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Food and Fitness

Why is it Important to Have a Healthy Gut?



Gut health is important for a healthy life. The gut (gastrointestinal tract) is defined as the entire system from the mouth to the anus. Gut health requires a balance of both good and bad bacteria and yeast. A large part of the immune system is in the gut and so is the hormone serotonin. A healthy gut promotes both a healthy immune system and hormone function while the opposite is also true.

You may hear the word microbiome when discussing gut health. A microbiome are the microorganisms that are in a particular environment. Gut microbiome includes bacteria, archaea, viruses, and fungi that are in the gut that are incredibly important for overall health.

The gastrointestinal tract includes every part of the tract from the moment food enters the body through the mouth until the remaining waste exits through the anus. The length of the tract will vary from person to person but can be about thirty feet long (noting that this measurement is taken during an autopsy). When the intestines are inside a living person, the muscles are in a mixture of tense and relaxed state. This makes the length of the tract considerably shorter, and different lengths during different stages of digestion.

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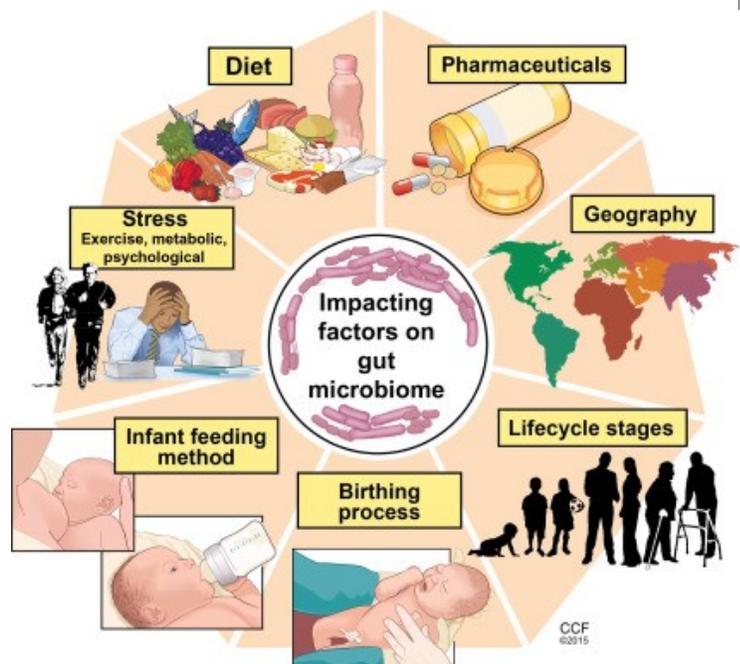
Why is it Important to Have a Healthy Gut?

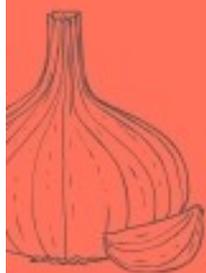
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The gut has many important jobs like digesting food, absorbing nutrients, and maintaining bodily functions. Your gut is also the place that rids the body of waste and toxins. An imbalance in the gut, creates issues with the immune system and with the serotonin hormone. The serotonin hormone is known for sending messages between nerve cells. Serotonin is believed to also play a role in mood, emotions, appetite, digestion, and sleep. The body is not effectively getting rid of toxics and things begin to go down hill when there is an imbalance. Symptoms of an unhealthy gut include inflammation, chronic fatigue, brain fog, gastrointestinal issues, joint pain, and chronic illnesses. Many times, this leads to autoimmune diseases.

Many factors can affect the health of your gut. Poor diet, stress, and long-term use of antibiotics or antacids are some of the factors. A diet high in processed foods and sugar can be very harmful to the good bacteria that live in the gut. Other things like red meats, fried foods, alcohol, and caffeine can create an imbalance if not done in moderation. On the other hand, other foods support a healthy gut. Fermented foods like yogurt, kimchi, and sauerkraut have live bacteria that are a great option for gut health. Other foods like bananas, leafy green vegetables, and whole grains are also supportive to a healthy gut. Beverages like teas, coffee, and red wine have been noted because of the compound polyphenols that promotes the growth of good gut bacteria.

Gut health is like the foundation of a house, it needs to be strong and stable to hold the house together. It works the same within the human body. If the gut is not healthy, other health related issues can arise.





BEST FOODS FOR A DIET TO SUPPORT GUT HEALTH

Sometimes the best approach in trying to get clients to improve their diet is not to focus on what they cannot eat, but to push what they can and should eat. To support good gut health and a healthy microbiome, educate your clients about all the tasty, nutritious foods they can add to their meals.

PREBIOTIC FOODS RICH IN PREBIOTICS AND OTHER NUTRIENTS THAT SUPPORT HEALTHY BACTERIA

- Chickpeas
- Lentils
- Kidney beans
- Peas
- Broccoli
- Oats
- Collard greens, kale, spinach, and other leafy greens
- Jerusalem artichokes
- Asparagus
- Garlic, leeks, and onions
- Green tea
- Sprouted grains, like sprouted grain bread
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Nuts
- Dark chocolate



PROBIOTIC PROBIOTIC FOODS

- Yogurt
- Kefir
- Sauerkraut
- Kimchee
- Kombucha
- Miso
- Tempeh

Vegetable—Chives



Chives are an herb more so than a vegetable. Chives are a part of the allium family which is in the same family as the onions, garlic, leeks, and scallions. Chives can be found all over the world.

Chives have a long, green stem that are hollow on the inside. Chives are one of the first herbs to pop up in the spring. The green stem of the chive has a flavor that is similar to an onion.

Most often chives are used fresh as a garnish but they can also be found dried in the spice aisle. Often chives are added to provide brightness and create a visual appeal to a dish, but they also add some flavor as well. They can be used in dishes like soups, potatoes, eggs, etc.

The chive can grow a purple flower (blossom) which can also be eaten. The flower blooms at the tip top of the stalk. It is said that the flavor of the chive blossom is a hint of both onion and garlic. The chive blossoms are not generally sold in stores but you may be able to find them at local farmers' markets. The growing season for the flower is usually in the months of May and June, so the growing season for the flower is very limited.

Chives are a pretty well-known herb. Chives provide a hint of color and a hint of flavor, making them the perfect herb to top an array of dishes.

NutritionData's Opinion

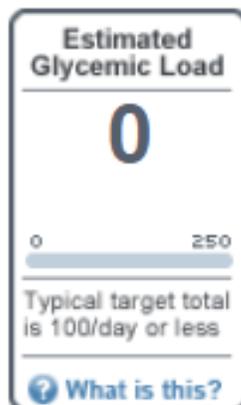
[? What is this?](#)

Weight loss: ★★★★★

Optimum health: ★★★★★

Weight gain: ★☆☆☆☆

The good: This food is very low in Cholesterol and Sodium. It is also a good source of Thiamin, Niacin, Pantothenic Acid, Phosphorus and Zinc, and a very good source of Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin K, Riboflavin, Vitamin B6, Folate, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Potassium, Copper and Manganese.



Caloric Ratio Pyramid [? What is this?](#)

Caloric Ratio Pyramid for Chives, raw

This feature requires Flash player to be installed in your browser. [Download the player here.](#)

53%	20%	27%
Carbs	Fats	Protein



Chives, raw

Serving size:

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Amounts per 1 tbsp chopped (3g)

Calorie Information

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Calories	0.9 (3.8 kJ)	0%
From Carbohydrate	0.5 (2.1 kJ)	
From Fat	0.2 (0.8 kJ)	
From Protein	0.2 (0.8 kJ)	
From Alcohol	0.0 (0.0 kJ)	

Protein & Amino Acids

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Protein	0.1 g	0%

[More details](#)

Carbohydrates

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Total Carbohydrate	0.1 g	0%
Dietary Fiber	0.1 g	0%
Starch	0.0 g	
Sugars	0.1 g	

[More details](#)

Vitamins

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Vitamin A	131 IU	3%
Vitamin C	1.7 mg	3%
Vitamin D	~	~
Vitamin E (Alpha Tocopherol)	0.0 mg	0%
Vitamin K	6.4 mcg	8%
Thiamin	0.0 mg	0%
Riboflavin	0.0 mg	0%
Niacin	0.0 mg	0%
Vitamin B6	0.0 mg	0%
Folate	3.2 mcg	1%
Vitamin B12	0.0 mcg	0%
Pantothenic Acid	0.0 mg	0%
Choline	0.2 mg	
Betaine	~	

[More details](#)

Fats & Fatty Acids

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Total Fat	0.0 g	0%
Saturated Fat	0.0 g	0%
Monounsaturated Fat	0.0 g	
Polyunsaturated Fat	0.0 g	
Total trans fatty acids	~	
Total trans-monoenoic fatty acids	~	
Total trans-polyenoic fatty acids	~	
Total Omega-3 fatty acids	0.4 mg	
Total Omega-6 fatty acids	7.6 mg	

[Learn more about these fatty acids and their equivalent names](#)

[More details](#)

Minerals

Amounts Per Selected Serving		%DV
Calcium	2.8 mg	0%
Iron	0.0 mg	0%
Magnesium	1.3 mg	0%
Phosphorus	1.7 mg	0%
Potassium	8.9 mg	0%
Sodium	0.1 mg	0%
Zinc	0.0 mg	0%
Copper	0.0 mg	0%
Manganese	0.0 mg	1%
Selenium	0.0 mcg	0%
Fluoride	~	

Recipe—Garlic-Chive Baked Fries

Ingredients

- ◆ 4 medium russet potatoes
- ◆ 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ◆ 4 teaspoons dried minced chives
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon salt
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- ◆ 1/4 teaspoon pepper



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Cut potatoes into 1/4-in. julienne strips. Rinse well and pat dry.
2. Transfer potatoes to a large bowl. Drizzle with oil; sprinkle with the remaining ingredients. Toss to coat. Arrange in a single layer in two 15x10x1-in. baking pans coated with cooking spray.
3. Bake 20-25 minutes or until lightly browned, turning once.

Happy Easter Word Scramble

The Easter Bunny decorated some of his eggs with words, but when he delivered them, they got a little scrambled. Can you unscramble the words and find the answer to his favorite riddle?



1. _ _ _ 1 2 _ _ _

4. _ _ _ 7 _ _ 8

2. _ _ _ 3 4 _ _ _ 5

5. _ _ _ 9 _ _ _ _

3. 6 _ _ _ _ _ _

6. 10 11 _ _ _ _ _

What do you call a rabbit who tells good jokes?

11 6 3 2 7 8 10 9 1 4 5



April 2022

Monthly Observances

- **Global Astronomy Month**
- **International Guitar Month**
- **Keep America Beautiful Month**
- **Lawn and Garden Month**
- **National Card and Letter Month**
- **National Frog Month**
- **National Humor Month**
- **National Kite Month**
- **National Pecan Month**
- **National Poetry Month**
- **National Welding Month**
- **Stress Awareness Month**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 April Food's Day	2 Reconciliation Day
3 World Party Day	4 Walk Around Things Day	5 Deep Dish Pizza Day	6 National Walking Day	7 National Burrito Day	8 Zoo Lover's Day	9 Name Yourself Day
10 National Siblings Day	11 National Pet Day	12 Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day	13 National Peach Cobbler Day	14 National Pecan Day	15 Good Friday	16 Mushroom Day
17 Easter Sunday	18 Patriot's Day	19 National Garlic Day	20 Volunteer Recognition Day	21 Kindergarten Day	22 National Jelly Bean Day	23 National English Muffin Day
24 Pig in a Blanket Day	25 World Penguin Day	26 National Pretzel Day	27 Babe Ruth Day	28 International Astronomy Day	29 National Shrimp Scampi Day	30 National Raisin Day

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Brain Exercise Answers

Happy Easter Word Scramble

SOLUTION

1. BONNET
2. SUNDAY
3. FLOWER
4. CANDY
5. TULIP
6. BASKET

Answer: A FUNNY BUNNY



This newsletter is created by Kathrine J. Clark, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition Consultant to the
West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services.