



Six Tips for a Healthier Gut and Why It Matters

By Joy Lenz, RD

March is National Nutrition Month. I want to give some practical tips this month to boost your nutritional status which will in turn help you achieve and maintain a healthier gut.

Why in the world would you want a healthier gut you ask? Well, did you know that the bacteria in our gut are intertwined with five essential axes of human health. Dr. Bulsiewicz in the book *Fiber Fueled* lists the five as immune health, metabolism, hormonal balance, cognition, and gene expression. He refers to our gut as a sort of command center for human health.

When there is damage to the gut we experience:

- Digestive issues
- Weight gain
- Brain fog
- Mood imbalances
- Fatigue
- Metabolic disorders
- Insulin resistance
- Eczema
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- High cholesterol
- Kidney disease
- Non alcoholic fatty liver disease
- Hormonal imbalance
- Depression
- Some cancers and so much more



But we can do something about it. We need to get rid of the pathogenic bacteria and empower and diversify the good bacteria. This sounds complex and complicated, but it's really not. It all comes down to what's on your fork. Here are some practical tips that will have a profound impact on your gut for your long-term health.

Here are **6 Nutrition Tips for a Healthier Gut**

1. Go for variety. Do you know a two-year-old that only eats one or two fruits? Do you know a 60-year-old that only eats one or two fruits? Our gut will thrive with variety. As a matter of fact, the single greatest predictor of a healthy gut is the diversity of plants in one's diet. Can you get 5-6 different fruits or vegetables in a day? Can you get 30

different fruits and vegetables in a week? Go for it! All plant foods count. So go for variety in legumes and whole grains too.

2. Limit or avoid animal products. These foods promote inflammatory microbes in our gut that produce toxins that lead to the problems listed above. Limit or avoid alcohol too as it is toxic and will halt the progress you make towards a healthier gut.

3. Enjoy an abundance of colorful fruits, vegetables, and beans. Make fresh colorful plant meals without restriction. Have fun trying new combinations and flavors. Try different ethnic cuisines.

4. Try these fermented foods that will act like a fertilizer in your new healthy gut: kombucha, tempeh, kimchi, miso paste, and sauerkraut.

5. Go for whole grains. They are an excellent source of prebiotic (think fertilizer again) fiber and give us more plant diversity. Whole grains are actually anti-inflammatory in scientific literature and are very good for our gut.

6. Fiber up! Fiber promotes the growth of the health bacteria in our gut. Fiber is only found in plant sources. Some high fiber choices include raspberries, peas, broccoli, beans, brown rice, oats, flax seeds, pears, acorn squash, oranges, edamame, and sweet potatoes. If you are keeping track go for 30 grams or more per day.

*If you would like more personal help as you find solutions to eating well, Joy would love to help you. Book an appointment with her by calling 262-695-5311. She even has a cookbook filled with simple plant-based recipes to help you achieve your goals.

©March2022, March 2021, Joy Lenz, RD CD is a Registered Dietitian at Ommani. She sees clients who are free of symptoms on Thursdays. She also offers zoom visitation. Call our office at 262.695.5311 to schedule an appointment.