

# GET BETTER GUT HEALTH

**Your gut** houses approximately 100 trillion bacteria in your digestive tract, which is commonly referred to as gut microbiota. An imbalance in the composition and diversity of the gut microbiota can prevent your body from performing at its best. Maintaining a wide variety of good bacteria relative to the harmful bacteria may provide numerous benefits.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY GUT?

- Enhanced immune function
- Improved mood
- Restful sleep
- Efficient metabolism and appetite regulation
- Decreased inflammation
- Reduced risk for chronic disease

## WHICH FACTORS INFLUENCE MY GUT?

Initially, each individual's gut microbiota is determined by genetics, mode of birth, and what you were fed as an infant. However, your gut evolves. There are several factors and lifestyle choices that influence our gut health for better or worse, such as our age, environment, diet, exercise, chronic stress, alcohol consumption, and use of antibiotics and medication. Although we cannot control all of these factors, we can choose to follow a diet that promotes a healthy gut.

## WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF PREBIOTICS AND PROBIOTICS?

Nutrition research suggests that two specific functional components in foods synergistically support gut health: prebiotics and probiotics. Probiotics are the “good” bacteria or live active cultures that reside in our gut, mostly in the large intestine. Prebiotics are non-digestible plant foods (fiber) that feed the probiotics to stimulate growth. Although prebiotics and probiotics are available as dietary supplements, using real foods is always encouraged.



### Perform a gut check.

A diet high in refined carbohydrates, sugar, and processed foods initiates and harbors less helpful bacteria. Limiting these types of foods in your diet may help improve your gut health.



### Repair your gut.

Practice lifestyle behaviors that facilitate the growth of healthy bacteria, such as engaging in regular exercise, meditation, and sleep hygiene. Excessive use of antibiotics, NSAIDs, alcohol, and smoking are just a few behaviors that may compromise the integrity of your gut.



### Restore your gut.

A diet rich in prebiotic fiber and probiotics helps the good bacteria in your gut thrive. Prebiotics are found in many fruits and vegetables, especially those containing complex carbohydrates, such as bananas, leeks, and whole grains. Probiotics are found in fermented foods containing live active cultures. Fermented foods include products like yogurt, aged cheeses, sauerkraut, and kombucha.



## Main Takeaway

There is still a lot to learn about the role of your gut in overall health but we know for a fact that eating a healthy diet that includes lots of fruits, vegetables, fiber and fermented foods is one of the best ways to optimize your gut!



## Resources

### **TED Talk - Food + Gut**

[Watch this video >](#)

### **What is a probiotic?**

[Watch this video >](#)

### **Microbiome...WHAT?**

[Read this article >](#)

### **Gut bacteria influencers**

[Read this article >](#)

### **Microbiota + functions**

[Read this article >](#)