



Soothe the Stomach, Calm the Mind

A Quick-Reference Guide for Gut-Brain Calm

TRIGGERS ANXIETY

Refined Sugar



e.g., High-fructose corn syrup, white bread, processed pastries, sodas, fruit drinks, ketchup, pasta sauces, SUGAR

Why not?

Spikes blood glucose, triggering a cortisol and adrenaline cascade that mimics panic.

Seed Oils



e.g., Corn oil, soybean oil, canola oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil

Why not?

Triggers oxidative stress & cellular friction in digestive tract, disrupting clear vagal signaling

Artificial Sweeteners



e.g., Sucralose, stevia, aspartame, erythritol

Why not?

Disrupts gut-brain axis feedback loop; linked to increased anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Ultra-Processed Foods



e.g., Packaged snacks, fast food, frozen meals, many breakfast cereals, microwave popcorn.

Why not?

Strips the gut barrier of protective mucus; starves beneficial bacteria of fibre.

CALMS THE STOMACH

Dark Berries



e.g., Wild blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, acai berries

Why?

Act as potent antioxidants, neutralising oxidative stress in the enteric nervous system.

Fermented Foods



e.g., Yogurt, Kimchi, kefir (fermented milk drink), miso, sauerkraut

Why?

Introduces probiotic strains that produce GABA and serotonin precursors in the gut.

Omega 3 Foods



e.g., Pastured eggs, wild-caught salmon, walnuts, chia and flaxseeds

Why?

EPA/DHA omega-3s cross the blood-brain barrier, directly reducing neuroinflammation.

Snacks



e.g., Air popped popcorn, dark chocolate, greek yogurt, avocado boats

Why?

Keeps blood sugar level and reduces systemic neuroinflammation.