



IS THE CONNECTION REAL?

YES! There is strong scientific evidence connecting gut and brain health. Stress and anxiety can lead to stomach or intestinal distress when no other physical cause exists. Conversely, an upset stomach can send signals to the brain causing stress.

An example of this has been seen in people who suffer from Irritable Bowl Syndrome (IBS). Those with IBS tend to deal with higher rates of depression and anxiety compared to the general public. It was once thought anxiety and depression caused IBS, but recent research is showing it is more likely the other way around.

The connection between the central nervous system and gut microbiota is referred to as the gut-brain axis. Studies in animals and humans have shown that an increased level of inflammatory markers are associated with higher levels of depression symptoms.

Additionally, studies have seen reduced risk of depression in people with prebiotic-rich diets.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY GUT?

The stomach, large intestine and small intestine are all parts of the human digestive system or "gut", and the gut is the largest immune organ in the body. The gut microbiota are the microorganisms, including bacteria, that live in the digestive tract. Every human being has a unique combination of bacteria in their gut. The more diverse the good bacteria in your gut, the healthier your gut is considered. Unbalanced gut bacteria (having more bad bacteria than good) can lead to inflammation in the body and has been linked to anxiety and depression.

PROBIOTICS

Probiotics are a combination of live beneficial bacteria and yeast that naturally live in your body. Probiotics must meet the following criteria to qualify:

1. Be isolated from a human
2. Be able to survive in your intestine after ingestion
3. Have a proven benefit to you
4. Be safe to consume

OUR FAVORITE PROBIOTICS

Supplements can be expensive and are not regulated, so it's hard to guarantee you get what you pay for. Visit [US Probiotics Guide](#) to see which supplements are supported by research. Luckily, fermented foods are naturally a rich source of probiotics.

YOGURT

Look for brands that contains added Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium strains or at a minimum says live active cultures. Also look for plain or no sugar added varieties to maximize health benefits.



KEFIR

Kefir is a fermented milk drink. It has its own strains of probiotic bacteria, plus a few helpful yeast varieties. It is also a good source of calcium and protein.

SAUERKRAUT & KIMCHI

Both are fermented cabbage-based condiments. If you like spice and funk, kimchi is for you. Look for unpasteurized versions as the heat process can kill the good-for-you bacteria. Both are high in sodium, so use sparingly.



MISO

A Japanese seasoning typically made from fermented soybeans, barley or rice. It is most commonly used to make miso soup, but can also be used in marinades, dressings or sauces.

PREBIOTICS

Prebiotics come from certain dietary fibers including inulin, fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS), and galacto-oligosaccharides (GOS). These fibers cannot be broken down by the digestive system. When they reach the part of the colon where the good bacteria live, they are able digest them and act as nutrients for growth.

OUR FAVORITE PREBIOTICS

Not all dietary fibers are prebiotics, but by getting the recommended daily amount of dietary fiber in your diet, you will likely get a sufficient dose of prebiotics.



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Produce like garlic, onions, leeks, apples, bananas, chicory root and asparagus all contain prebiotic fiber.

WHOLE GRAINS

Wheat bran, barley and oats are all loaded with prebiotic dietary fiber and will also help keep you feeling full.



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