

Leaky Gut Supplements

Betaine HCL

Betaine HCL is a hydrochloric acid supplement, which helps increase stomach acid production to improve the digestion, absorption and assimilation of all nutrients, especially protein.

The reason why betaine HCL is at the top of our leaky gut supplements list is because low stomach acid is one of the most common causes of leaky gut. When you aren't producing enough stomach acid, your body can't properly digest and absorb the nutrients in the food you eat. Not only can this lead to nutrient deficiencies, but it also lets food "linger" in your GI tract, where bacteria can ferment and putrefy.

If left untreated, these bacteria can set up shop in your small intestine and cause chronic inflammation, leaky gut, and a bacterial overgrowth condition called **SIBO**. If you have symptoms such as bloating, acid reflux, constipation, and abdominal pain, you could have low **stomach acid**.

Taking a stomach acid supplement like betaine HCL is a good starting point to help increase your stomach acid production, aid digestion, and improve nutrient absorption. However, it's also important to consider why you have low stomach acid in the first place.

Many diet and lifestyle factors can contribute to low stomach acid production, such as frequent antibiotic use, alcohol consumption, a low fiber diet, and chronic stress. So while taking betaine HCL is helpful for healing leaky gut, it's only part of the equation when it comes to improving your gut health in the long term.

To find out if you have low stomach acid, try taking **The Baking Soda Stomach Acid Test** at home. It's quick, painless, and easy. All you need is baking soda and cold water.

How to Take it: Take a betaine HCL supplement right before each meal.

Probiotics

Probiotics are beneficial bacteria found all over your body, and they form the foundation of a healthy digestive system. Probiotics help with nutrient absorption, help reduce inflammation, produce certain vitamins, and prevent "bad" or opportunistic bacteria, such as yeast, from overpopulating your system.

Probiotics can help heal leaky gut by strengthening the gut lining, and replenish your natural stores of good bacteria to reduce inflammation. Since probiotics play such a crucial role in digestion, you may also notice physical improvements soon after you start supplementing with them. It's not uncommon to experience improved bowel movements, increased energy, and less gas and bloating once you find the probiotic strain (or strains) that work best for you.

However, there are many different strains of probiotic supplements, and not all of them provide the same benefits. For example, certain strains of bacteria are known to be most beneficial for immune function, while others do a better job at improving digestion. This is where you'll need to do a bit of research or speak with a healthcare practitioner to find the appropriate probiotic supplement to match your specific needs.

How to Take it: Probiotics are best taken on an empty stomach, first thing in the morning, or right before bed (assuming your last meal was at least three to four hours beforehand). This allows the probiotics to recolonize in the intestinal lining without the interference of any other foods.

You can also get probiotics in your diet by eating fermented foods, such as sauerkraut, beet kvass, and coconut milk yogurt. However, if you're also dealing with candida (yeast overgrowth), you may want to supplement with a yeast-eating strain of bacteria called *saccharomyces boulardi*.

L-Glutamine

Glutamine is an amino acid that contributes to healing leaky gut by repairing the gut's mucosal lining and closing up the tight junctions in your intestine. Glutamine helps reduce intestinal inflammation, which may also provide relief for digestive symptoms.

Glutamine is most effective when it's taken as a powder, especially when you're dealing with a weakened digestive system, which may not be able to properly break down or absorb capsules and food sources of glutamine.

How to Take it: The amount of glutamine you need to take each day will depend on your current state of health. For the correct dosage and form of l-glutamine to take, consult your healthcare practitioner.

Quercetin

Quercetin is an antioxidant found in plant foods that may help stimulate the production of proteins in the GI tract that can heal and seal the gut lining, which is exactly what the body needs to repair leaky gut.

Quercetin is also known for being an extremely powerful anti-inflammatory, which can reduce intestinal inflammation, keep allergies at bay, and even improve symptoms of autoimmune conditions. Allergies, food sensitivities and autoimmune conditions all can stem from leaky gut syndrome.

How to Take it: We hate to sound like a broken record, but the amount of quercetin you need will depend on your symptoms and the severity of those symptoms. Consult your healthcare practitioner for dosage, frequency, and the best time of day to take it.

Vitamin D

There are many things vitamin D does for your body, but in the case of a leaky gut it activates killer T-cells for defense against infections and bacteria. It can also reduce chronic inflammation. Vitamin D is said to be a key player in holding the tight junctions of the intestinal lining together, which means deficiency could actually contribute to the onset of leaky gut.

How to Take it: To find out how much vitamin D your body truly needs, it's best to run some lab tests. From here, your doctor or healthcare practitioner can prescribe the best dose for you, based on the current picture of your health. Don't forget to get outside and get your vitamin D from the sun, too!

Leaky Gut Functional Foods

Apple Cider Vinegar

As we mentioned earlier, a primary cause of leaky gut syndrome is having low stomach acid. This can encourage bacterial overgrowth and intestinal inflammation, and ultimately lead to leaky gut.

The acetic acid in apple cider vinegar may help stimulate stomach acid production to help you better digest and absorb nutrients from the food you eat. The best type of apple cider vinegar to use is a raw, unpasteurized version (like Bragg's), because it will contain digestive enzymes.

How to Take it: Dilute one to two tablespoons of apple cider in ½ cup of water and drink five to 10 minutes before each meal. Always use a straw to prevent the acid from wearing down your tooth enamel.

A Word of Caution: Several OTC medications interact with apple cider vinegar, including diuretics and insulin. If you're currently taking any prescription drugs, check with your doctor before taking apple cider vinegar.

Bone Broth

Bone broth is our favorite food for healing leaky gut because it's the only true dietary source of type II collagen (aside from collagen and gelatin supplements, which are also derived from bones). Collagen is the most abundant protein found in the body, and while it's a buzzword associated with skin health, it also has the ability to help heal and seal holes in the gut lining.

Collagen is extremely easy for the body to digest and absorb when it's released from bones and connective tissue into a broth, which makes it ideal for those with weakened digestive systems.

Connective tissue is also rich in several anti-inflammatory amino acids, such as proline and glycine, which help promote detoxification, fat digestion, and reduce inflammation in the GI tract. It's safe to say if there were one food Mother Nature would want us to eat for leaky gut, bone broth would be it.