminded of the health secrets taught by the ancient physicians."

**Dr. Peter Bennett, ND, author of *The 7-Day Detox Miracle*,
Director - Meditrine Naturopathic Medical Clinic**



"From the time I met Van in India many years ago I was struck by his dedicated search of various healing systems. So I am not surprised that *You Are NOT What You Eat* is so interesting. But rarely have I read something like this - such useful information for people looking to improve their health."

Dr. Sebastiano Lisciani, MD



"... a terrific collection of anecdotal and well-researched material that can educate average 'Joe' and 'Jill' toward improved eating habits. Powel has written an easy-to-read book in such a way that I didn't even realize I was being educated!"

Ray Fournier, RPN, Professor of Psychiatric Nursing



"This wonderful work gives light to one of the most important functions of the body. In a simple and humorous way it gives people a practical understanding of digestion - a vast and difficult subject, but one which sustains health, and even life itself."

Dr. T. Sukumaran, Ayurvedic Physician



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**Better Digestive Health
In 7 Simple Steps**

Van Clayton Powel



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Mind Body Fitness Books

#47-6127 Eagle Ridge Crescent, Whistler, BC, Canada V0N1B6

<http://www.healingsearch.com> mail@healingsearch.com

Cover design by V. Powel Cover image by nito

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Powel, Van Clayton

You are not what you eat : better digestive health in 7 simple steps / Van Clayton Powel.

Includes bibliographical references.

Electronic monograph.

Issued also in print format.

ISBN 978-0-9879789-1-2 (PDF).

1. Digestive organs--Diseases--Prevention. 2. Digestive organs--Diseases--Nutritional aspects. 3. Digestive organs--Diseases--Alternative treatment. I. Title.

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1

INTRODUCTION

The whole of nature ... is a conjugation of the verb to eat.

English prelate and scholar William Ralph Inge

At some point we've probably all heard the common notion that 'You are what you eat.'

Well, guess what – you aren't.

Now certainly, your body relies on the food you eat for the nutrients it needs to maintain and rejuvenate itself.

But just because you *eat* something doesn't mean you digest it. And if you don't digest it, it's passing right through, robbing you of energy. Or even worse, hanging around and causing problems.

You are then, not what you eat, but what you digest ... what you absorb ... what you assimilate. And the extent to which *that* happens depends on what goes on in your digestive tract.

Traditional medical systems like those from China and India have known this for thousands of years and have developed clear guidelines on *how* to eat in order to enhance digestion.

In the West, however, we've been much more focused on *what* to eat. Good fat - bad fat ... high carb - low carb ... so many micrograms of this essential nutrient ... so many ounces of that magical juice ... all washed down with at least eight glasses of water a day. (Which, as we'll see, can cause its *own* set of problems.)

But this approach isn't working. Digestive illness in the West is at an all-time high*. Some estimates indicate as many as 50% of us now suffer from digestive problems. In fact, after the common cold, it has become the most common reason we will seek out a doctor. And with up to 70% of our immune system located in or around our digestive system, the implications are significant.

Some researchers even suggest there are clear links between digestive problems and a growing number of serious illnesses, ranging from asthma and arthritis, to migraines and psoriasis. (Not to mention conditions we would expect to be related, such as food sensitivities, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and colitis.)

Now naturally, your body will operate best if you provide it with the highest quality nutrients possible. But that's only half the equation. You also have to follow eating habits that enable your body to actually absorb and utilize those nutrients. And that's the part of the equation most of us ignore: we constantly worry about *what* we eat, but rarely consider the implications of *how* we eat.

It's like pumping high-performance fuel into your car but ignoring the fact that the spark plugs are corroded, the fuel filter is clogged, and the engine oil is filthy.

Fortunately, the kind of eating habits that can dramatically enhance your body's ability to digest, absorb, and utilize the nutrients from your food are easy to learn, and almost as easy to follow. And that's what we're going to look at in this book.

We'll do it in three sections:

Section 1:

THE FOUNDATION – What You Need To Know

Signs And Symptoms Of Poor Digestion

Warning signs that your digestive system is struggling to do its job.

Eating Right, Eating Wrong

The impact of two very different meal scenarios.

Digest This!

Food's remarkable journey through one of the most vital processes in the body.

**Chapter Notes can be found at the back of the book.*

Section 2:**THE 7 SIMPLE STEPS – What You Need To Do**

Often, the simplest way to enhance digestion is to avoid habits that interfere with it. In this section we'll look at the 'Why' and 'How' of seven simple, practical approaches that do just that, including:

Eating Between Meals; Why Grazing Is Just For Cows

8 Glasses A Day? How Fluids Can Damage Your Digestion

Stress And Digestion Don't Mix; Why Your Stomach Doesn't Like Watching The News

Section 3:**HOW TO BREAK ALL THE RULES – Plus, One 'Not-As-Simple' Step**

Unless we take a realistic approach to following the rules in Section 2, it's unlikely they'll become part of our regular daily routine. (Which is where the *real* benefits start to accrue.) So we need to allow ourselves to *break* the rules on occasion.

We'll look at when it's okay to do that, and when it's not. We'll also introduce a powerful digestive cleanse you can do in just seven days, and cover some common digestive aids and irritants, with:

Let's Be Realistic: How Staying 'Home' Can Help You Go Out And Party

A Simple 7-Day Home Detox

Digestive Aids and Irritants



Like many, I discovered that illness can be a powerful motivator. It was my own serious digestive problems and chronic disease, for example, that gave me the passion to search for the solutions covered in this book.

And because I have training in both Western medicine and Eastern traditions, it is somewhere between the two that I found the most effective methods, the ones that restored me to vibrant health. So you might read about some unfamiliar approaches in this book. Chinese medicine, for example. Or *Ayurveda* – the ancient medical system from India.

Now, I can state unequivocally that I'm a great fan of modern scientific medicine. As a Registered Psychiatric Nurse working with street addicts, I witnessed first-hand its remarkable ability to deal with trauma and prevent death. And after three knee operations for sports injuries, I can certainly attest to the wonderful advances in areas like orthopedic surgery and anesthesiology!

But my clinical exposure to the traditional methods of China, India, and Japan taught me there is another world out there as well - a world with thousands of years of clinical experience ... something we would be foolish to ignore.

Those traditional systems might not always have the double-blind, peer-reviewed studies we crave. But they've been focusing on nurturing health rather than just fighting disease for millennia. And when it comes to assessing and enhancing digestion, they have an impressive head start. (See table below.)

ALEXANDER THE GREAT'S INDIAN DOCTORS

The medical systems in China and India have been around for thousands of years.

In Chinese medicine, *ephedra* has been used for over 4,000 years; today its synthetic form is widely found in asthma medications and on emergency room 'crash carts'. One Chinese medical text, the *Yellow Emperors Classic of Internal Medicine*, has been in use for about 2,500 years.

India's ancient medical system, *Ayurveda* (pronounced 'eye-yer-vay-duh'), also produced its first written texts 2-3,000 years ago. But many generations before that its knowledge was already being taught orally using a unique mnemonic technique, one that remains in use today. And one of its most famous surgeons practiced **such advanced surgical techniques over 2,500 years ago** (reconstructive, dental, cataracts, etc.) that some consider him to be the Father of Surgery.

So perhaps it is not surprising that **Alexander The Great** was so impressed with Ayurveda during his campaign in India that he **replaced his army doctors with Ayurvedic doctors**, finding they kept his soldiers healthier and saved more lives.

Today, Ayurvedic theories that **predate our own understanding by thousands of years** continue to be validated. The role of genetics in disease, for example. Or the cause and management of diabetes, and the presence of toxins in fried foods. And scientific methodology is proving an ever-increasing number of traditional Ayurvedic remedies to be effective. (Such as *guggul* for high cholesterol, *curcumin* as an anti-inflammatory, and ginger for colorectal cancer.)



Some of the methods described in this book have been used successfully in other cultures for countless generations. It is prudent to keep in mind, however, that nothing out there seems to work for *everybody*, so be prepared for your journey to be unique.

And, of course, before initiating any major modifications in your normal routine, always consult with your health care professionals. The more serious your condition, the more important that consultation is! Remember, these are the people best able to monitor changes in your condition and help you make any necessary adjustments. (If you don't feel comfortable involving them in this process, you might consider whether you have the right health care professionals.)

Finally, you might want to keep in mind the phrase I found most useful when dealing with my own illness and digestive problems - "Effectiveness is the measure of truth." In other words, if what you are doing is working - keep doing it. If not - try something else!

At the height of my problems I couldn't eat wheat, dairy, soy, chocolate and a host of other foods without having a severe reaction. I regularly experienced skin problems, loose bowels, gas, bloating, and fatigue. My lips had white spots on them. My fingernails were becoming etched with ridges and bumps.

Today I can eat anything I want without a problem. My skin is clear and all the other symptoms have disappeared. And all I did was follow the simple procedures in this book. It is my sincere hope that your experience will be similar.

With every good wish,

Van Clayton Powel

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SECTION ONE

THE FOUNDATION
What You Need To Know

2

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POOR DIGESTION

**I don't deserve this award,
but I have arthritis and I don't deserve that either.**

Comedian Jack Benny

Is your body's digestive system struggling to do its job, compromising the ability of every other part of your body to function properly?

Health care professionals can order a number of tests to assess specific components of your digestive system, such as the amount of hydrochloric acid your stomach is producing. But there are also some classic warning signs that will tell you right now if your digestive powers are weak.

Take a look at the list in the table below and check off the ones that you experience.

SIGNS and SYMPTOMS of POOR DIGESTION

- Feeling tired and lethargic after a meal
- A lot of gurgling noises after eating
- Experiencing a lot of gas
- Feeling bloated after eating
- An increasing number of food sensitivities*
*You experience symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, skin problems, diarrhea, migraines, cramping, nausea, inflammation, or joint pain after eating certain foods.
- Frequent bowel movements
- Loose bowel movements (Or constipation)
- Undigested food particles in your stool



Let's examine each of these a little more closely.

Feeling tired and lethargic after a meal

Digestion is a major production for your body - an elaborate performance that requires tremendous energy and coordination. A healthy body pulls this off so easily you don't even think about it. When the actors in the production start to tire, however, the performance becomes sluggish and ineffective.

You can probably recall a time when you could eat almost anything, anytime, and not feel tired afterwards. After all, food is supposed to *give* us energy, not rob it from us.

You might even know some hearty souls who are still able to wolf down a massive Thanksgiving dinner, heavy with fats and proteins, and then race outside to run around for a few hours. (They're called children!)

But if your digestive system is laboring, you'll find that more and more meals, even light ones, can leave you feeling drained and drowsy, heading to the couch for a nap. What is your body trying to tell you? "I'm having trouble coming up with enough energy to digest this food. Don't give me anything else to do!" Not a good sign. (In Chapter 9 we'll look at the negative side of exercising after a meal.)

A lot of gurgling noises after eating

As we'll see in the next couple chapters, digestion is an incredibly dynamic process. But it is normally a relatively *quiet* one!

A lot of audible gurgling noises after eating suggests that things are moving along too quickly down there. Picture a factory assembly line that is zipping past the workers so fast they're unable to grab the parts they need to do their job correctly. In the same way, 'percolating' noises from your digestive system indicate that the assembly line is moving too fast, preventing nutrients from being properly absorbed.

(The *growling* noises you hear when you're hungry are a different matter. They are completely natural and are caused by specialized muscle contractions as your body tries to prevent any waste from lingering in your digestive tract by pushing it through to the end.)

Experiencing a lot of gas

Traditional forms of medicine, such as those from China and India, use the analogy of a fire when describing digestion. And when you think about it, the hydrochloric acid and enzymes in your belly *are* pretty hot. Hot enough, in fact, to burn a hole in your skin, or melt a burger and fries into liquid.

To use this analogy then, when your digestion is strong, it's like that fire in your belly is burning hot and clean – it produces very little smoke. Weak digestion, on the other hand, is like a cool, damp fire – it burns inefficiently and throws a lot of smoke - smoke that you experience as gas.

Now, some foods are naturally more gas producing than others. (And we all have our own personal troublemakers!) But as our digestive fire weakens, we will find that more and more foods result in a gassy experience.

Feeling bloated after eating

Continuing with our fire analogy, feeling bloated after a meal is also related to a weak digestive fire – the more smoke a weak fire throws, the more pressure we feel building in the belly. (Talking while eating can also exacerbate this problem by causing us to swallow air.)

It's not unusual to experience some bloating after 'too much of a good thing' – a large meal of rich foods, for example. But when even a simple meal leaves you feeling heavy and uncomfortable, it is a sign that your body is struggling to digest what you put into it. And the longer the feeling lasts, the longer it's taking your body to win the struggle.

Frequent bowel movements

More than three bowel movements per day suggests that too much of the food you are eating is passing through your digestive system without being broken down and absorbed.

Once again, instead of a fire that burns clean and hot, leaving little residue, your digestive fire is burning inefficiently, resulting in a lot of waste that needs to be eliminated.

Loose bowel movements (Or constipation)

Loose bowel movements are clearly a sign that food is passing through your system too quickly, preventing valuable fluids and nutrients from being absorbed. (Our stool should be solid and formed.)

At the opposite end of the spectrum, constipation is a sign that the final act of digestion – elimination of the waste – isn't happening properly, and the repercussions can be serious indeed. *What* we eat undoubtedly plays a role in constipation, but so do a range of other habits, and we'll look at those in Chapter 11.

An increasing number of food sensitivities

The lining of your small intestine (where most digestion actually takes place) is incredibly thin in some places. In fact, it is *so* thin (Only one cell thick in some spots!) and contains so many folds and layers that if you laid it out flat, the surface area would cover a doubles tennis court.

That's great for absorbing nutrients. But unfortunately, it also means the lining can be easily irritated by many common substances and practices. (We'll cover some of these in Chapter 14.)

When this lining is irritated, not only is digestion itself impaired, but improperly digested particles are also able to slip through the intestinal wall into your blood stream.

Those particles are not supposed to be there in that form. So your body's immune system does its job and attacks them, leading to a broad variety of unpleasant and sometimes serious symptoms.

For someone suffering from this condition, it will seem that an ever-growing number of foods will cause a reaction. The problem is not the food, however, but the 'leaky' intestinal lining. (Fortunately, many find that when they follow eating habits that enhance the body's natural ability to repair this lining, their food sensitivities begin to disappear.)

Undigested food particles in your stool

This is pretty much irrefutable evidence that your digestion wasn't able to do its job. The nutrients in those food particles weren't broken down and absorbed. But your body still had to expend energy to move those particles all the way through your system. So, there was a net *loss* of energy for your body from eating those bits of food.

Undigested food particles moving through your digestive tract are also more likely to irritate the sensitive intestinal lining we just talked about. And as we'll see, when that happens, it can lead to serious problems.



Now, if you're strong and healthy, and only experience some of these eight warning signs on the odd occasion, it's probably not something to be too concerned about.

But the more of these signs and symptoms you have, the more intense they are, and the more frequently you experience them, the more important it will be for you to look at the recommendations in this book. Otherwise, it is probably only a matter of time before problems in your digestive system start interfering with every aspect of your health and performance.

The good news is that the self-healing properties of your body are truly remarkable, and some simple changes to eating habits can lead to dramatic results. In the next chapter we'll get a first glance at some of those eating habits when we describe two very different meal scenarios: *Eating Right* and *Eating Wrong*.

**SUMMARY -
SIGNS and SYMPTOMS of POOR
DIGESTION**

- Feeling tired and lethargic after a meal
- A lot of gurgling noises after eating
- Experiencing a lot of gas
- Feeling bloated after eating
- An increasing number of food sensitivities
- Frequent bowel movements (Or constipation)
- Loose bowel movements
- Undigested food particles in your stool



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3

EATING RIGHT, EATING WRONG

In the 1950s, the average American homemaker spent 2 ½ hours shopping for and preparing dinner. By 1996, this had decreased to 15 minutes.

By the year 2000 Americans were eating 80% of their restaurant meals in fast-food outlets. The average amount of time they spent there? 11 minutes.

From The Hungry Gene; The Science of Fat and the Future of Thin

The digestive process is an amazingly complex series of interactions between body systems. It is affected by what we see and what we smell. By what we're thinking and what we're feeling.

Hormones are involved. An army of enzymes and chemicals. One of the chemicals, hydrochloric acid, will burn right through the lining of the stomach if it isn't produced in just the right way.

Special muscles also play an essential role: they must contract in a coordinated wave-like fashion or we will soon be in agony. (Ask any hospital patient about the excruciating pain they experienced after an operation if they weren't able to pass gas because the anesthetic had put those muscles to sleep.)

And all the time, messages are flying back and forth between different vital organs – "More insulin!" ... "Turn off the acid!" ... "Stop eating!" ... "We need more bile!" – every single action coordinated by an independent Bowel Command Center so powerful it has been called 'The Second Brain'. (More on that in the next chapter.)

Indeed, so many things must happen in just the right way ... at just the right time, that it is somewhat of a miracle digestion happens at all!

Yet most of us take it for granted. We assume that once the food disappears into our mouth, everything will be taken care of. And in many cases, it is. But when things go wrong, the implications can be dire.

Indeed, digestion and absorption are just as essential "... as the beating of the heart and the drawing of breath" according to Dr. Michael Gershon, one of the world's preeminent Neurogastroenterologists. (That's a *nerve-stomach-intestine-guy* for most of us.)

Let's take a look, then, at two very different meal scenarios - one rather idyllic approach that *supports* digestion and absorption. And another that ... well, you'll see.



EATING RIGHT

It's six in the evening when Jen gets home from work. She hasn't eaten since lunch and her stomach is 'growling' with hunger.

She smells lasagna cooking in the kitchen and her brain is kicked into a higher gear by the aromas. It starts flashing out messages to different parts of her body. Jen doesn't even notice the sudden increase of saliva in her mouth, and has no inkling of the massive chemical factory that has come awake in her stomach. And she doesn't need to – everything is on automatic.

She wanders into the kitchen and helps prepare the salad and garlic bread, and the images and textures of the food send even more messages to her body: "Get ready for what's coming! We've got some hot and spicy ... some cool and sweet ... some creamy"

While she goes to change into comfortable clothes, the table is set, relaxing music is put on, and she returns to sit down to a delicious meal with her loved ones.

With her first bite, the flavors burst over her taste buds and the juices really start flowing. She chews well, then swallows, and with the arrival of the first packages in her stomach, things go wild.

Special cells pump acid and enzymes into Jen's stomach. Messengers zip back and forth between her various organs. Blood flow, electrical activity, and nerve transmission dramatically increase throughout her whole digestive system, while her Bowel Command Center oversees everything.

Jen just continues eating, taking occasional sips of wine and water, not even aware of the frenetic goings-on down below. And there's no reason she should be. She's healthy and has strong digestion. She's not on any medications that interfere with her digestion. And her eating habits support her body's ability to do its job.

She eats until she's comfortably full, enjoying the relaxing conversation, and leaves the table feeling strengthened and energized. A couple hours later she sips a cup of her favorite herbal tea, but otherwise, doesn't feel the urge to eat any more that night.

Four or five hours later when Jen goes to bed, the meal has completely cleared her stomach, and she enjoys a restful night's sleep as her body focuses on detoxifying and rejuvenating itself. She wakes the next morning feeling refreshed and recharged, and within forty-eight hours any waste from that evening's meal will be easily eliminated from her body.



I warned you it was going to sound pretty idyllic!

But that *is* the kind of eating routine that supports digestion. Unfortunately, for many of us it is light years away from what really happens. Let's take a look at a very different, and probably more common, scenario.



EATING WRONG

It's six in the evening and Jodi just got in the door. She's got a meeting at seven and needs to drop off the kids first. There's no time to make anything to eat, so they all jump in the car and head to the nearest drive-thru. She gets a bucket of chicken, fries, and some cold drinks and tries to eat while driving.

The kids are fighting, the traffic is terrible, and it looks like she's going to be late so she turns up the radio, hoping for a traffic report. Instead, she gets a vivid play-by-play of the day's disaster news. She tries to settle down the kids,

snatches big bites of chicken and fries while looking for holes in the traffic, and takes long draws at the soda when she gets a chance.

By the time Jodi drops off the kids and gets to the meeting, she's frazzled. The meal is already repeating on her and the gurgling noises in her stomach are embarrassing. She feels bloated, heavy, and tired. In fact, she has to fight to keep her eyes open.

Down in her stomach, things are in disarray. There was no warning about this massive delivery, no time to prepare. Huge chunks of poorly chewed fatty food are being pushed around in the gastric juices that were diluted by the cold drink. And all the stress from the frenzied dash through traffic actually turned *off* the normal digestive processes, so her body is fighting to catch up.

Because the food is in such large pieces, it's going to take a lot longer and a lot more of the body's energy to break it down. And because it wasn't in Jodi's mouth for very long, the part of digestion that normally starts there wasn't effective, slowing things down further.

Compounding the problem, the over-the-counter anti-inflammatories Jodi has been taking have damaged the protective lining of her stomach, so some of the gastric acid there is irritating the stomach wall. And because Jodi has been eating like this for a while now, other parts of her digestive system are also damaged and malfunctioning.

Jodi's Bowel Command Center is frantically trying to draw energy from other parts of the body but this has been happening a lot lately, and the whole body is in a weakened state.

Jodi feels sluggish, so at a break in the meeting she grabs a cup of coffee and a donut, hoping the caffeine and sugar will give her a boost. Instead, it just adds more confusion to an already overwhelmed Digestion Department. It's getting too many mixed signals: "Speed up." "No, slow down!" "Empty the stomach." "No, leave it in there!" "Here comes some new stuff! What do we do now??"

Self-consciously, Jodi runs a finger over a number of hard red pimples on her face, hoping her makeup is still hiding them. The pimples keep coming back and she can't figure out what's causing them.

By the time she gets out of the meeting, Jodi is grateful for the walk through the parking lot because of all the gas she's been holding in. She picks up the kids and makes a final stop on the way home to get them a treat, picking out an energy bar for herself to get her through the next few hours.

When she finally crawls into bed, Jodi's stomach still holds much of the food she put into it earlier. Her digestive system has a massive amount of work left to do yet, and instead of Jodi's body being able to cleanse and heal itself while she sleeps, it's going to be struggling to digest all that heavy food.

As usual, when the alarm goes off the next morning, Jodi wakes feeling sluggish and heavy, almost as if she were hung-over. She drags herself from bed and heads straight to the kitchen, thinking the first thing she needs is a cup of strong coffee.



Now realistically, most of us will have both kinds of days - Eating Right *and* Eating Wrong. That's just life. The goal is to *minimize* the number of Eating-Wrong days, and maximize the number of Eating-Right days. (See Chapter 12.) Otherwise, it's only a matter of time before Jodi's symptoms ... become ours. And the longer we allow that to go on, the more serious the implications.

In the next chapter, we'll go backstage at this truly remarkable production called 'Digestion' and get to know the actors who take something that *isn't* part of us - food - and convert it into a *living part* of us - our cells. Quite an amazing bit of engineering if you think about it.

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4

DIGEST THIS!

How Food Turns Into You

During your lifetime you will eat *hundreds* of times your body weight in food.

Insects eat much less; some as little as two times their body weight.

And for bats, just 2 nights without a meal means death.

From Mean Genes; From Sex to Money to Food: Taming Our Primal Instincts

When either digestion or absorption fails, starvation looms.

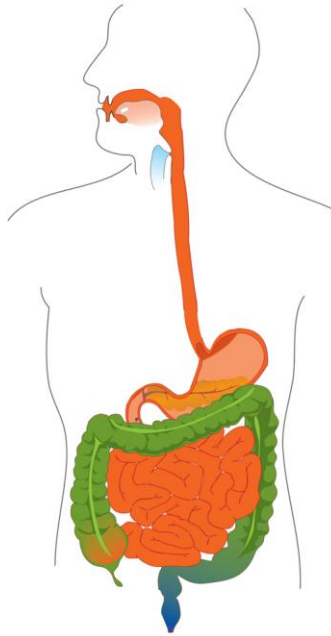
Neurogastroenterologist Dr. Michael Gershon

Picture a hollow tube, standing upright and open at both ends.

It's flexible, and altogether about 25-feet long. But it's not straight. In fact, it has quite an elaborate design:

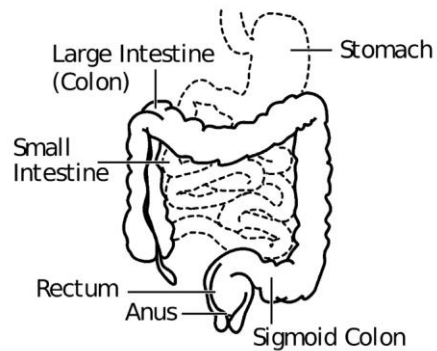
- About **eight inches below the top** it widens into a **pear-shaped bag** ...
- then it narrows again and goes into a **complex series of loops and coils** that take up most of its length ...
- towards the bottom it widens and does a **large arch over the coils** ...
- then it finishes with the **bottom opening** of the tube **pointing downwards**.

Now wrap a body around that hollow tube, and you've got a human being.



That tube is your gastrointestinal tract:

- the top opening is your **mouth**,
- the pear-shaped bag is your **stomach**,
- the elaborate coils are your **small intestine**,
- the big arch is your **large intestine**,
- and the bottom opening is your **anus**.



Now, it's important to keep in mind that just because you put food or fluids *into* that hollow tube, **they are not actually in your body yet**; they're just *inside* that hollow tube.

In order to get into the body itself, they have to be absorbed *through* the wall of the tube. And anything that doesn't get absorbed through the tube wall will just continue its journey through the tube until it makes it to the bottom end, and (hopefully) gets dumped out.

There are, in fact, **only two ways to get something into a human body**:

- **From the outside**, going through the skin, or;
- **From the inside**, entering through the wall of that hollow tube.

(There is a branch of the tube that heads to the lungs, but we're just going to focus on digestion here.)

Now fortunately for you, it's not that easy to enter your body through the skin *or* the tube wall. Otherwise, you'd have armies of bacteria and viruses swarming in to help themselves to the all-you-can-eat Human-Cell Buffet. And you wouldn't be around for long.

There is, however, a major difference between your skin and the tube: ...

... continued

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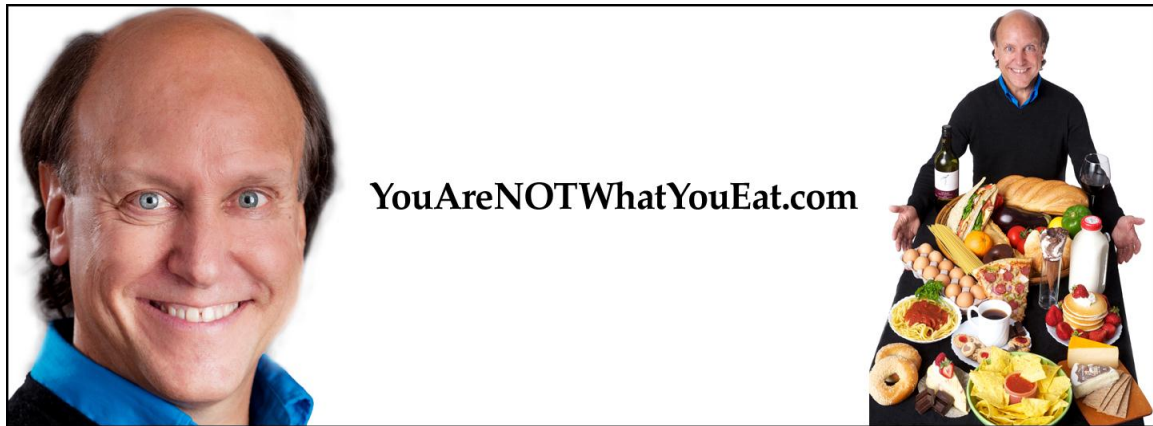
Thank you for your interest in *You Are NOT What You Eat*.

You can pick up the paperback at your local bookstore (just ask them to order it if you don't see it on the shelf), or major chains like Chapters and London Drugs. It is also available in all formats through online retailers like Amazon. (see below)

*If you have any thoughts or questions for Van, he would love to hear from you. You can reach him through the [Website](#), [Blog](#), or [Facebook Page](#).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Van Clayton Powel is a former nursing supervisor, the founder of Mind Body Fitness Inc., and the creator of the [Runner's Yoga Program](#).

As a Registered Psychiatric Nurse he graduated top of his class and went on to specialize in detoxification, addictions treatment, and emergency assessments.

He also spent years in Asia training in ancient medical systems, martial arts and yoga, and has taught his unique blend of Western and Eastern techniques to thousands of clients, including Olympic athletes, the Canadian National Snowboard Team, and major corporations.

Powel's passion for teaching about digestion comes from winning his own battle with chronic digestive problems, and he happily reports he can eat anything he wants again.

He and his wife spend most of their time on the west coast of Canada. You can contact him through [YouAreNOTWhatYouEat.com](#), and also on Facebook at [facebook.com/YouAreNOTWhatYouEat](#).

**Van's presentations are often standing-room only and utterly fascinating. If you get a chance, check one out.
Or drop us a line to bring him to your community.*

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