

GUT HEALTH

KEEP YOUR MICROBIOME IN BALANCE



Gut Health

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Disclaimer

We hope you enjoy reading this publication, however we do suggest you read our disclaimer.

All the material written in this document is provided for informational purposes only and is general in nature.

Every person is a unique individual and what has worked for some, or even many, may not work for you. Any information perceived as advice must be considered in light of your own particular set of circumstances.

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Every attempt has been made to provide well researched and up to date content at the time of writing. Now all the legalities have been taken care of, please enjoy the content.

Introduction

A very short time ago, the general population didn't even know what 'microbiome' was. It's no coincidence that most of us were just as unaware of just how important our gut health was.

Sure, we had some understanding, or at least acknowledged, that our digestive system was necessary to our lives. But it is only recently that the public has started to become aware of just how critical the health of our gut is to our overall health and wellbeing.

And when we say 'gut health', what do we mean? It is not simply the wellbeing of the body parts that make up our digestive system. 'Gut health' is more about the trillions of microbes that *live in our gut*, rather than the actual gut itself.

These microbes are essential to our digestive process, including digestion, distribution and elimination.

This eBook explains what our 'microbiota' is, and what a huge influence it has on our health. It explains the signs of poor gut health, and how this can affect not only your general health, but specific areas that you may not have known could be influenced by it.

There are also chapters on very practical ways to improve your gut health, to help you live a healthier, happier and longer life.

Why Is Gut Microbiota Important for Health?



Most of the nutrients and energy that your body needs are obtained from the food that you eat. Therefore, your digestive system, and especially your gut health, is incredibly important.

Your gut plays a crucial role in maintaining your entire body's health, from digesting your food to distributing the nutrients to making you feel happy.

Your gut is full of microbes, which are essential to the body's immune, metabolic, and neurobehavioral functions. The collective community of microorganisms in the gut is called microbiota.

When gut microbiota are in balance, that is, existing in proper ratios to one another, they are the good guys, helping you with digestion, immunity, and removing toxins from your system. However, too much of any of them and you are going to be sick.

Gut microbiota starts to develop at birth and evolves throughout your entire life. Each person has a unique gut microbiota, which determines how their system fights infections and diseases, digests food, and even feels emotions or acts a certain way. It is affected by several factors, particularly diet and drugs.

Gut Microbiota

Here are the essential functions of gut microbiota:

- **Gut microbiota helps you break down food and absorb nutrients.**

Have you ever wondered how your stomach digests food? Well, that's thanks to the bacteria present in your intestines. Gut microbiota affects your metabolism, helping you break down complex molecular compositions from the meat and vegetables that you eat.

- **It affects your immune functions.**

You first get microbes from your mother's cervix during birth, which is the initial point that your body learns to respond to microbes and potentially disease-causing organisms.

It is called adaptive immunity. When microbe ingestion is disrupted early on, it can be linked to allergies and autoimmune conditions.

- **Gut microbiota impacts your psychological functions.**

Would you believe that your gut health can affect your mood and behavior? Gut microbiota is actually called the "second brain."

As your gut microbiota breaks down molecules from the food you eat, it triggers nerve functions, the release of hormones, and cognitive function. An imbalance can lead to bad moods, anxiety, poor quality of sleep, and depression, among others.

- **It can help you fight disease.**

One of the most important functions of your gut microbiota is helping you prevent and fight diseases. With a balanced composition of bacteria, you are protected against infections and illnesses.

However, when the harmony is disturbed, it can lead to various gut conditions, such as inflammatory bowel diseases, ulcerative colitis, indigestion, and metabolic syndrome.

What Makes Gut Microbiota Get Out Of Balance?

Gut microbiota can be disturbed by different factors, such as poor diet, stress, antibiotics, lack of sleep, drinking too much alcohol, and some drugs. Processed and unhealthy foods can affect your gut health, which is why it is important to be aware of the consequences of what you eat and drink.

Repeated use of antibiotics can kill some of the good bacteria in your gut, causing an imbalance that impacts other body functions, such as metabolism.

Studies have confirmed the link between gut health and diseases and conditions. Some of these are diabetes, obesity, malnutrition, eczema, cancer, heart disease, and multiple sclerosis, among others.

What Can You Do To Keep Your Gut Healthy?

Given the important role that gut microbiota plays in your overall well-being, it is crucial to keep it healthy. There are many ways you can do so, and the first and foremost is being mindful of what you eat.

If you are regularly indulging in sweets and processed foods, a far healthier option is to swap them for whole and fiber-rich foods. Adding prebiotic-rich foods and probiotics in your diet will also be helpful to your gut health.

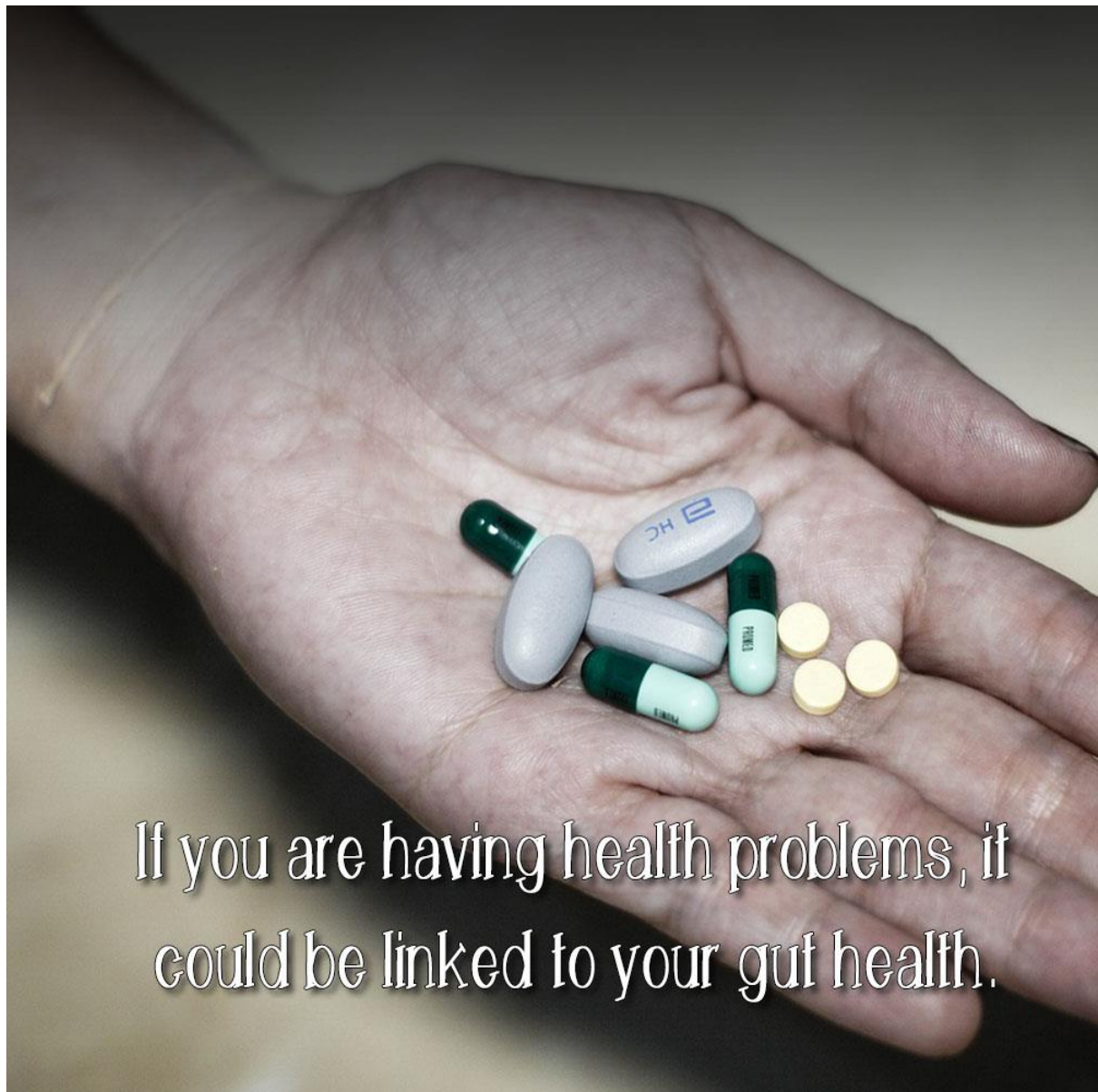
Aside from the food that you put into your stomach, it is also essential to engage in regular exercise, get enough sleep, and reduce your stress, or learn to manage it better.

Given the uniqueness of each person's gut microbiota, your nutritional needs may vary, and your optimal diet may have to be tailored to your gut microbiota.

For instance, you may be allergic or intolerant to some foods, such as dairy, grains, or gluten.

There's more to your digestive system than breaking down the foods that you eat to give your body the energy it needs to function. It is important to keep your gut healthy to maintain and improve your overall well-being.

Signs of an Unhealthy Gut (Bad Gut Bacteria)



There are trillions of microbes living in your digestive tract and they are responsible for almost your entire health condition.

If you're feeling lonely, irritated, bloated, or stressed, the chances are that you can trace back the root cause to your gut.

Additionally, up to 80 percent of your immune system is located in your gut.

The gut microbiome has good bacteria and bad bacteria. They help your body digest foods, absorb nutrients, and keep each other in check to fight off infections.

The truth is, the 'bad' bacteria are mostly only bad when their numbers increase beyond their 'normal' levels.

If there is an imbalance of bacteria in the gut microbiome, such as having an overload of bad gut bacteria, it can lead to all sorts of illnesses. Therefore, it is important to know the signs of an unhealthy gut.

Take note of these signs and remember that your gut health could be the problem if you experience any of the following.

Digestive Problems

Bloating, gas, constipation, and diarrhea are some of the common signs of an unhealthy gut. These suggest that the number and diversity of microbes in your stomach are not right, affecting your ability to break down foods, absorb nutrients, and eliminate waste. You may also have insufficient acid for digestion.

Extra Cravings For Sugar

Do you tend to eat a high-sugar diet? That's because gut bacteria release special proteins that cause you to hunger for the food they thrive on. So when you have extra cravings for the sweet stuff, the chances are that there is already an excess of bad gut bacteria, and they want to be fed!

Too much sugar can lead to inflammation, which is a precursor to various diseases.

Chronic Bad Breath

Halitosis, or chronic bad breath, is another classic sign of bad gut bacteria. You may especially notice the bad breath after eating sugary foods because that's what bad bacteria, yeast, and candida feed on.

Food Sensitivities

When the balance of good and bad bacteria is off, you will have difficulty digesting certain foods, such as gluten and dairy. You may experience food intolerances and food allergies.

They happen when the gut barrier could be leaking large protein molecules to the bloodstream when they're not supposed to, so the body activates an immune response to attack them.

Emotional Health Issues

Your stomach may be far from your brain, but your mental health is actually linked to your gut health. Your mental health relies on the micronutrients that the gut supplies.

So, when the gut microbiome is off-balance, it affects your ability to produce certain hormones that make you feel good, such as serotonin and dopamine. Compromised gut health can lead to mood swings, anxiety, and depression.

Skin Irritation

Believe it or not, your gut health also has something to do with skin problems. Bad gut bacteria can cause inflammation, which then results in leaking proteins to the bloodstream. Because of this, you may experience skin irritation, such as eczema, acne, and rosacea.

Fatigue and Poor-Quality Sleep

Much of your body's serotonin, which is responsible for your mood and sleep, is produced in the gut.

So, when you have a compromised gut, serotonin production is affected. This can cause difficulty in getting enough sleep, which then negatively affects your mood. Insufficient serotonin can also trigger depressive symptoms.

Disrupted Immunity

Gut health is linked to your immunity. When you have bad gut bacteria, it can cause inflammation and lead to an autoimmune disorder. It pertains to the condition wherein the body attacks itself, mistaking it as foreign or an invader.

Lose or Gain Weight Unexpectedly

Another sign of bad gut bacteria is unintentional changes in your weight. You could be gaining or losing weight even when you haven't been changing your lifestyle, diet, or exercise habits.

A messed-up microbe diversity can hinder proper absorption of nutrients, regulation of blood sugar, and fat storage. It is clear that gut health is responsible for various aspects of your health, which is why it is important to keep it in the best condition possible.

Keep in mind these signs of bad gut bacteria, and when you begin to experience them, act fast in getting your gut health back in shape.

Change your diet, get enough sleep, exercise more, reduce your stress levels—there are plenty of ways to keep your gut healthy.

How Does Your Diet Affect Gut Microbiome?



One of the biggest factors affecting your gut microbiome is your diet!

Gut microbiome is the name given to the bacteria, viruses, and fungi living in your gut. A balanced diversity of these microbes is beneficial to your health, helping your body perform its many functions and maintain optimal well-being.

Gut microbiome starts to develop the moment you are born, however, over time your gut microbiome experiences major changes, and various environmental factors are responsible for that.

One of which – the biggest one - is your diet.

Logically, all the foods that you eat go through your gut, which is the system that distributes to the rest of the body what it needs and filters out and eliminates the rest. In this article, we'll talk about how your diet affects your gut microbiome.

Diet Determines What Lives In Your Gut

Each individual has a unique gut microbiome, and the type of diet you choose determines what kinds of microbes thrive in your gut. For instance, studies have shown that those whose diets are mainly plant-based have more anti-inflammatory bacteria in their gut.

This means that their gut microbiome can better combat harmful inflammation that could otherwise lead to diseases.

Studies have also shown that diet can change the type of microbes in your gut in as quickly as 24 hours. However, to make a lasting change, you must eat a healthy diet consistently.

Otherwise, your gut microbiome would return to the flora that is supported by the prevailing diet.

Diet Helps Maintain Proper Gut Microbiome Functions

The food that you eat feeds the bacteria that are thriving in your gut. So, your diet has an essential role in keeping the diversity of the gut microbiome so that it will function properly.

For this reason, it is best to have a varied and balanced diet to promote a healthy gut microbiome. It is also best to keep your diet diverse, instead of routine or predictable, because it helps to keep the gut microbiome diverse as well.

Foods You Must Include In Your Diet For A Healthy Gut Microbiome

Having said that your diet is responsible for keeping a healthy gut microbiome, let's get into the types of foods that you must include in a balanced diet.

- **Prebiotics**

Prebiotics is one of the main diet elements that are widely studied when it comes to gut health. Prebiotics refers to food ingredients that are indigestible and are essential to the growth of certain species of bacteria in the gut.

Prebiotics can be found in vegetables, fruits, and cereals. Some of these that you can include in your diet are garlic, asparagus, leeks, bananas, apples, and almonds.

- **Probiotics**

Probiotics are live microorganisms, which can help restore the balance of bacteria in the gut. Probiotics are especially recommended when you experience infections, are taking antibiotics, have been eating poor diets, and are experiencing lots of stress.

Probiotics can be found in yogurts, fermented milk, and supplements.

- **Fiber**

You've probably heard many times already that you must eat fiber-rich foods for your gut health. Fibers help keep your digestive health in shape by keeping your bowel movements regular and keeping your colon cells healthy.

Otherwise, you may experience constipation, hemorrhoids, diarrhea, bloating, or gas. Oats, fruits, legumes, vegetables, wheat, and seeds are rich in fiber. Just remember not to eat too much fiber because it could have adverse effects.

- **Fermented**

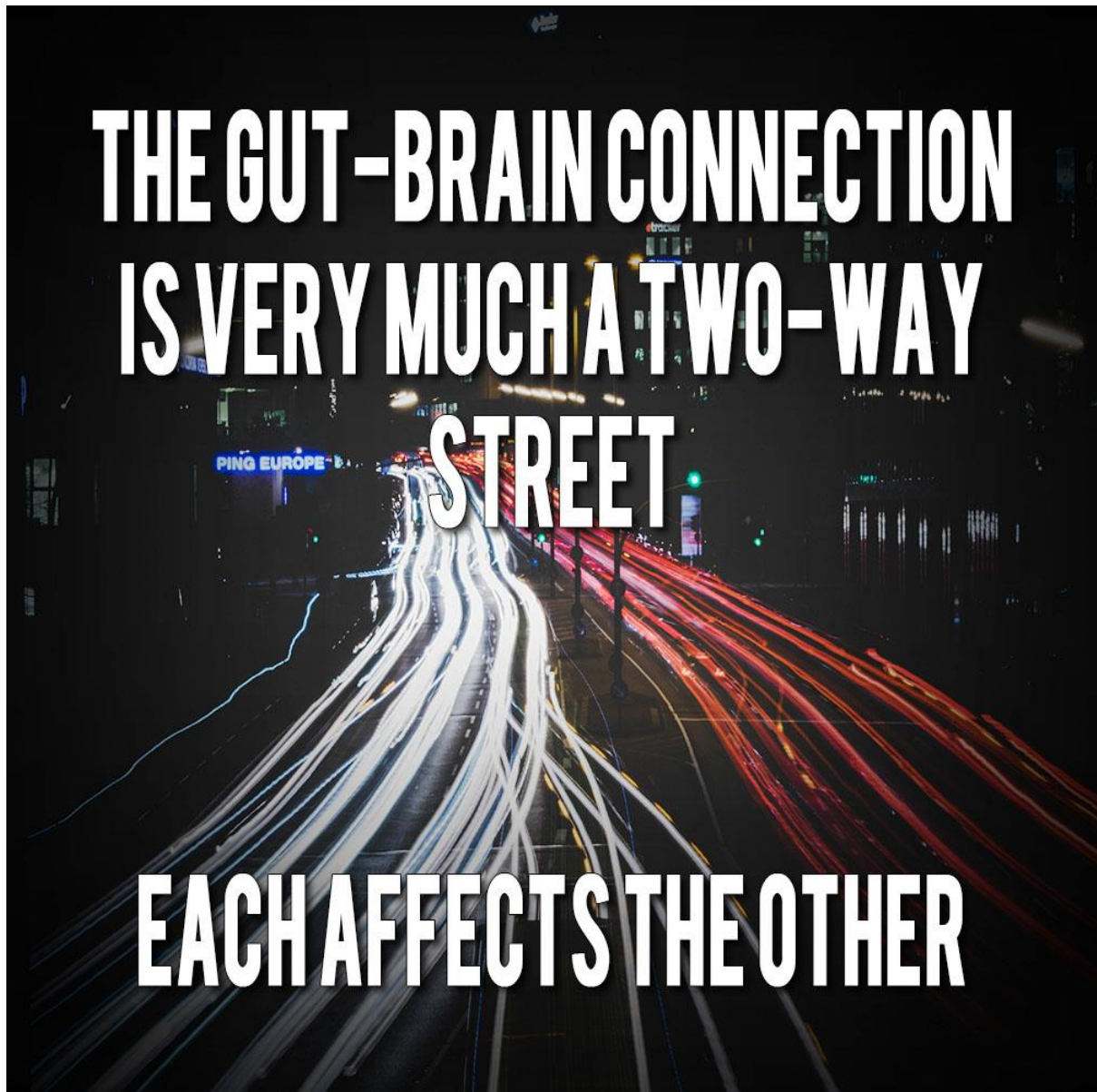
While there is still little scientific evidence, fermented foods are said to be good for gut health as well. Fermented foods, such as kombucha and Korean kimchi, can help increase the diversity of bacteria in the gut.

Kefir, yogurt, miso, and sauerkraut are some of the fermented foods that are touted to be good for gut health. Experts, however, warn not to rely on fermented foods alone in keeping your gut healthy.

Your gut is what processes the foods that you eat. However, it can only do its needed tasks in accordance with how well you feed it, so it is essential to keep your diet healthy and balanced.

Too much processed and artificially-sweetened food can destroy the balance of good and bad bacteria. A healthy diet with the above inclusions will help maintain your gut microbiome in the best condition possible.

Gut-Brain Connection - How Does Gut Health Affect Your Mental Health?



Do you experience “having butterflies” in your stomach? How about a gut-wrenching experience? Or feeling nauseous before giving a public speech? These are just some of the signs that your gut and your brain are connected.

The gut-brain connection, also called the gut-brain axis, has been in the spotlight as mental health issues become more highlighted in recent years.

Studies are looking into how keeping the gut healthy might alleviate the symptoms of mental health disorders.

The gut and the brain are physically connected by the vagus nerve, which is responsible for controlling the signals from the brain to different organs in the body.

The gut-brain axis also involves chemicals, such as hormones and neurotransmitters that transmit messages between the gut and the brain. These chemicals are affected by the gut microbiome, or the composition of bacteria, fungi, and viruses that live in the gut.

When there is an imbalance in the gut microbiome, such as an overgrowth of a particular bacteria, it can contribute to mental health problems, such as anxiety, stress, and depression.

On the other hand, mental health problems can also lead to gut health issues, as they can cause changes in the gut microbiome.

The gut-brain connection is very much a two-way street – each affects the other.

Here are some ways that gut health affects mental health:

A Leaky Gut Triggers The Release Cytokines

The gut has a thin lining that acts as a barrier, preventing molecules and other elements from entering the bloodstream when they are not supposed to. When this lining is compromised, you have a “leaky gut.”

Among other things, a leaky gut can trigger the release of cytokines, which are pro-inflammatory proteins that increases the blood flow around an infected area. Cytokines are essential for regulating immune response, but the downside is that they can cause low mood and lethargy.

Gut Microbes Are Important In The Production Of Serotonin And Dopamine

Half of the body's dopamine and up to 95 percent of its serotonin are produced in the gut. These two neurotransmitters are called happy hormones as they are responsible for controlling your mood and are associated with the feelings of happiness.

When your gut is unhealthy, it could affect the production of serotonin and dopamine, which can impact mental functions, including sleep and mood.

Irritable Bowels Are Linked To Higher Levels Of Mood Disorders

Millions of people suffer from irritable bowel, which can be a debilitating experience. Irritable bowel can cause higher levels of mood disorders, even to the point that some patients think of committing suicide. Irritable bowel due to an unhealthy gut brings significant distress, anxiety, and depression to those who suffer from it.

Low Levels Of Bacteria Could Lead To Depression

Studies have found that people with low levels of certain gut bacteria, such as Coprococcus and Dialister, may suffer with depression. As mentioned above, gut bacteria are a precursor for the production of dopamine and serotonin that are crucial for brain functions.

A few experiments have shown that a probiotics-rich diet can improve the symptoms of mental health disorders, although more proof is needed.

Common Symptoms Of Unhealthy Guts That Could Affect Mental Health

If you're feeling anxious, stressed, or depressed, you might want to check your gut health. Here are some of the symptoms, and addressing them could help you deal with any mental health issues you may be facing:

- Gas
- Bloating
- Fatigue

- Poor quality sleep
- Skin irritations
- Autoimmune disorders
- Food intolerances

Mental Health Issues Associated With Gut Health

Studies have found links between an unhealthy gut and the following mental health disorders:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Parkinson's Disease
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder

Keep Your Gut Healthy

Given the apparent connection of your gut health to your mental health, it is vitally important to keep your gut healthy. It is essential to keep the balance of bacteria in your gut to ensure an optimal overall health condition. Some of the things you can do include the following:

- Eat a balanced diet
- Eat prebiotics food to help the bacteria grow
- Eat probiotics to restore the balance in your gut microbiome
- Get enough and good quality sleep
- Be physically active and exercise more
- Find time to relax, and reduce and manage your stress
- Avoid taking antibiotics unless essential

A healthy gut means a healthy mental condition. When you are experiencing any form of psychological disorder, you can start addressing the symptoms by helping your gut to heal.

Keep it healthy and be happier!

Poor Gut Health Leads to Many Health Problems



If you're feeling down, if you get sick more often than usual, if you're having an upset stomach when you're tired and stressed out, the chances are that your gut health is compromised.

A huge part of your immunity is developed in the gut, along with neurotransmitters and hormones that regulate your mood and feelings. Many diseases are associated with the condition of your gut microbiome, and studies have shown that allowing your gut to heal can also help treat the health problems you are experiencing.

Here are some of the diseases that you may experience due to an unhealthy gut:

Obesity

Obesity is one of the top health issues that first-world people have, largely blamed on poor lifestyle choices, especially diet. An imbalance in the gut microbiome, called dysbiosis, is a huge factor.

Dysbiosis affects the gut's ability to absorb nutrients and to store fat properly. Some people may also experience unintended weight loss because of gut health problems.

Autoimmune Diseases

Because the majority of the immunity is found in the gut, dysbiosis that can damage the gut's lining can increase inflammation and compromise the immune response. Autoimmune diseases make your body attack itself, mistaking it for invaders.

Cardiovascular Diseases

Studies have found that certain bacteria in the gut can produce higher amounts of TMAO (trimethylamine-N-oxide). With high levels of TMAO, you are at a higher risk of suffering from a heart attack or stroke.

Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is one of the most documented diseases that are linked to gut health. A leaky gut can cause chronic inflammation, which then prompts increased insulin resistance. Some treatments for diabetes today include diet changes to target certain intestinal bacteria.

Psoriasis

An unhealthy gut can also manifest in your skin condition, and psoriasis is one of the skin irritations you might experience. It is painful, scaly patches of skin,

associated with dysbiosis. Psoriasis can be due to overgrowth of candida, leaky gut, and inflammatory bowel disease.

Acne

A leaky gut allows particles to enter the bloodstream, and some bacteria can cause skin irritation. If you are having a breakout of acne that just won't go away, it's worth checking your gut health.

Acid reflux

Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth or SIBO has been associated with acid reflux. Some people experience GERD, which is worse than acid reflux. The overgrowth of bacteria affects the small intestine, which then pushes acid from the stomach towards the esophagus.

Constipation

Digestive problems are common, and constipation is one of the health problems caused by a poor gut condition. Constipation can happen when the gut contains lower levels of certain bacteria. Dysbiosis can also lead to diarrhea.

Anxiety

Anxiety can be paralyzing. You are constantly worried, and you can't do anything productive because you are distracted. It is one of the common mental health issues that can be linked to gut health. The gut is responsible for producing some of the neurotransmitter chemicals that control mood.

Depression

While there are various triggers to depression, it can also help to look at your gut health. Studies have found that certain bacteria in the gut can contribute to severe depression.

Dementia

Dementia is one of the top causes of death in the world. Research has shown that an unhealthy gut microbiome can contribute to the progression of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, as it triggers metabolic disorders and inflammation.

Osteoarthritis

Who would have thought that the pain in your joints could be due to your gut health? Osteoarthritis can be associated with gut health because when the gut microbiome is unbalanced, it causes inflammation.

Asthma

Some bacteria in the gut are also responsible for asthma when they are out of balance. People may also suffer from allergies when the diversity of the microbes is compromised.

Thyroid Problems

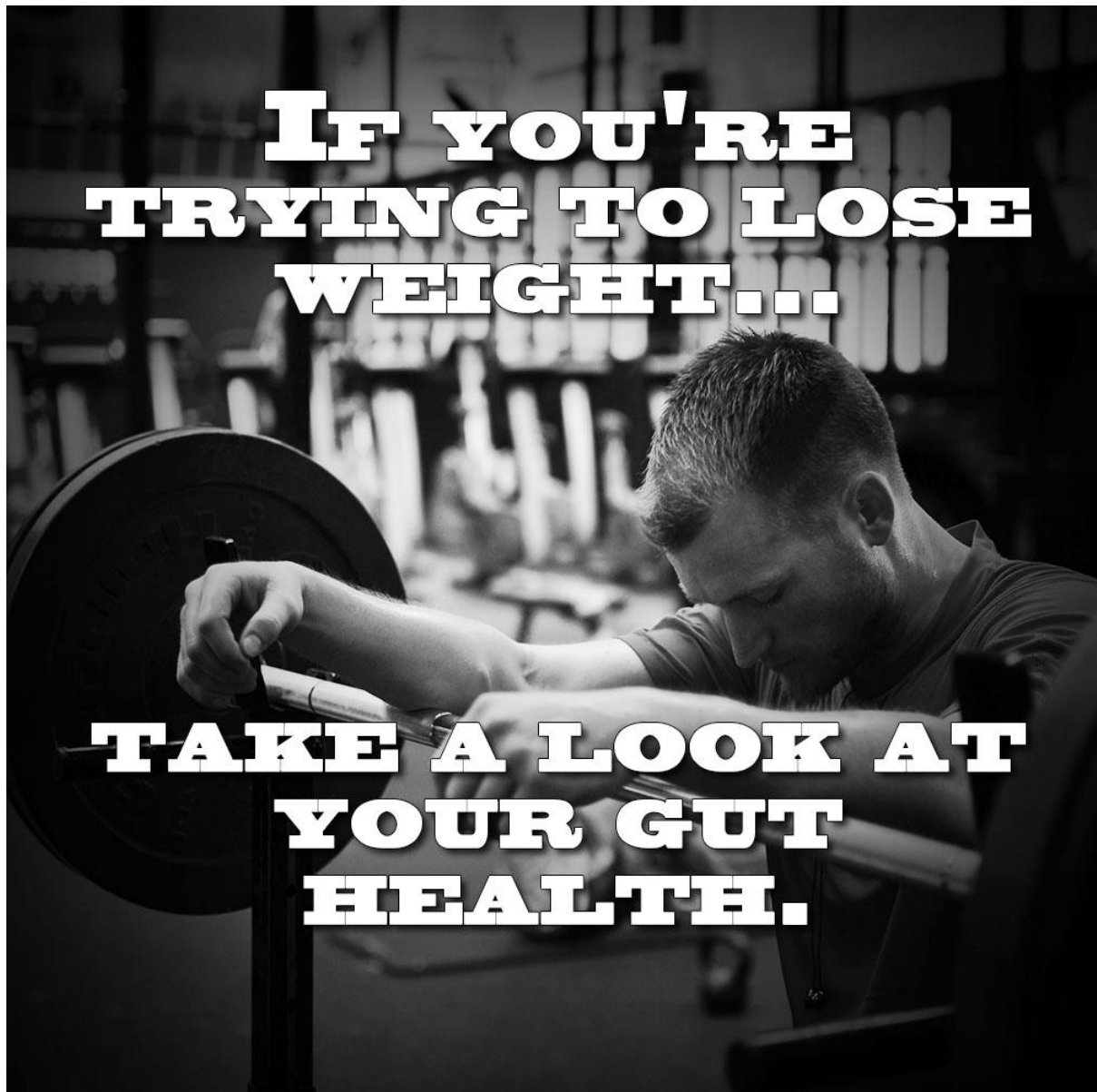
Bacteria in the gut play an important role in metabolizing thyroid hormones. When the gut microbiome is compromised, the unbalance can decrease thyroid hormone conversions, leading to thyroid problems.

Wrapping Up

Gut health is largely responsible for our overall health. From the inside of our stomachs to our lungs, heart, and brain, and to the outside of our body in our skin - diseases and ill-health can be linked to the condition of our gut microbiome.

Gut microbiome-based treatments for various diseases, particularly the chronic ones, are developing, and it is exciting to see how this will pan out in the future.

How Gut Bacteria Affects Your Weight



The past decade has shed light on the role of the gut microbiome in human's overall health. Gut microbiome pertains to the collective bacteria, viruses, and fungi that live in our gut.

Ten years ago, few of us were aware of just how significant they are in affecting our health, other than helping with food digestion.

More recently, studies have shown that they play a crucial role in keeping us healthy. So, you might be wondering, can gut bacteria make you fat or thin? How can they affect your weight?

Digesting Food That You Eat

The gut is one of the main contacts of your body to the outside world—all the foods that you eat passes through it. The primary purpose of the gut microbiome, then, is to break down the foods into tiny molecules, small enough to enter the bloodstream and distribute the nutrients. Unbroken pieces are excreted out of the body as waste.

Studies have shown that certain types of gut bacteria help break down particular types of food. Low levels of such bacteria, therefore, can affect how you digest food and store energy in the body, leading to weight gain.

Suppressing Appetite

Gut bacteria also play a role in producing hormones that affect your feeling of fullness or hunger, such as leptin, ghrelin, and peptide YY. For example, when certain types of bacteria break down fiber, they also produce chemicals such as propionate, which can affect how much of these hormones are produced.

Studies showed that those who take propionate supplements experienced reduced appetite and were able to reduce their food intake and weight gain.

Reducing Inflammation

Your gut health plays an important part in keeping your immunity active. When you eat an unhealthy diet, it causes an imbalance in the gut microbiome, prompting an increase in inflammatory chemicals.

Too much sugar, fat, and calories can lead to weight gain, and increased inflammation can lead to insulin resistance. Some species of bacteria, however, can ease inflammation, reducing insulin resistance and weight gain.

What You Can Do To Support Good Gut Bacteria Growth

When you're trying to lose weight, but all your efforts have been for naught or have shown little progress so far, the answer might be lying in your gut microbiome makeup.

Trillions of bacteria live in your gut, and what you need is to maintain active populations of the good bacteria that can help you lose weight.

How do you do that?

One way is to eat more fiber. Fiber can help keep a diverse gut microbiome, which is essential to maintaining a healthy weight. You can find fiber in whole grains, some fruits, and vegetables.

You must also avoid sugary foods, because some bacteria thrive on sugar, making you feel hungrier and craving for more sugar. Instead, eat foods that are rich in complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains and legumes.

Also, boost your diet with healthy fats, such as the omega-3 fatty acids that you can find in oily fish.

Some foods you can eat for a healthy gut include the following:

- Nuts and seeds
- Dark chocolate
- Yogurt
- Kombucha
- Kefir
- Miso
- Oats
- Bananas
- Green tea
- Red wine

Avoid or reduce your intake of the following foods, which can negatively affect the diversity of your gut microbiome:

- Soy
- Dairy
- Red meat
- Gluten
- Artificial sweeteners
- Processed foods

Aside from being mindful of what you eat, it is also essential to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Get moving and exercise regularly. Physical workouts can help reduce the growth of 'bad' bacteria in your stomach, which can affect how you lose or gain weight.

Gut Health And Obesity

Millions of people suffer from obesity, and for many, it's very hard to manage. Gut health and obesity are a relatively new field of research. More still needs to be done to make conclusions as to how gut bacteria can help treat obesity, but the future looks promising.

Understanding how certain species of bacteria affect weight may lead to better, personalized treatments.

Listen To Your Gut

If you're trying to lose weight or maintain a healthy one, take a look at your gut health. Pay heed to the signs of an unhealthy gut microbiome, such as upset stomach, indigestion, gas, and bloating.

Then, pay attention to what you eat. If you haven't been eating healthy foods, it's time to make a shift and get the ideal body that you've always wanted.

Can Fasting Improve Your Gut Health?



You often hear the word fasting when it comes to weight loss or religious observance. It refers to a period of abstaining from food. You also have a daily fasting period when you sleep, which is also when the body works to repair itself.

Aside from losing weight, fasting has been found to be beneficial for helping to keep the gut healthy.

Why Gut Health Is Essential

The gut's main acknowledged purpose is to digest food and distribute the nutrients to the body while separating and excreting harmful materials and waste.

But more than that, the gut is essential for maintaining your overall health and well-being. Most of our immunity is developed in the gut, and essential hormones and neurotransmitter chemicals are produced with the help of the gut microbiome.

Gut microbiome pertains to the trillions of bacteria, fungi, and viruses that play a crucial role in your overall health and your digestion. When there is an imbalance in the gut microbiome, called dysbiosis, you may experience health problems.

These can range from mild but annoying discomfort through to various illnesses and serious diseases. From digestive problems to skin irritation to cardiovascular diseases and mental health issues, your poor gut health could be responsible for them. That's why it is essential to keep the gut healthy.

Can fasting really help improve your gut health? Let's take a look at that.

Fasting Can Help Detoxify The Body

Dead cells, fatty tissue, and other toxins can accumulate in the body. Fasting helps the gut to detoxify. When the gut is given a break from all its digesting tasks, it can divert its resources to cleansing and repairing.

Fasting Improves The Composition Of the Gut Microbiome

While trillions of microbes live in the gut, they need to be diverse in terms of species and types. That's because they play different roles in the body, such as digesting certain types of foods and keeping you safe from foreign elements.

Fasting is a good way to improve the composition of the gut microbiome, restoring the balance between good and bad bacteria.

‘Bad ‘ bacteria are usually only bad in excess. They increase their populations beyond what is healthy (for us) often due to poor diet. Fasting depletes their food source and they decrease in number to healthy ratios.

Fasting Helps Restore the Circadian Rhythm

It is believed that the gut microbiome has its own circadian rhythm, and disrupting it also impacts the composition of the microbes. When your internal body clock is messed up, the diversity of bacteria fluctuates. Fasting helps restore your circadian rhythm to keep the diversity balanced and the gut healthy.

Fasting Boosts Your Metabolism

Gut bacteria are essential elements of metabolism, the process by which your body burns food or stored fat for energy. Fasting helps boost your metabolism. It can increase the production levels of norepinephrine, a neurotransmitter that can promote weight loss.

Fasting Reduces Inflammation

Chronic inflammation is one of the major symptoms and contributing causes of severe diseases. An unhealthy gut can increase inflammation. When you fast, it can help ease the inflammation by reducing the growth of inflammatory cells, such as monocytes. Fasting puts these cells into “sleep mode,” so they don’t go to the bloodstream.

Fasting Heals The Gut Lining

A leaky gut, which happens when the gut lining is damaged, can lead to infections and illnesses. Fasting heals the gut lining by giving the gut a break from constant digestion.

Digestion requires much energy, so when you fast, your body uses less energy. Then, the gut cells transition into repair mode.

Gut Health and Intermittent Fasting


Intermittent fasting is one of the popular ways to fast. It has gained traction in recent years because for many people it is a lot easier to follow and stick to than a traditional fast. Intermittent fasting is about going without food for a certain period and eating your normal meals in a given time window.

For instance, you can fast for 16 hours a day (which includes your sleep period) and eat normally within the remaining eight hours. You can also fast for two non-consecutive days a week and have your normal meals during the other five days. There are other intermittent fasting regimes, but these 2 are very popular.

Studies have found that intermittent fasting is beneficial in keeping your gut healthy and balanced. It also helps improve blood pressure levels, insulin resistance, and immunity.

One last thing to remember, though, is that fasting is not a magic solution. Before doing fasting for an extended time, it is still best to consult with your health care provider to make sure that it will work for you.

Probiotics for Gut Health



**Consuming
probiotics is one
way to help
ensure your gut
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remains
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Although not everyone is fully aware, more and more people realize that a healthy digestive system is vital for their overall health and wellness. If you know you need a healthy gut, you may be considering taking probiotics for your gut health.

Probiotics can help the bacteria help *you* keep your overall health and well-being in tip-top condition. The gut is responsible for digesting foods and facilitating the absorption of nutrients to the body while eliminating the waste elements out of the system.

An imbalance in the composition and diversity of microbes in the gut is linked to various illnesses and chronic diseases.

Consuming probiotics is one way to help ensure your gut microbiota remains balanced.

What Are Probiotics?

Probiotics are a type of good bacteria that provide certain benefits to gut health. One of which is helping restore the balance and diversity of bacteria in the gut. These live microorganisms are often bacteria, but yeast can also be considered a probiotic.

Probiotics are usually taken as supplements, and bacterial-fermented foods are also probiotics. There are different types of probiotics featuring certain species of bacteria, and some supplements contain multiple species in one product.

Some examples of probiotics are:

- Yogurt
- Kimchi
- Kefir
- Tempeh
- Sauerkraut
- Miso
- Kombucha
- Pickles
- Dairy products
- Sourdough bread
- Lassi
- Fermented vegetables

What Are The Benefits Of Probiotics?

1. Probiotics reduce chronic inflammation.

Chronic inflammation is one of the leading drivers of many diseases. Studies have shown that probiotics are helpful in reducing inflammation, such as in ulcerative colitis and antibiotic-associated diarrhea.

2. They can alleviate anxiety and depression.

Some strains of bacteria can help reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression. *Lactobacillus helveticus* (L. helveticus) and *Bifidobacterium longum* (B. longum) are species of bacteria that have been studied and found to affect brain health.

3. Probiotics boost immune function.

Probiotics have been shown to be effective in boosting immune function. They can help increase your body's ability to fight off infections.

4. They can reduce blood pressure and cholesterol.

Probiotics can reduce the bad cholesterol in the body, as well as blood sugar levels, which will help to reduce insulin resistance. In turn, blood pressure levels are also improved.

Probiotics also aid in regulating the hormones that are responsible for fluid balance and blood pressure.

5. Probiotics can help treat or prevent various diseases.

Studies have shown that probiotics have the potential to be part of treatment programs for various diseases. These include diarrhea, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, vaginal infections, bladder cancer, and eczema, among others.

Lactobacillus GG, for instance, has been found to diminish infectious diarrhea in infants and children.

Things To Remember When Taking Probiotics

Probiotics are generally safe for the majority of people. However, if you have certain conditions, taking probiotics may do more harm than good. If you have a compromised immune system, certain probiotics may not be recommended for you, so it's best to consult your health care provider.

As there are many gut microorganism species, some may not work for you. That's probably because it's not what your body needs. So, if you've been taking probiotic products for a while now and you haven't seen positive effects, it's time to switch to other probiotics.

Also include prebiotics, which will help good bacteria flourish in the gut. Some prebiotic foods are onions, green bananas, beans, and asparagus. Often, it takes some trial and error to find the prebiotics that work best for you.

Given the many benefits of probiotics in keeping a healthy gut, it is worth integrating them into your diet.

Even so, remember that gut health is more than just taking probiotics—regular exercise, a balanced diet, quality sleep, and a healthy lifestyle should also be part of the equation.

Fermented Foods to Boost Your Gut Health



Food fermentation has been around for thousands of years, from back when technologies like refrigerators were not yet a thing. Fermentation is a process of preserving foods to extend their shelf life and avoid wastage.

It is done by adding live bacteria or yeast, which transforms carbs into alcohol or acids that act as natural preservatives.

In recent years, fermented foods have gained increased popularity as gut health has been brought into greater public awareness.

Many diseases have been found to have a link to gut health, which opens the topic of how to keep the gut healthy to fight off such illnesses. Fermented foods contain probiotics, which are good microbes that help restore the balance of bacteria in the gut.

Due to different factors, the diversity of gut bacteria can be compromised. These factors include a poor diet, unhealthy lifestyle, lack of exercise, and environmental factors.

When the bacteria exist in incorrect ratios, the gut cannot function as it should. Functions such as proper digestion and optimal immune response will be adversely affected.

So, what do you do? There are different ways to keep your gut healthy and to restore the balance of the gut microbes, one of which is through the help of fermented foods.

Below are some examples of fermented foods that you may want to include in your diet to help keep your gut healthy:

Kimchi

Kimchi is a staple side dish in Korea. It is rich in probiotics and fiber. Kimchi is fermented cabbage made spicy by gochujang or Korean chili paste. You can find a jar of kimchi in the Asian ingredients section in the groceries. Of course, you can also make it yourself.

Sauerkraut

If you're not fond of spicy foods, then sauerkraut is a better option than kimchi. Sauerkraut is also cabbage and salt, and you probably know this German superfood as a topping on a hotdog.

Kombucha

If you're a tea lover, your gut is already enjoying its benefits. Well, you can take your tea up a notch with kombucha, which is a fermented green or black tea, with herbs or fruits for added flavor. You can find kombucha tea at your local grocery stores.

Yogurt

Yogurt is fermented milk containing millions of probiotic microbes. Some yogurts, however, have gone through pasteurization that might have killed most of the good bacteria. So, make sure that you look at the label and choose the ones that say "cultured" or "live bacteria."

Miso

Miso is fermented barley, rice, or soybean paste, which you may most likely recognize in Japanese soups. It is a staple ingredient in many Japanese and Chinese foods, given the zest that it brings to almost any dish. It contains millions of bacteria that have digestive health benefits.

Pickled vegetables

Pickled vegetables are a good way to get started with fermented foods if you haven't been eating them already. They are often made from carrots, cauliflowers, celery, cucumber, and cabbage, with small hot chilis and bay leaf to taste. They are fermented with salt, water, and vinegar.

Tempeh

Tempeh is fermented soybeans and is rich in protein, dietary fiber, and vitamins. It is a popular Indonesian soy product made into a cake-like form that is similar to tofu. It can be marinated, fried, baked, grilled.

Not All Fermented Foods Are Created Equal

The above-listed fermented foods are just some of the many that you can easily find and include in your diet for a healthier gut. However, not all fermented foods are created equal.

For one, you can expect them to taste differently—sour, spicy, tangy—which may not be suitable for your preferences. You don't have to force yourself if you are not enjoying their taste.

Another thing to remember is that some fermented foods are pasteurized, which means the good bacteria would have probably died in high heat. Look for the ones labeled with live bacteria or cultured, or better yet, ferment them on your own.

Also, if you are sick, an elderly, or pregnant, you need to be extra cautious. Some unpasteurized and fermented foods may have adverse effects.

Tips To Improve Your Gut Health



Your health is dependent on so many things, but a major one is definitely the status of your gut. Your gut health can affect your mental and physical health in various ways. If your gut is out of balance, it can feel like your whole world is too.

It's incredible to think that the trillions of viruses, fungi, and bacteria that thrive in your gut can play such a vital role in different body functions. Because of this, it is essential to keep the balance of these microbes in the gut.

Problems occur when a blowout in one or more species occurs, which alters the healthy ratio. Here are some tips to help you keep a healthy ratio.

Eat A Balanced Diverse Diet

One primary function of your gut is digesting all the foods that go into your stomach. Keep the gut healthy by eating fresh, whole, and unprocessed foods. Processed foods and others high in sugar and artificial sweeteners are bad for your gut. It is also important to diversify the foods that you eat to encourage the diversity of the gut microbiome.

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and more fiber. Incorporating prebiotics and probiotics will also help the good bacteria to grow and keep the gut microbiome balanced. Some of the foods that are good for the gut are whole grains, nuts, yogurt, kimchi, kefir, miso, bananas, and cheese.

Exercise Regularly

Physical activities help with proper digestion, which is good for the gut. When you exercise regularly, you improve your gut health and increase the diversity of bacteria species. It also helps you keep a healthy weight and avoid obesity. It is suggested to engage in moderate-intensity exercises for at least 150 minutes each week.

Get Plenty of Sleep

Your circadian rhythm also has a role to play in keeping the gut healthy, which is why it is important that you get enough sleep every day. Disturbed and poor-quality sleep can impact the gut microbiome negatively. Sleep quality and quantity affect your metabolism, mood, and cognitive functions.

Reduce Your Stress Levels

Stress can disrupt the balance of microorganisms in your gut. For your health's sake, it is important that you reduce or properly manage stress. Doing the first three tips in this list will assist in bolstering your system to better deal with

stress. You can also do meditation, journaling, and yoga to reduce your stress levels.

Improve Your Dental Health

Your mouth is the entryway to the gut. It is where the foods and drinks you consume pass through. Food debris, sugar, and other chemicals may remain in your mouth, and bad bacteria can grow between your teeth. If you don't keep your teeth clean, these bad bacteria can find their way to your gut and the bloodstream.

Make sure that you brush your teeth at least twice a day and that you floss daily. Drink plenty of water, and rinse your mouth after eating sugary foods. Visit your dentist twice a year for a checkup and dental cleaning.

Keep Yourself Hydrated

Water is beneficial to the lining of the gut and in keeping the balance of bacteria. It also helps with the digestion and for ensuring stools pass through the colon easily. Drink at least eight glasses of water a day to keep yourself hydrated and to promote a healthy gut.

Eliminate Bad Substance Usage, In Particular Alcohol And Cigarettes

Smoking and drinking alcohol have adverse effects on the digestive processes and the balance of the gut microbiome. They can alter the composition of the gut microbiome by reducing the number of essential bacteria. In turn, risks of intestinal problems increase, which could lead to chronic and systemic illnesses, such as irritable bowel disease and cancer.

You may find a lot of products, such as probiotics, supplements, etc., promising to keep the gut healthy. These products can assist in maintaining optimal gut populations, but they can't make up for the impacts of an unhealthy lifestyle.

Keeping a healthy gut starts with changing your lifestyle and diet. Follow the tips above, and you'll be on your way to having a better, healthier gut, and better overall wellbeing also.

Conclusion

It is not intuitive to realize how our gut microbiome works – how it works for us, and how it can work against us. But when we understand how it does work, and just how responsible we are for its health (or otherwise), it is like turning on a light in a dark room.

We are the ones who have compromised the diversity and balance of our gut microbes. This is unintentional of course, and stems from making poor lifestyle choices. Mostly this relates to diet, but other factors have an influence as well.

Many of us have impacted our gut flora biodiversity to such an extent that disease and ill-health is a constant and ‘normal’ condition. The populations of the various fractions of our gut microbiome increase or decrease (and even die out) in response to what we feed them.

Years of abuse means that our gut may be largely colonized by the microbes that thrive on sugars and trans fats, and the microbes that are needed to assist in the digestion of whole foods have become all but extinct.

A whole new branch of science is looking to so-called ‘primitive peoples’ to become donors of their gut microbiome – to help those in the ‘first’ world to regain their gut health.

We have the power to reclaim our gut health, and in doing so, massively improve the health of our total mind and body. Follow the advice given in this eBook. Stop feeding the ‘bad’ microbes and feed the beneficial ones. Your gut health underpins your wellbeing, so give it the attention it deserves.