

The Top 10 Foods for Gut Health



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There are many great foods that can aid gut health. And variety counts. We need to eat different foods that can help feed our good gut bacteria. Different bacteria like different foods. The research is on-going and we do not have specific information for specific beneficial strains. We do know that people who have a diverse whole food diet have a more robust set of microflora and better health.

Here are a few key players to add to the diet:

Kefir



This is not all kefirs – just the ones from kefir grains which contains 32 strains of good bacteria and yeast that live synergistically. They cannot survive without each other. Because it has so many strains, it helps the most. When made with cow or goat milk, it contains GOS, an amazing prebiotic. Many people who have issues with dairy have no problem with kefir. If they do, there are ways to use the kefir grains with coconut milk. There have been many studies determining the health benefits of kefir. It inhibits Candida Albicans, regulates inflammation, helps with acne and eczema, lowers triglycerides and cholesterol, stabilizes blood sugar, is antimicrobial, supports the immune system and has anti-tumour properties. Serving size should be 1/4 -1/2 cup. Start with a smaller amount and work up. Not all kefirs are made with kefir grains, so be sure to check.

Sauerkraut

Probably one of the most well known, sauerkraut is made with cabbage and is fermented in a brine made of salt and cabbage juice. It must be made without oxygen. It is not just a source of good bacteria, it also contains prebiotic fibre. It can be purchased from a health food or grocery stores and should be purchased from a refrigerator case and not the store shelf. Phytochemicals in cabbage are more bioavailable and may protect against carcinogens. Enzymes found in sauerkraut may help with ulcers. Sauerkraut is also a good source of vitamin C, which is found in every cell of the body the gut loves it. Serving size should be 1/4-1/2 cup.



Bone Broth:

The best kind is the kind you make yourself but it is available in health food and specialty stores. The key to bone broth is how long the bones are simmered in the water. The longer the bones simmer, the more minerals, amino acids and collagen will be present in the broth. These are key nutrients to help the gut function well and help repair when it is not working as it should. For vegetarians, make your own veggie broth and add vegetarian glutamine and agar agar to give it more gut health benefits. It can be consumed daily and is good as a base for soups and stews. However, it can also be consumed as a beverage on its own. Just heat a cup of broth and season it to taste with sea salt, pepper and your favourite herbs. Pour it in a mug and relax as you sip it like a tea or coffee.



Cruciferous Vegetables



Broccoli, cauliflower, kale, bok choy, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts are an amazing source of prebiotic fibre but generally do not cause digestive issues for people who are bothered by oligosaccharides. Whether they are consumed raw or lightly steamed, they provide a number of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients that aid the function of the gut. Try to consume them on a regular basis, even daily, if possible.

Legumes

All beans are good for the gut but legumes like chickpeas, black beans and kidney beans deliver more help than their younger siblings green beans, edamame and peas. They contain resistant starch which is essential for feeding a specific type of bacteria in our colon which, in turn, produce beneficial short chain fatty acids that help our immune system, regulate inflammation and do other beneficial activities in the body. Consuming a legume every day is a great for the gut. If you have trouble digesting legumes, place cooked legumes in a jar with water, 1 teaspoon sea salt and 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar. Screw on a lid tightly and let sit at least overnight and up to two weeks.



Grains



Whole grains such as wheat, rye, barley, spelt, kamut, brown rice are all great sources of resistant starch, even more so than legumes. Potatoes and corn are also good sources. They support the body and the gut as a source of B vitamins and they help our good gut bacteria make even more B vitamins for us. For those who have trouble digesting grains, fermenting the grains may be the answer. This means buying sourdough bread. Many true sourdoughs are available from local bakeries and it can be purchased online. It will contain flour, water and bacterial culture. No yeast. Studies show sourdough bread, even made with white flour can stabilize blood sugar and improve immune system response. By fermenting the flour ahead of time, much of the gluten is broken down as well as the carbohydrates. It is a great option for the gut.

Jerusalem Artichokes

One of the highest foods for prebiotic fibre, Jerusalem artichokes (also known as sunchokes) are extremely helpful for gut health. They also help stabilize blood sugar and support liver function. Look for them in the fall and winter and they are becoming easier to find in health food and grocery stores. They can be consumed raw or they can be added to vegetable dishes or substituted for potatoes. They have a different type of prebiotic fibre than potatoes so mixing the two together is a great way to get the best of both.



Kimchi



As a traditional Korean fermented food, kimchi is receiving a lot of attention from researchers. Like sauerkraut it is made with cabbage but also contains daikon radish, ginger, onions and other good foods for the gut. Certain strains in kimchi have been shown to aid the detoxification of heavy metals and Bisphenol-A, found in plastic, from the gastrointestinal tract, preventing them from entering the body. It also helps protect against heart disease, aids weight loss and boosts the immune system. Kimchi is available in health food or grocery stores and again, should be from a refrigerator case and not the store shelf.

Berries

Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries and all their cousins contain phytonutrients that have many powerful benefits but they also are loved as food by our good gut bacteria. As a grab and go food, they are simple to consume. Add them to breakfast meals, smoothies or baked goodies. Remember, variety is always a key for gut health so have different varieties of berries. Dried berries such as goji or goldenberries are also good options.



Garlic, Onions and Leeks



Not only are garlic, onions and leeks great prebiotic foods that feed out good gut bacteria, they also contain phytochemicals that are antibacterial and antifungal. This means they can help control bad bacteria and fungus that may cause us symptoms. These phytochemicals do not hurt our good bacteria. It is no wonder that we include them in many savoury recipes. If these are foods you like, be sure to continue to add them when and where you want.

Honourable Mention: Bananas, citrus fruits, sweet potatoes, quinoa, carrots, asparagus, apples, pears, spinach, kombucha, yogurt, wine, unpasteurized beer, dark chocolate, apple cider vinegar, honey, maple syrup, almonds, tomatoes, chia seeds, flax seed and hemp seeds are just a few foods that also aid the gut.

With a list like this there are so many ways to enjoy food and be nice to the gut.

Tip: Culinary herbs and spices all aid digestive and intestinal health. That is one of the main reasons they have been added to foods for centuries. Do not hesitate to spice up meals with the flavours you love.

Questions and Support

Are you suffering from indigestion, bloating, gas, constipation, low energy, and belly fat? Do you suffer from Leaky Gut symptoms such as brain fog, joint pain, skin rashes and headaches?



I hope this document gave you enough tools to get started on improving and maintaining your gut health! If you feel overwhelmed and need personalized support on doing a leaky gut protocol, feel free to book an Initial Consultation with me and let's talk (Insurance Receipts for Naturopath Services are available)! 😊

I offer one on one consultations and online programs to reset and rebuild your gut health. Optimizing your gut function is the foundation for improving your metabolism, immune health, managing weight, increasing energy, and feeling comfortable in your own body.

Book a Free Discovery Call

My nutrition consultations include:

- ✓ Private ONLINE Zoom sessions
- ✓ Health assessment report
- ✓ Customized protocol with supplement, dietary, lifestyle recommendations
- ✓ Gut Reboot Kit:
 - Lifestyle suggestions to help guide you through the process of improved eating habits, removing sugar, and cravings
 - Food Guide: list of foods to avoid and to replace with healthier alternatives
 - Sample meal plans that help you set healthy habits
 - Delicious Recipes for meals, snacks, smoothies, teas, salad dressings and soups
 - Access to your personal portal and food journal (Mobile App) as needed