

5 Easy Tips
TO IMPROVE
YOUR GUT HEALTH



Simple, straight forward tips to support your gut health that you can start today!

Gut Health, the Foundation of Overall Health

Congratulations on starting your gut health journey! Gut health is everywhere in the media these days (and with good reason!), but unfortunately, that comes with a lot of misinformation and confusing messages. At Gut Healthy Dietitian, we're here to provide evidence-based and impactful information to empower everyone on their journey to good gut health.



meet Kelsey

Hi! I'm a Registered Dietitian with nearly 10 years of clinical experience. I have a 'food as medicine' approach, and truly believe in the power of nutrition to support our health goals.

Since the gut impacts nearly every aspect of our health, the benefits of good gut health are endless. Good gut health is linked to improved immunity, reduced rates of chronic disease, autoimmune conditions and allergies, as well as better heart and skin health. Gut health even supports mood and mental health through the gut-brain-axis.

Gut Health, the Foundation of Overall Health

Our gut microbiota – the community of trillions of microbes that our house in our digestive tract – are the foundation of gut health. The good news is that the most effective way to support our gut health is through diet, and it's all about adding foods, not taking any away.

What does our gut microbiota do?

- Produces vitamins and hormones (including serotonin)
- Influences appetite and satiety (feeling full)
- Impacts metabolism, has a role in carbohydrate and lipid (fat) storage and metabolism
- Communicates with our brain through the gut-brain-axis

What is 'good gut health'?

Some people might think that if they're not having any digestive symptoms (think bloating, gas, constipation, diarrhea) from a microbiome perspective a healthy gut actually means a diverse and abundant microbiota. This means that we want **more** gut bacteria, and a greater **variety** of bacteria so that we can reap the many benefits of a healthy gut.

How can I increase the variety of plant foods in my diet?

All plant foods contain different types of fiber and beneficial phytochemicals, even within the same species! Next time you're grocery shopping, try one of these simple switches:

- choose a different variety of apple than usual
- get one of each colour bell pepper instead of just red
- try a can of mixed beans instead of black beans at the grocery or

Or think of easy ways to add in extra plant foods throughout your day. Sprinkle a tablespoon of hemp hearts or ground flax on your salad, cereal or toast. Choose bags of mixed frozen fruit for your morning smoothie and throw in a scoop of chia seeds.

5 Easy Tips to Support Gut Health:



1. Eat more fiber. Ultimately the foundation of a 'gut healthy' diet is fiber. Fiber is not digested by the human body and it's sole purpose is to provide food for the gut bacteria that reside in our large intestine. Therefore, the more fiber you eat (think the amount of and variety) the better chance you have at optimizing gut health.

When fiber is fermented by gut bacteria it results in the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). SCFAs are responsible for a lot of the amazing, beneficial impacts of the microbiota. SCFAs have a role in metabolism, insulin sensitivity, gut transit time (the amount of time food takes from eating to excreting (could say pooping here), inflammation, reducing appetite and improving satiety...just to name a few!

How much fiber do you need?

Aim for 30 grams a day at a minimum, and more if you can tolerate it!

5 Easy Tips to Support Gut Health:



2. DIVERSITY.

When it comes to gut health, diversity is key. The single most effective way to contribute to a healthy gut microbiota is to increase the amount and variety of fiber in your diet through eating a diet abundant in plant foods. A good goal is to aim for 30 different plant foods in your diet every week. Each different plant food contains different types of fiber and phytochemicals (beneficial plant chemicals) that feed different gut bacteria. There are 6 plant-based food groups: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes. Although it may seem daunting to eat 30 (or more!) different plant foods every week, it's easier than you think!

Note: go slow and steady when increasing fiber intake.

Increasing your fiber intake too quickly especially if right now your diet is low in fiber, can cause uncomfortable digestive symptoms like gas, bloating and constipation. When you're incorporating more fiber into your diet go slowly, and make sure to increase your water intake as you go. (A short example here would be really helpful

If you have IBS or IBD, you may not be able to tolerate a high fiber diet initially. Rest assured, in most cases, with the help of a gut-specialized dietitian you can gradually increase your tolerance to fiber. [Contact us](#) today if you're interested in learning more or feel you would benefit from the guidance of a dietitian.

A Word About FODMAPS

If you're interested in trying the low FODMAP diet to manage your IBS symptoms, remember that the reintroduction of FODMAP foods is just as important as the elimination phase. Research shows significantly improved results when done under supervision of a gut health dietitian.



5 Easy Tips to Support Gut Health:



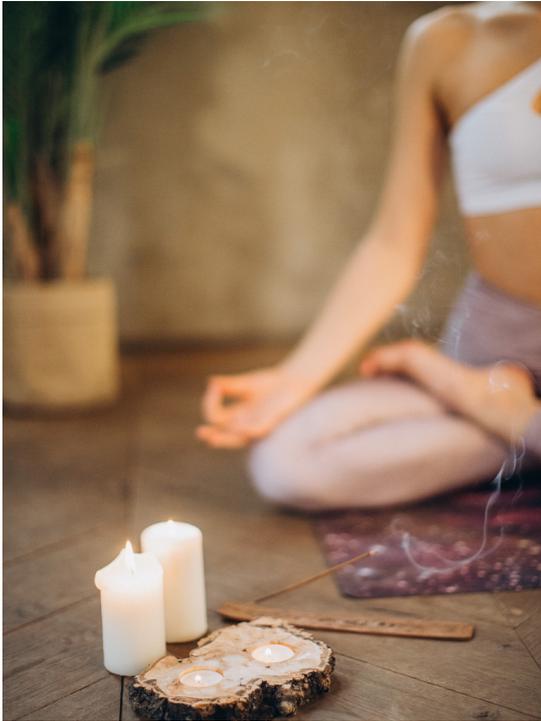
3.

Think INclusion instead of EXclusion. A gut health diet is anti-restriction. Research shows that restrictive diets that eliminate entire food groups (think Keto, paleo and Atkins) negatively impact gut health. Think of it this way, our healthy gut bacteria have preferences for different types of fiber, similar to how we have taste buds and favourite foods.

When we eliminate entire food groups (i.e. whole grains, fruits, beans/legumes) we are starving the gut microbes that feed off of those particular types of fiber. Since we know that the goal is the most diverse gut microbiota possible (for overall health and wellness), the last thing we want to do is restrict entire plant food groups. And don't worry too much about indulging in your favourite treats here and there, research *also* shows that what you add IN to your diet is much more impactful than what you restrict when it comes to gut health.

5 Easy Ways to Support Gut Health:

4.



Manage Stress. The link between gut health and mental health has been well established. You may have heard of the gut-brain-axis, which refers to the two way communication system between the gut and the brain. The gut and the brain are connected both physically and biochemically.

There is actually something to the expressions “having a gut feeling”, someone “giving you butterflies, or your “stomach being in knots”. When you’re having those thoughts and feelings in your brain you are also experiencing them physically in your gut.

If your stress levels are unmanaged, there's a good chance that you are experiencing some gut-related symptoms. In fact, the impact of the brain on gut symptoms is so significant that several trials have shown that non-diet approaches like yoga, breathing exercises, behaviour therapy and hypnotherapy can reduce IBS symptoms to a similar degree as the low FODMAP diet.

5 Easy Tips to Support Gut Health:

5. Move your body, everyday. Aim for 20-30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, most days. Exercise may increase levels of several beneficial gut bacteria as well as the health-promoting short-chain fatty acid butyrate. Butyrate has been associated with many health benefits including reduced inflammation and increased insulin sensitivity. Exercise has been shown to promote higher diversity of the gut microbiota, a key factor in overall gut health. Exercise also stimulates digestion, helping to improve regularity and prevent constipation.



Next Steps...

Gut Healthy Dietitian was created to provide clients the most up-to-date and science-based nutrition services to help them meet their lifestyle and nutrition goals.

We believe that gut health is the foundation to our overall health, and that gut health should matter to everyone, not just those with digestive disorders!

We provide 1:1 and group nutrition counselling services for a wide variety of conditions, including but not limited to digestive disorders, chronic disease management, PCOS, sports nutrition and specialized diets.

Contact us today to begin working on your health and wellness goals!



Thank you!

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kelsey@guthealthydietitian.com
<https://guthealthydietitian.com>

IG: [@guthealthydietitian](#)
