

How To Improve Gut Health Naturally: Best Foods & Tips for Cure

Let's talk about your gut.

I know, I know.

Not exactly the most pleasant topic.

But gut problems are something that millions of people struggle with. Some of us aren't even aware of it, though that doesn't make the devastating health effects any less real.

Just how serious is the gut health problem, anyway?

Most importantly: what can we do about it?

Keep reading to find out more about the gut's wide-ranging effects on the body, and five practical steps you can take to heal your gut naturally.

The Human Gut: A More Complex Issue Than Most People Think

How many microorganisms are in the gut?

A hundred million? Ten billion?

Try 100 trillion. That's truly an insane number - so large our brains can't really even comprehend it. This enormous, complex ecosystem contains over 400 different species of bacteria.

Scientists are just now discovering just how important the gut really is. We're barely scratching the surface with the research and studies, and we've already discovered fascinating links between gut health and weight control, thyroid function, mood, and cognition - just to name a few.

Additionally, researchers are exploring links between autism and gut health — along with other diseases that may interplay with what’s going on in your gut.

These wide-ranging effects play a role in practically every aspect of health. Many scientists refer to the gut as the “second brain.” It’s just that important!

What Causes an Unhealthy Gut?

There are actually two variables that determine your gut health:

1. The gut bacteria themselves
2. The gut barrier, which allows nutrient absorption and keeps out unhealthy bacteria and toxins

These variables are closely related, so if you have issues with one you’ll probably have issues with the other as well.

Unhealthy Gut Bacteria

Most people assume that “gut problems” must mean “digestive problems.” Sometimes that’s the case. But in reality, the problem is broader than that.

Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, claimed over 2,000 years ago that every illness begins in the gut. Modern scientific research is proving that he was onto something. The connections between gut bacteria and other aspects of our health are wider - and deeper - than anyone previously thought.

In other words, even if you don’t have serious digestive problems, you could still have an unhealthy gut microbiome (the ecosystem of bacteria).

Leaky Gut Syndrome

It’s the gut barrier’s job to make sure the good stuff (nutrients) are allowed in while passing the bad stuff (harmful bacteria and toxins) through the body without harming you.

When the barrier becomes too permeable, you can end up with leaky gut syndrome. Large protein molecules and toxins pass into the bloodstream when they aren’t supposed to. Your body recognizes that these things don’t belong in

the gut and attacks them, triggering an immune response.

Leaky gut syndrome leads to digestive nightmares (bloating, heartburn, constipation, etc.) and even more serious autoimmune problems. Several recent studies discovered that the function of the intestinal barrier plays a major factor in autoimmune diseases.

How to Improve Gut Health Naturally

Because your gut can affect practically every other aspect of your health, keeping it healthy is vital.

The steps below take a holistic approach that combines diet and lifestyle to heal your gut naturally. Applying them will help you whether you have unhealthy gut bacteria, a leaky gut, or both.

Here are five steps you can try:

1. Remove Toxic Foods

Many of us have been dealing with minor to moderate gut issues for so long that we've started to see them as normal.

We just don't know any different. We eat the same foods we've eaten for decades, unaware that some of them might be triggering the issues.

Everyone's gut is a little different. Because of the sheer number and different types of bacteria, and other factors that influence how the gut functions (more on those in just a second), there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution.

With that said, some foods are much more likely to cause gut issues than others.

Here is a list of the most common offenders that you should remove immediately:

- **Grains** - Grains contain anti-nutrients like lectins and phytates, which bind to the intestinal lining and inhibit nutrient absorption. Wheat products also contain gluten, a protein that often triggers an immune

response.

- **Dairy** - Dairy products contain casein (a milk protein with a similar structure to gluten), which can cause digestive problems and inflammation. Most dairy cows live on unnatural diets and are given growth hormones and antibiotics. Fortunately, camel milk offers a great alternative. More on that in just a bit.
- **Sugar** - Sugar is dangerous because it fuels the growth of harmful bacteria. This goes for artificial sweeteners as well; they can decrease healthy bacteria and change the balance within our gut microbiome.
- **Legumes** - Like grains, legumes contain phytates and lectins. These can damage the intestinal wall, leading to leaky gut, and interfere with the body's ability to absorb nutrients.

The cool thing: the foods above aren't great for you anyway. By avoiding them and sticking to quality produce, proteins, and healthy fats, you'll heal your gut and improve your overall health. You end up with more nutrients - and less inflammation and blood sugar issues.

2. Eat More Fiber and Gut-Friendly Probiotic Foods

The gut hosts hundreds of types of bacteria. Some are harmful, but many are absolutely crucial to keep your gut functioning like it should.

Fortunately, we can take action that encourages these "good bacteria" to thrive.

Probiotic Foods

A great first step is to eat more foods containing beneficial bacteria, including:

- Apple cider vinegar
- Bone broth (rich in glycine, gelatin, and glutamine — building blocks that can help repair the intestinal lining)
- Dark chocolate
- Fermented vegetables (sauerkraut, kimchi, etc.)
- Kombucha
- Microalgae

- Pickled fruits and vegetables
- Pickles

Check out this post, which goes into a lot more detail about all the delicious (and Paleo-friendly) foods you can eat to heal your gut.

High-Fiber Foods

Fiber does a lot more than just help with constipation. It also protects the gut against inflammation. Diets low in fiber force gut microbes to feed on the protective mucous lining (instead of the fiber), which can trigger digestive problems and inflammation.

For ideal gut health, eat plenty of high-fiber foods like:

- Apples and pears (with the skin)
- Beets
- Berries
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Coconuts
- Leafy greens (spinach, kale, collard greens, etc.)

3. Tweak Your Lifestyle

Chronic stress can weaken your immune system, and a weakened immune system doesn't stand a chance against the harmful bacteria that sometimes make their way into our bodies. Left unchecked, these invaders can cause inflammation, digestive problems, and a leaky gut. Not to mention illnesses!

The problem: elevated levels of cortisol. If this goes on long enough, you can end up with nasty effects like ulcers, painful digestion, and even irritable bowel syndrome.

You have to get a handle on this. Here are a few ways how:

- **Physical activity** - Exercise releases feel-good endorphins that have been proven to lower cortisol levels.

- **Sleep** - This one's non-negotiable. If you want a healthier gut, sleep for at least six or seven hours a night. Quality is also important. Cut off your caffeine intake by the early afternoon at the latest, and try to avoid alcohol and bright screens before bed.
- **Stress management** - Get proactive about managing stress by doing something you enjoy. It doesn't matter if it's painting, reading, yoga or gardening - as long as you enjoy it enough to make it a regular part of your life.
- **Tweak your environment** - The people you hang out with and the media you consume has a profound effect on your stress. Maybe it's time to turn off the barrage of negative news websites and celebrity gossip. Or cut ties with people who spend most of the time complaining or worrying about the future.

Antibiotics and Gut Health: Too Important to Overlook

Doctors prescribe antibiotics all the time. They're extremely effective at wiping out harmful bacteria. The problem is they don't discriminate between the harmful bacteria and the beneficial kind. They eliminate everything in sight.

Studies have found that using antibiotics leads to a rapid loss of the diversity of gut flora. This diversity does not recover on its own. You have to get proactive about consuming more probiotics to restore the microbiome.

Use antibiotics as a last resort. Just be mindful that you'll need to introduce more healthy bacteria afterward. If you follow the other steps in this post, you won't have to use them so often because you'll strengthen your immune system overall.

4. Probiotic Supplements

In addition to changing your diet and lifestyle, you can also take probiotic supplements to heal your gut.

These supplements contain living bacteria - the "good" kind that's beneficial to your health. These pills contain similar bacteria to what you'd find in probiotic foods. The differences lie in the dosage and the convenience.

Studies have found that probiotics strengthen the immune system and fight off infectious agents while providing key nutrients themselves.

Unless you eat a lot of foods high in healthy bacteria daily, these are definitely worth considering. For many of us, it's more convenient to pop a pill than to lie awake at night, regretting that you didn't have enough sauerkraut that day.

Plenty of options are available either at your local vitamin shop or online. Look for a high bacteria count (at least 5 billion) and brands that have relied on science and research to find the best choice.

5. Camel Milk

Finally, you can heal your gut by drinking camel milk.

Yes, you read that read!

Camel milk is a great alternative to cow milk. It's non-dairy and doesn't contain casein protein, which makes it much easier to drink without digestive problems or inflammation.

Camel milk also contains more nutrients per serving than cow milk. This is especially important for people with leaky gut syndrome because the body struggles to absorb nutrients (malabsorption) when the gut lining becomes too permeable. So it's key to get as many nutrients as possible during the healing process.

While dairy products often trigger an immune system response (inflaming the body), drinking camel milk has the opposite effect. Because both leaky gut and unhealthy gut microbiome cause inflammation, and because chronic inflammation has been linked to numerous modern diseases, it's imperative to do whatever we can to fight it.

How to Heal Your Gut

Your gut health is more important than you think. This incredibly diverse, complex ecosystem of bacteria has wide-ranging effects on your health.

A quality diet rich in vegetables, protein, and healthy fats keeps your gut

barrier solid and lays the foundation for beneficial bacteria to thrive. Using supplements strategically and tweaking your lifestyle will take your gut health to the next level.

Additionally, treating your gut well may have impact on healing autism and other diseases that affect many people.

Have you ever struggled with an unhealthy gut? How have you tried to fix it? What worked, and what didn't? Leave a comment below and let us know!