



# EATING FOR A HEALTHY MICROBIOME

In your daily life, the choices you make about what you eat can make the greatest difference in cultivating a healthy gut microbiome. The modern Western diet, which is low in fiber and high in sugar, salt, fat, and highly processed food, can also severely degrade the gut microbiome. When the gut microbiome is damaged or degraded, the intestinal wall can also be damaged. Then certain chemicals made by the bacteria, such as lipopolysaccharides (LPS)—also known as endotoxin—can leak through the intestinal wall into the bloodstream. Endotoxin is a potent trigger for our immune system and results in inflammation. As long as endotoxin is present, the inflammatory response will stay activated. This chronic inflammation is an underlying cause of many illnesses. It's important to keep in mind that because of its genetic complexity, a "normal" gut microbiome hasn't been defined yet. Researchers generally believe, however, that a flourishing, healthy gut microbiome is established by eating a wide range of natural foods, with an emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and fiber. Here are a few guidelines for what to add to your diet and what to eliminate. If you follow these steps, you will simultaneously help to increase the diversity of your gut microbiome while decreasing inflammation in your body and mind.

1. Fatty, cold-water fish (such as salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring).
2. Tree nuts (such as walnuts, almonds, etc., but excluding peanuts, a groundnut)
3. Pickles
4. Seeds
5. Fresh fruit, especially berries and tart cherries
6. Cruciferous vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, bok choy, cauliflower)
7. Dark, leafy greens
8. Tempeh
9. Sauerkraut
10. Whole grains
11. Organic dairy products
12. Peppers (i.e. bell peppers, various chilies)
13. Beets
14. Ginger and turmeric
15. Garlic
16. Mycoprotein (from mushrooms and other fungi)
17. Olive oil
18. Ghee
19. Soy (including soy milk and tofu)
20. Active Yogurt
21. Kefir
22. Kimchi

# HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR GUT HEALTH



## LOWER YOUR STRESS LEVELS

Chronic high levels of stress are hard on your whole body, including your gut. Some ways to lower stress may include meditation, walking, getting a massage, spending time with friends or family, diffusing essential oils, decreasing caffeine intake, laughing, yoga, or having a pet.

## GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Not getting enough or sufficient quality of sleep can have serious impacts on your gut health, which can in turn contribute to more sleep issues. Try to prioritize getting at least 7–8 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night. Your doctor may be able to help if you have trouble sleeping.

## EAT MINDFULLY

Chewing your food thoroughly and eating your meals more slowly can help promote full digestion and absorption of nutrients. This may help you reduce digestive discomfort and maintain a healthy gut. Be aware of how your food tastes, smells, looks and be present while eating, not watching TV.

## STAY HYDRATED

Drinking plenty of water has been shown to have a beneficial effect on the mucosal lining of the intestines, as well as on the balance of good bacteria in the gut. Staying hydrated is a simple way to promote a healthy gut.

## CHECK FOR FOOD INTOLERANCES

If you have symptoms such as cramping, bloating, abdominal pain, diarrhea, rashes, nausea, fatigue, and acid reflux, you may be suffering from a food intolerance. You can try eliminating common trigger foods to see if your symptoms improve. If you are able to identify a food or foods that are contributing to your symptoms, you may see a positive change in your digestive health by changing your eating habits.

WELLNESS COUNCIL OF ARIZONA  
CONTACT@WELCOAZ.ORG

