

Wellness

REVIEW

Healthy Gut Healthy Life



The Gut Is the Root of Health

Have you ever experienced symptoms such as indigestion, reflux, wind, bloating, constipation or diarrhoea? These are among the most common health complaints that people live with every day. In fact, if these symptoms are left untreated, they can lead to more serious problems and affect the health of the whole body.

There are four key elements that promote healthy digestive function: maintaining the integrity of the gut lining, having a healthy balance of bacteria in the gut, adequate digestive enzyme function to break down foods, and eating a healthy and nutritious diet. It may seem simple enough, but if one of these areas is out of balance, it will impact on digestion and overall health.

Put Up Your Best Guard

The first element of a healthy gut is the lining of the digestive tract. The lining is made up of several layers of cells and mucous; this barrier is the only internal part of your body that is exposed to the outside world. The lining of our gut protects your insides from being exposed to foreign particles and acid. Anyone can have barrier issues; as even stress, drinking coffee and alcohol, and poor dietary choices can damage the lining of your gastrointestinal tract.

The following nutrients help maintain a healthy gut lining:

- Glutamine is an amino acid beneficial for protecting and healing the gut. Glutamine energises the cells in your gut and helps to repair your lining after trauma from infections, food intolerances and anti-inflammatory medications that affect the gut.
- GutGard® liquorice is a potent anti-inflammatory, soothing the lining of the gut and speeding healing time. It has been proven to improve symptoms including heartburn, abdominal pain, bloating, and nausea.

Bacteria Are Not Always the Enemy

Our gut is home to a huge population of microbes. There is a perfect balance of good and bad bacteria that will be specific to you as an individual. It is when this harmony between your microbes goes out of balance that you may start to experience symptoms. Probiotics are a way of restoring the right amount of good bacteria, and making that balance just right.

- *Lactobacillus acidophilus* (NCFM) is a probiotic that helps to colonise the gut full of good bacteria, and helps to reduce the bad bacteria for healthy digestive balance.
- *Bifidobacterium lactis* (Bi-07), another probiotic strain, can be beneficial during and after antibiotics, and can relieve symptoms such as flatulence, diarrhoea and constipation.

Enzymes for Digesting

Your body creates enzymes to do a multitude of functions, including the breakdown and digestion of food. The following enzymes support digestive health:

- Hydrochloric acid is a gastric enzyme in stomach acid, helping to break down food, and eliminate bad bacteria and microbes introduced to the digestive tract.
- Pancreatic enzymes are produced by the pancreas, and are dispensed through pancreatic juice. These enzymes are involved in the digestion of proteins, fats and carbohydrates in the stomach.
- Brush border enzymes are found in your intestines and further digest food particles.
- Bile helps to break down fats and is needed for cholesterol synthesis.

You Are What You Eat

Do you base your food choices on the benefits they will provide?

Here are some key guidelines to achieving optimal gut health.

- Cut out refined, processed and fast foods. Restrict sugary foods, cakes, lollies, soft drinks, bottled juices, ice creams and pastries.
- Limit starchy carbohydrates to two serves daily and include protein rich foods at every meal and snack.
- Eat fresh and organic as much as possible, choosing two serves of fresh fruits and at least three cups of fresh vegetables daily.
- Include healthy oils, nuts and seeds in your diet too.
- Drink plenty of water, a minimum of eight glasses per day and avoid excessive alcohol, caffeine and salt.

If you have a digestive condition, speak to your Practitioner about whether a tailored diet will be beneficial for you. Certain digestive disorders may require a more specific, individualised diet for the best results. This may include a gluten free diet, elimination diet or a low FODMAPS (Fermentable Oligosaccharides, Disaccharides, Monosaccharides and Polyols) diet.

Getting to the Bottom of Things

If you are suffering from indigestion, reflux, wind, bloating, constipation or diarrhoea, your gut is not 100% and could be preventing you from being your optimal self. Speak to your Practitioner today about the many ways they can help you restore your gut function and make your digestive system its healthiest.

*References available on request.