



Your gut or gastrointestinal system covers a lot of ground within your body which includes the following body parts:

- The Mouth
- Salivary Glands
- Esophagus
- Stomach
- Liver
- Gallbladder
- Small Intestine
- Large Intestine
- Appendix
- Rectum
- Anus

Gut health stems from the function of the gastrointestinal tract particularly the esophagus, stomach and intestines working in synergy with the liver, pancreas, and gallbladder to help the body digest and absorb dietary nutrients. Your gut health refers to how effectively your body is able to carry out the digestive function without complication causing unwanted symptoms found in digestive disease. This also includes your gut microbiome which contains trillions of beneficial microorganisms that help your body with many different functions including:

- Supporting Your Immune System
- Protects Your Body From Ingested Pathogens
- Synthesizes Vitamins & Creating Needed Vitamins
- Digesting & Absorbing Nutrients
- Excreting Waste Products

Why Is Gut Health Important?

- To efficiently breakdown foods and deliver nutrients to your body.
- Contains healthy bacteria and immune cells helping to ward off infection, bacteria, viruses, and fungi.
- Communicates with the brain through nerves and hormones and create brain receptors.

The Gut Microbiome & Disease

Inflammatory Bowel Disease: *IBD is an umbrella term that includes: Crohn's Disease & Ulcerative Colitis.*

Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth: *SIBO develops when bacteria found in other parts of the digestive tract begin growing in the small intestine. It can lead to malnutrition.*

Obesity: *Disruptions in gut microbiome can lead to the development of obesity.*

Insulin Sensitivity & Other Endocrine Disorders: *May alter your body's ability to use and respond to insulin or other hormones.*

Mental Health: *Imbalance of gut microbiome is associated with anxiety, depression, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.*

Asthma: *Gut health is connected to the body's immune system and can lead to the development of asthma and other lung issues.*

Various Cancers: The gut's influence on the immune system can lead to the possible development of certain cancers including colorectal and breast cancers.

What Are The Signs of A Gut Problem?

Everyone experiences digestive problems at some point, however persisting symptoms may be a sign of an underlying problem that needs medical attention.

- Abdominal Pain
- Bad Breath/Halitosis
- Black Stool
- Bloating
- Constipation
- Difficulties Swallowing
- Fever
- Heartburn
- Loose Stools
- Nausea
- Skin Irritation
- Sleep Disturbances
- Unintentional Weight-loss
- Vomiting

How To Support A Healthy Gut

Probiotics: Live digestive bacteria and yeasts taken as a supplement to support healthy gut flora.

Prebiotics: Food source for your gut flora helping to keep balance populations of good bacteria.

- *Resistant starch can be a probiotic as it is not absorbed in the small intestine and passes to the large intestine where microbiota break it down.*
- *Prebiotics promote growth of several types of beneficial bacteria including Bifidobacteria.*
- *Certain prebiotics have been shown to reduce insulin, triglyceride, and cholesterol levels in people with obesity-beneficial in preventing certain conditions like heart disease & type 2 diabetes.*

Polyphenols: Eat foods rich in polyphenols--compounds with health benefits including reduction in blood pressure, inflammation, cholesterol levels, and oxidative stress.

- *Cocoa & Dark Chocolate, Red Wine, Grape Skins, Green Tea, Almonds, Onions, Blueberries, Broccoli*
- *Polyphenols create changes in the microbiome associated with lower levels of triglycerides and C-reactive protein, a marker for inflammation.*

Dietary Fiber: Slows gut motility giving your large intestine time to absorb water so it is not passed in the stool. Serves as a bulking agent, binding digestible matter together to be passed by the body as stool.

- *Artichokes, Apples, Green Peas, Broccoli, Chickpeas, Lentils, Beans, Whole Grains, Raspberries, Bananas*
- *Apples, Artichokes, Blueberries, Almonds & Pistachios increase Bifidobacteria--a beneficial gut bacteria that helps prevent intestinal inflammation& enhance gut health.*

Varied Diet: Eat a variety of foods rich in plant foods to increase microbial diversity. Fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds are prebiotic foods that feed beneficial gut bacteria and help reduce inflammation.

- *Whole grains contain lots of fiber and non-digestible carbs, such as beta-glucagon. These carbs are not absorbed in the small intestine and make their way to the large intestine to promote beneficial bacteria growth in the gut.*
- *Whole-grains promote growth of Bifidobacteria, Lactobacilli, and Bacteroidetes.*

Fermented Foods: Eating foods that have undergone fermentation can help to increase the good bacteria in your gut.

- *Yogurt, Kimchi, Sauerkraut, Kefir, Kombucha, Tempeh*