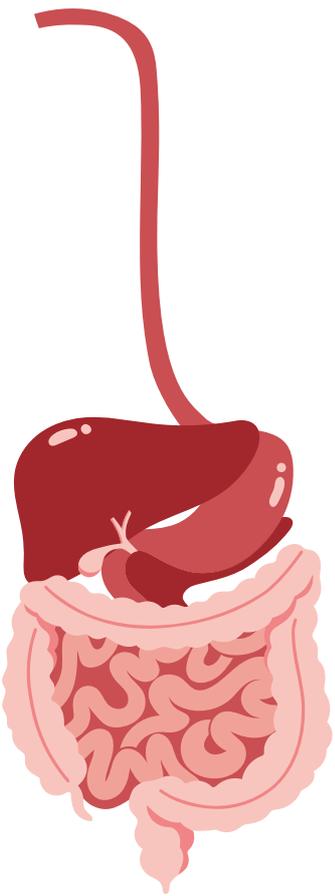
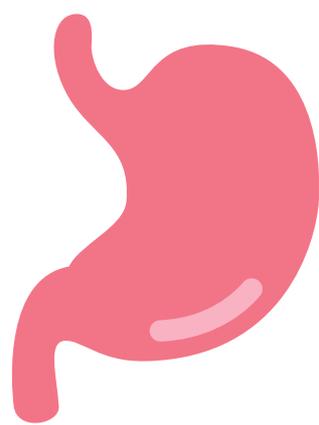


Looking after your gut health!



DISCOVER YOUR INNER WARRIOR





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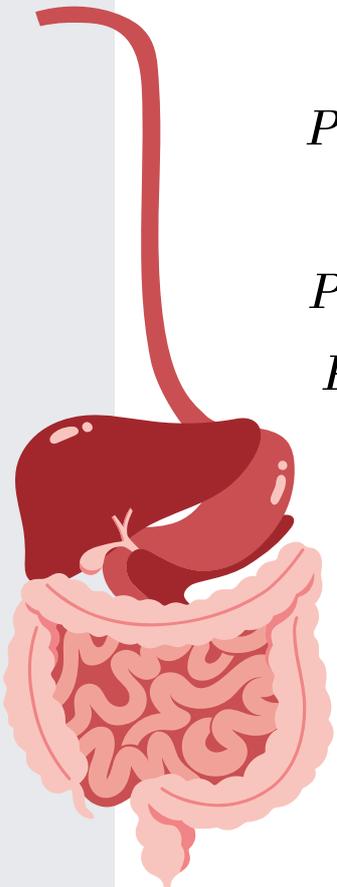
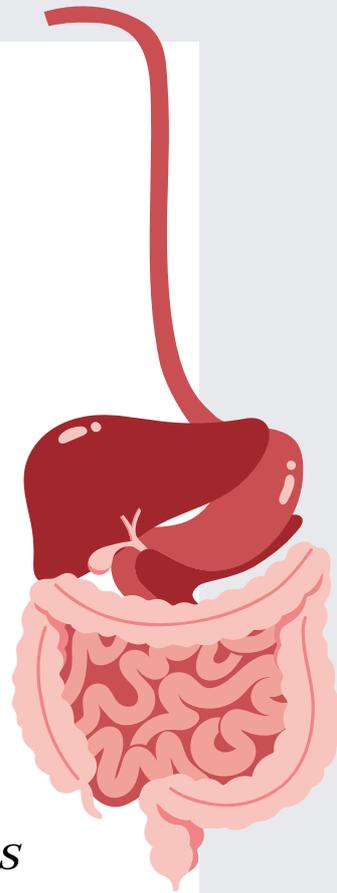
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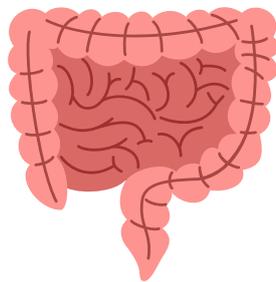
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What is the gut microbiome?

The term “gut microbiome” refers to the microorganisms living in your intestines. Each person has about 200 different species of bacteria, viruses, and fungi in their digestive tract.



Microscopic creatures—including bacteria, fungi and viruses—can make you ill. But what you may not realize is that trillions of microbes are living in and on your body right now. Most don't harm you at all. In fact, they help you digest food, protect against infection and even maintain your reproductive health.

How do I spot something is wrong & the signs to look out for:

- High Stress Levels
- Lack Of Sleep
- Eating a diet that is high in processed and sugary foods
- Regular upset stomach such as gas, bloating, inflammation, constipation, heartburn
- Unintentional weight changes
- Sleep disturbances
- Constant fatigue
- Skin irritations
- Autoimmune conditions
- Food intolerances



9 Common Digestive Conditions:

GERD

Known as Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease. When stomach acid backs up into your oesophagus — a condition called acid reflux — you may feel a burning pain in the middle of your chest. It often occurs after meals or at night

GALLSTONES

Gallstones are hard deposits that form in your gallbladder — a small, pear-shaped sac that stores and secretes bile for digestion. Gallstones can occur when substances that make up the bile (usually cholesterol or a waste product called bilirubin) become too concentrated and form a hard stone. Most people have to have surgery to remove these.

CELIAC DISEASE/GLUTEN INTOLERANCE

Celiac disease is an immune reaction to gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. Eat gluten, and your immune system goes on the attack: It damages your villi, the fingerlike protrusions in your small intestines that help you absorb nutrients from the foods you eat.

To help with this it's best to completely avoid eating gluten.

CHRON'S DISEASE

Crohn's disease is part of a group of digestive conditions called inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Crohn's can affect any part of the GI tract but most commonly affects the terminal ileum and large intestine, which connects the end of the small bowel to the beginning of the large intestine, or colon.

ULCERATIVE COLITIS

Also an inflammatory bowel disease but the part of the digestive tract affected is solely the colon.

9 Common Digestive Conditions:

IBS (IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME)

Is your digestive tract irritable? Do you have stomach pain or discomfort at least three times a month for several months? It could be irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). What causes IBS isn't known, but treating symptoms centers largely on diet, such as eating low-fat, high-fiber meals and avoiding common trigger foods (dairy products, alcohol, caffeine, artificial sweeteners, and foods that produce gas).

HEMORRHOIDS

If there's bright red blood in the toilet bowl when you move your bowels, it could be a sign of hemorrhoids.

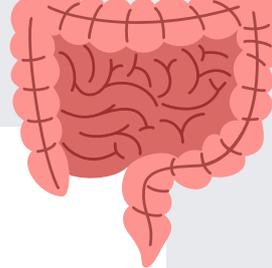
Hemorrhoids are swollen veins found in your anus or lower rectum that can be painful and itchy. Causes include chronic constipation, diarrhea, straining during bowel movements, and a lack of fiber in your diet. Treat hemorrhoids by eating more fiber, drinking more water, and exercising.

DIVERTICULITIS

Small pouches called diverticula can form anywhere there are weak spots in the lining of your digestive tract, but they are most commonly found in the colon. If you have diverticula but no symptoms, the condition is called diverticulosis, which is quite common among older adults and rarely causes problems. But in about 5 percent of people, the pouches become inflamed or infected, a condition called diverticulitis. Symptoms include fever, chills, nausea, and abdominal pain. Obesity is a major risk factor for diverticulitis.

ANAL FISSURE

Anal fissures are tiny, oval-shaped tears found in the lining of the anus. Symptoms are similar to hemorrhoids, such as bleeding and pain after moving your bowels. Straining and hard bowel movements can cause fissures, but so can soft stools and diarrhea. A high-fiber diet that makes your stool well formed and bulky is often the best treatment.



Stress & The Gut

Firstly, stress signals travel along the gut-brain axis, instructing the gut to direct energy elsewhere in the body; if you need to flee from a ravenous predator, digestion is a waste of energy.

As a result, blood is diverted away from the intestines towards your limbs, slowing digestion and potentially causing sudden evacuation (diarrhoea, to you and me).

The unpleasant effects of stress in the gut don't end there, either. Increased cortisol production can decrease the number of prostaglandins, a compound which reduces acidity in the stomach.

Combine this with stress-related muscle spasms, and stress can be a recipe for gut issues. Worse still, stress increases visceral hypersensitivity, meaning you feel an increased pain response.

Adding to this cocktail of digestive woes, stress causes the gut to produce less mucus, a protective layer which coats the bowel wall.

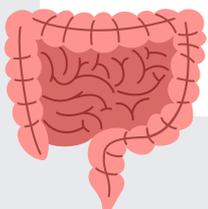


Stress & The Gut-

Key Takeaways:



- The gut-brain axis is a two-way communication network connecting the cognitive and emotional centres of the brain with our intestinal functions.
- The fight-or-flight response is an automatic physiological response to perceived or actual danger.
- When you are stressed, the body ramps up its production of cortisol, which induces numerous changes throughout the body, including the gut.
- The acute stress response slows digestion, potentially causing diarrhoea. What's more, stress can trigger painful muscle contractions in the gut and increase pain sensitivity.
- Stress can drive and augment numerous gastrointestinal issues, including irritable bowel syndrome and multiple inflammatory bowel diseases.
- Chronic stress is associated with reduced diversity in the microbiome and increased intestinal permeability.
- Emerging evidence suggests that our gut microbiota can influence stress responsiveness.
- Implementing stress management techniques can help to address stress-derived digestive issues.



Sleep & The Gut



As you may know, sleep is an important part of overall health. It not only influences energy levels, but it also helps every system in the body function properly, including the immune system, heart, brain and even digestive system. If you're not sleeping well, it can take a toll on your gut health in a variety of ways.

Our bodies like consistency and predictability, meaning we should go to sleep and wake up around the same time each day, with just about an hour of leeway in between. We should eat at the same times and be as consistent as possible, even on the weekend.

Your digestive health can play a role in how well you sleep, and sleep can affect how well the digestive system functions.

- Lack of sleep can increase stress, which affects the gut- This is due to it causing hormone imbalances and makes cortisol levels rise. Also known as 'leaky gut' this means food and toxins pass through into the intestine and into your bloodstream.
- Lack of sleep can affect dietary choices- this is because deprived sleep causes poor decision making meaning you will pick unhealthy food choices for quick bursts of energy. Also the hormones ghrelin and leptin become unbalanced which cause increased appetite. Sleep helps to regulate these!



Sleep & The Gut



- Lack of the sleep hormone, melatonin, may be related to GERD- Melatonin is a hormone that our bodies make more of in the nighttime, as it helps us fall asleep. But that's not all it does: melatonin also helps regulate gastrointestinal mobility. Some people who are diagnosed GERD take melatonin supplements to increase their levels, helping them sleep and reduce symptoms of GERD.
(gastroesophageal reflux disease).
- If you stay up too late, you might eat too close to bedtime, which can negatively impact your digestive health- eating 3 hours before bed time can also be super helpful! The body needs to digest and absorb the food, this is much better for the body to do this before bed otherwise it can lead to restless sleep and the body having to work over time to digest food while sleeping.

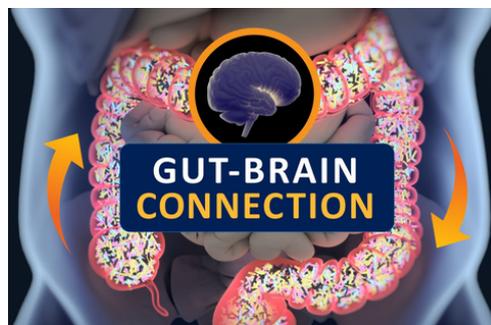
There is a lot more research needed behind the link to the gut and sleep but this is to give you basic information on your gut health and how you can improve it by focusing on all these health factors such as a better night's sleep.





Your Brain & The Gut

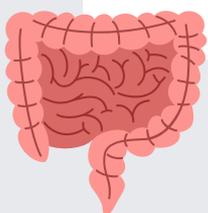
The gut-brain connection is no joke; it can link anxiety to stomach problems and vice versa. Have you ever had a "gut-wrenching" experience? Do certain situations make you "feel nauseous"? Have you ever felt "butterflies" in your stomach? We use these expressions for a reason. The gastrointestinal tract is sensitive to emotion. Anger, anxiety, sadness, elation — all of these feelings (and others) can trigger symptoms in the gut.



Gut microbes also influence how we digest and metabolise the precursors of important neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine.

Our gut flora even has a direct line of communication to the brain, through the vagus nerve, which has receptors near the gut lining that allow it to keep a check on our digestion. Microbes in the intestine can therefore release chemical messengers that alter the signalling of the vagus nerve – and, as a consequence, the brain's activity.

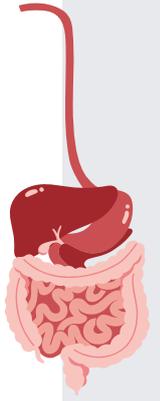
The brain has a direct effect on the stomach and intestines. For example, the very thought of eating can release the stomach's juices before food gets there. This connection goes both ways. A troubled intestine can send signals to the brain, just as a troubled brain can send signals to the gut. Therefore, a person's stomach or intestinal distress can be the cause or the product of anxiety, stress, or depression. That's because the brain and the gastrointestinal (GI) system are intimately connected.





Immune System & The Gut

Your gut health and your immune system are closely linked and can influence one another in a number of ways. This often involves your gut microbiome, the collection of thousands of different species of bacteria and other microorganisms that live in your gut.



Chronic inflammation is a continuing and unhealthy response from your immune system. It is associated with conditions like obesity, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.

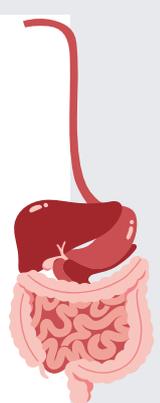


Research suggests that the gut microbiome may be a key player that links chronic inflammation to these diseases.





Immune System & The Gut



A healthy gut microbiome tends to include a wide range of different beneficial bacteria and is vital for a healthy immune system. It plays an important role in regulating your immune system so that it responds to injury or infection but doesn't attack healthy body tissue.

Over time, eating the wrong types of foods for your body can promote chronic inflammation by causing spikes in your blood sugar and unhealthy blood fat levels.





Taking Antibiotics & The Gut

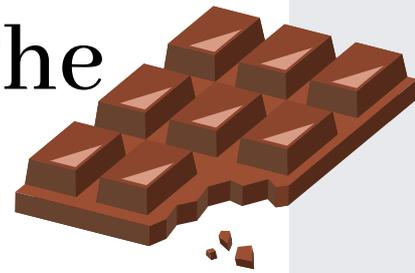
In one study, researchers tracked the progress of 2,000 people whose gut bacteria and immune cell levels had been lowered due to chemotherapy and antibiotics.

The team discovered three “good” bugs that were associated with higher levels of immune cells in the participants’ blood and two “bad” bugs associated with lower levels.

Using computer simulations, the researchers were able to predict that the three “good” bugs would help speed up the recovery of patients’ immune systems.



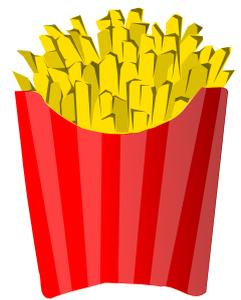
Processed Foods & The Gut



Heavily processed foods often include unhealthy levels of added sugar, sodium and fat. These ingredients make the food we eat taste better, but too much of them leads to serious health issues such as:



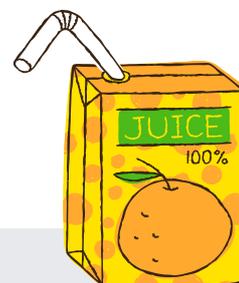
- Obesity
- Heart Disease
- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes



Fast food is usually high in fat and low in fibre, which can throw off your gut health and microbiome balance.

Processed animal-based foods like sausages, bacon, and creamy desserts were associated with having more "bad" microbes, as might be expected.

But highly processed plant-based foods such as juices, sauces, and baked beans were also associated with "bad" microbes, highlighting how important food processing is for our microbiomes and our health.



Processed Foods & The Gut

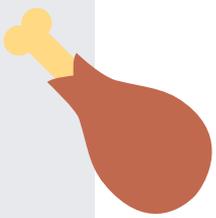


We all have a unique gut microbiome, so there is no one 'best' way to eat that suits everybody. Importantly, there's no one single food—or single microbe—that will make or break your microbiome. The microbiome is a complex community, and your regular dietary habits over time are what determines the mix.

Researchers from the Netherlands report that a diet full of high fat and high sugar foods – items found in most fast foods – can lead to an unhealthy gut microbiome.

An unhealthy microbiome increases your risk for inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome, as well as diabetes and even cancer.

As you know no food should be completely off-limits. However, choosing more delicious and nutritious unprocessed or minimally processed foods and limiting ultra-processed foods will help to keep your gut microbes happy and well-fed.





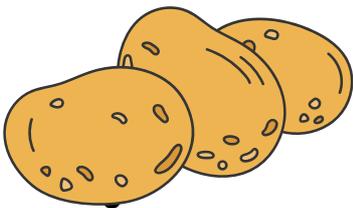
Tips you can use to help you improve your overall gut health:



- Try to lower your stress levels
- Get plenty and regular sleep
- Try to eat slowly
- Keep yourself hydrated
- Take a pre-biotic or pro-biotic
- Check for any food intolerances
- Change your diet



4 types of food that can improve gut health:



Focus on fibre



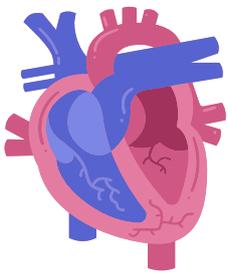
- Add garlic to your meals
- Add fermented foods like yoghurts
- Collagen boosting foods such as eggs, broccoli, nuts and meat



Important to know:

The human gut is complex. While research is ongoing, it seems clear that the gut microbiome impacts whole-body health.

A healthy gut contributes to:



a strong immune system

heart health

brain health

improved mood

healthy sleep

effective digestion

- potential prevention of some cancers and autoimmune diseases



Lifestyle and dietary changes may positively affect not only your gut health but your overall health.



Important to know:

The incredible complexity of the gut and its importance to our overall health is a topic of increasing research in the medical community.

Studies over the past few decades have found links between gut health and:

- the immune system
 - mental health
 - autoimmune diseases
 - endocrine disorders
 - gastrointestinal disorders
 - cardiovascular disease
 - cancer
- 



I hope you have found this guide helpful, informative and useful.

It is always really good to learn about your gut, why your nutrition is important and how to spot signs that there may be a problem in your gut.

You will find that sometimes when you eat higher processed foods your gut will become a little more upset. This is why a balanced lifestyle of enjoying those things in moderation can help keep your gut happy.

We know as humans when we eat healthy and focus on good sources of vitamins, nutrients and minerals from unprocessed foods our gut is much happier day-day!

If you do feel like you have spotted something that may be potentially wrong or causing concern then speak with a doctor about your symptoms.

