

# Wellness REVIEW

## Love Your Guts for Good Health

### Healthy Gut, Healthy Body

Suffering from bloating, pain, constipation, diarrhoea or reflux? Uncomfortable gut symptoms indicate an imbalance in your digestive system. Gut health can affect your whole body, with digestive imbalances related to allergy, autoimmunity and even cardiovascular disease. So don't ignore your symptoms - read on to find out how loving your guts leads to good health.

### Nourishing Your Body

Your digestive system is highly efficient at breaking down food to obtain the nutrients it needs to nourish your body; in a similar way that food scraps in a compost bin break down into nutrient-rich compost to nourish your garden. However, to function optimally, care must be given to all key aspects of your digestive system - from the foods you eat, to how well they are digested, the health of your gut lining, and the beneficial bacteria in your gut (the gastrointestinal microbiome). If one aspect is out of balance, the whole system is put under pressure. Over time, this can lead to uncomfortable gut symptoms and compromise your overall health.

### Breaking It Down

Your body produces digestive enzymes to help break food into smaller particles, so they can be absorbed. If you are stressed, tend to eat on the run, or have a digestive disorder of some kind, you may not produce sufficient enzymes. This can lead to symptoms of bloating and fullness after meals due to slow or incomplete digestion. Supporting enzyme production can provide relief from these symptoms.

### Holding It All In

Just as a well-sealed compost bin contains the compost until it is ready to nourish your garden; a healthy gut lining contains digested foods until their nutrients are ready to be absorbed. Providing a robust barrier, your gut lining also keeps harmful substances (e.g. waste products) within your digestive tract, allowing only beneficial nutrients to enter your bloodstream.

If the integrity of your gut lining is weakened (known as 'leaky gut') due to stress, alcohol, poor diet, or a digestive disorder; this may allow incompletely digested food particles and/or waste products to leak into your bloodstream. This is associated with symptoms including bloating and gas, but also fatigue, 'brain fog', allergy, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.<sup>1</sup>

### A Natural Solution

The good news is that certain herbs and nutrients can improve digestive enzyme function and help heal a leaky gut:

- **Gentian** and **dandelion root**: these naturally bitter herbs stimulate your body's production of enzymes to

strengthen your overall digestive capacity.

- **Vegetarian digestive enzymes**: plant-derived enzymes which can boost your body's own supply, improving nutrient absorption and reducing bloating.
- **Glutamine**: a component of protein that improves the integrity of your gut lining, therefore can help reduce gut symptoms.
- **Zinc** and **vitamin A**: nutrients essential for keeping the cells in your gut lining tightly packed together, reducing the gaps that result in a 'leaky' gut.<sup>1</sup>

### Love Your Guts

Implement these key suggestions to improve your gut health:

- Increase your intake of fruit, vegetables and fibre-rich foods such as legumes and wholegrains, which promote beneficial gut bacteria and overall digestive health.
- Reduce your intake of alcohol and processed, sugary and fatty foods which can harm your gut lining.
- Focus on stress management. Stress reduces digestive enzyme production and increases leaky gut.
- Eat slowly, chew thoroughly, and don't eat on the run. Eating slowly signals to your gut that food is coming, stimulating enzymes and improving digestion.

### See Your Practitioner

Supporting enzyme production and improving the integrity of your gut lining will enable you to break down food better and improve your gut symptoms - helping you feel healthier and more energetic. If you are struggling with uncomfortable gut symptoms, see your Practitioner for a tailored treatment plan to address all the key aspects of digestion, so you can feel your best!

<sup>1</sup> Bischoff SC, Barbara G, Buurman W, Ockhuizen T, Schulzke JD, Serino M, et al. Intestinal permeability—a new target for disease prevention and therapy. BMC Gastroenterol. 2014 Dec;14(1):189.

