



LIGHTER
BRIGHTER!
you

DO YOU HAVE THE GUTS TO BE HEALTHY AND HAPPY?

OUR DIGESTIVE SYSTEM NEEDS TO WORK WELL

so any food we eat can be digested and absorbed well. This provides nutrients into our bloodstream, which we need to function well, physically and mentally. Our digestive system needs a certain amount AND type of bacteria to digest our food. However, poor eating habits, the wrong foods, lots of stress and/or poor sleep all impact our digestion because these factors negatively impact our gut bacteria.

THE GUT LINING IS LIKE A BRIDGE

When a bridge is sturdy and well-built, it can easily carry vehicles over it. If it's the opposite, some will get across effortlessly in the beginning, but over time it will break down. Similarly, the gut lining must carry nutrients from the digestive tract into the bloodstream across very sensitive and sophisticated cells. If it doesn't work well, some food particles or toxic compounds in our environment – like viruses, bacteria, or pesticides – can cross into the bloodstream. This sets off an immune, alarm response, and damaging, inflammatory compounds are produced, which travel to the brain. The blood-brain barrier (which is like the lining/bridge between the gut and bloodstream) becomes damaged when exposed to these compounds, and they cross over into the brain, causing an inflammatory response within the brain.

HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS HURT GUT HEALTH

Processed foods do not supply the fibre that good gut bacteria need for food. Highly processed foods also contain lots of sugar, and damaged fats, both of which stop good gut bacteria from working well and prevent the gut lining/bridge from staying healthy. Over time, the gut becomes less capable of working well, and you'll get less and less of any nutrients that may be present in refined, nutrient-deficient foods. Your taste buds also change, so you end up preferring this factory-produced food, and the bad bacteria drive you to eat more of those foods, which support their existence.

THREE SIMPLE WAYS TO IMPROVE GUT HEALTH

Firstly, remove refined and processed food from your diet. These foods contain few nutrients and very little

fibre. Healthy gut bacteria need fibre because it's their food source, and when they have enough food, they can proliferate and do an excellent job of breaking down your food and keeping your gut lining/bridge working well. Secondly, consume probiotics for a few weeks, which help to recolonise the gut with good gut bacteria, but aim to have more prebiotic foods, so you don't need to use probiotics for long periods of time.

Thirdly, chew your food very well, as it then arrives in your stomach coated with digestive enzymes from your mouth, and it's then easier for gut bacteria to break down the food further.



HOW ARE SLEEP AND GUT HEALTH LINKED?

A group of researchers decided to look at the gut bacteria of jet-lagged travellers. Good gut bacteria decreased in volume when sleep was compromised. So, prioritising sleep also supports gut health.

Remember, we are NOT what we eat - we are instead what we absorb! Ensuring optimal gut health and sleeping well allows us to optimise a nutrient-dense and fibre-filled diet that ensures optimal physical and mental health across our lifetime.

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