

## **TRANSCRIPT OF MEDIA CLIPS-Deep breaths might help before a holiday meal**

**Dr. Omar Khokhar (KOH-car), gastroenterologist at OSF HealthCare**

**"The best way to sort of self-assess if you have a good, healthy gut microbiome is how many bowel movements you're having. Are they robust, big bowel movements? This is what we're looking for," Dr. Khokhar explains. (He holds up an example of at least a six inch long plush toy as an example) "That's what we want from everybody. Also, the gas you pass. Everyone knows the difference between the gas that actually feels good - like decompressive - versus the gas that is not satisfying." (:27)**

Dr. Khokhar says the vagus nerve can be distracted to respond to the brain too often in states of chronic stress or anxiety, ignoring the role it needs to play in digestion.

**"There's no question there's a correlation between mental health and optimal efficiency or efficacy of your GI tract. Whether that's motility, hormone secretion or digestion, it all ties in together," he stresses. "That's why it's really important to address that." (:20)**

Dr. Khokhar believes some deep breathing, especially before and after a big holiday meal, can help to reset the vagus nerve and improve how it works.

**"Kind of like you restart your phone or computer. It's a very similar concept. Let's clean it out. Let's do some deep breathing for five or 10 minutes. It's all it takes. Then the vagus nerve says, 'OK, I'm more relaxed here. I can then do my job, which is to secrete hormones, to squeeze and to help with the GI tract.'" (:20)**

What kind of breathing exercises does he recommend? Dr. Khokhar says the diaphragm should be engaged by using a 4-4-4 technique.

**"Four seconds in, four seconds hold and four seconds out. Navy SEALs have mastered this when it comes to sleep and other regulation. I think they have a 4-6-7 where you inhale four seconds, hold for six seconds and then exhale for six seconds. Personally, I have a hard time exhaling because you have to time your exhale. You can't just blow out that." (needs to occur slowly). (:23)**