

the importance of

Gut Health

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The gut microbiome has 3 main functions:

Metabolism - the gut breaks down carbohydrates, protein, and fat and makes vitamins such as vitamins B and K

Immunity - the gut contains 70-80% of our body's immunity

Protection - the gut's immune properties reduce the ability of pathogens to survive in the gut and strengthen the intestinal barrier

Leaky Gut

occurs when the intestinal lining starts letting large molecules that are potentially pathogenic into the bloodstream. This creates low-grade inflammation which is associated with a variety of illnesses.

Gut Health Affects the Whole Body



Unhealthy gut bacteria can influence chemicals in the brain that affect learning and memory, mental health, and contribute to Alzheimer's disease.



TMAO, a chemical made from red meat and eggs may cause cholesterol to build up in blood vessels and lead to heart disease.



An unhealthy gut microbiome may cause crossed signals for hunger and fullness.



Sleep deprivation may lead to changes in gut bacteria because we reach for quick sources of energy when we're tired.



Regular exercise supports a healthy gut and a healthy gut may improve exercise performance.

things that harm

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High intake of sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and other sweeteners can eliminate the good bacteria in the gut which can increase sugar cravings.



Artificial sweeteners such as aspartame, Splenda, and Nutrasweet may throw the gut microbiome out of balance and may cause leaky gut.



Ultra-processed foods such as frozen meals, potato chips, candy, and store bought bakery products don't resemble any of the ingredients they are made from. Ultra-processed food can cause bad bacteria to produce toxins that harm the gut.



Heavy alcohol use can reduce the variety of bacteria in the gut.

ways to improve

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Eat less red meat. Red meat contains L-carnitine which stimulates TMAO in the gut. High levels of TMAO are associated with heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Eat more fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, kimchi, and kombucha which contain probiotics, beneficial bacteria for the gut.

Focus on fiber. Gut microbes use fiber as an energy source.

Prebiotics are plant fibers that are a source of food for the good bacteria in the gut. Examples are leeks, garlic, onions, artichokes, asparagus, soybeans, flaxseed, and bananas.

Fructans are prebiotics that are found in whole grains such as wheat, barley, rye, and oats. Look for inulin and chicory fiber on nutrition labels.

Synbiotics contain both prebiotics and probiotics. Examples are yogurt and bananas, stir fry with tofu and asparagus, and oatmeal with kefir and flaxseed.

Strawberries increase helpful bifidobacteria in the gut.

Pumpkin is high in beta carotene, which is converted to vitamin A and helps reduce infections.

Beets reduce inflammation and strengthen the intestinal barrier.

Eat more leafy greens such as spinach, kale, and collard greens. These contain a compound that the good bacteria in the gut feed upon.

Drink green tea which can encourage the growth of good bacteria and help reduce the risk of leaky gut.

Choose dark chocolate with at least 70% cacao. Plant chemicals in dark chocolate fuel the good bacteria in the gut.

Erythritol is a sweetener that produces short-chain fatty acids in the gut and may reduce inflammation. Swerve is a sweetener that contains erythritol and prebiotics that can't be broken down by the digestive tract.

Eat 30 different types of plants each week for gut diversity.

recommended
websites:

webmd.com
eatthisnotthat.com
aarp.com
medicalnewstoday.com
healthline.com
meatlessmonday.com