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Your guide to

# Happy Gut – Happy YOU!



By Billie Lerch – Naturopath, Nutritionist & Herbalist



## Who am I?

Congratulations on taking steps to look after your gut.

First, let me introduce myself – it is always important to know who is giving you health advice.



My name is Billie Lerch – I am the founder of BL Natural Health, a naturopath, nutritionist & herbalist passionate about health - especially gut, mental & hormonal health.

Gut health has always held my special interest – not only because it is connected to so many diseases but also because I have personal experience with problems in this area and wish to help people by sharing my knowledge.

I have created this guide to assist you with achieving your optimal health and improving your gut function. All suggestions can be done by everyone – you might have to adjust some food ideas if you are on a special diet such as FODMAPS.

If you think you already know a lot about gut health – good on you! Keep this guide as a daily reminder (I have summarized the most important points on the last 2 pages for you to print out) - to ensure that you do something good for your gut every day. With this guide, you will find this task easy. Start today – your body deserves this!

If you need more support, I can offer you an in-person\* or Skype consultation. Together we can find the key to your health.

Get in touch with me [here](#) or call 0403 211 812.



\*Appointments in Beerwah & Pelican Waters (Sunshine Coast) available

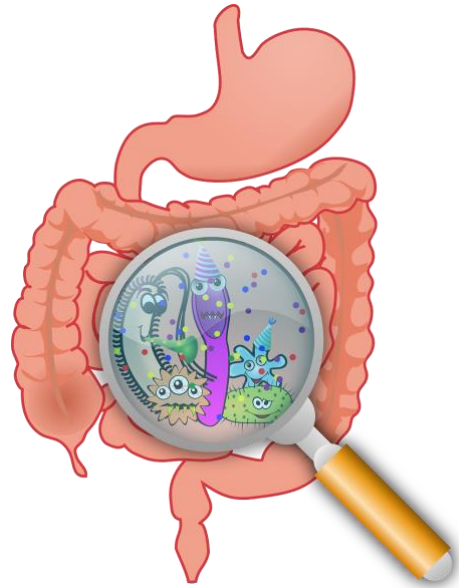
## Why is the gut so important?

**Your gut is the epicentre of your physical and mental health.** The gut is not only the place where you absorb important nutrients such as vitamins, minerals & protein which are the basic building blocks needed for our health, but 80% of your immunity also resides in your gut.

Your gut also houses approximately 100 trillion micro-organisms which carry out many important jobs.

Some of them are:

- assist in food breakdown and help produce essential nutrients.
- manage your moods by assisting with serotonin production - your happiness hormone.
- help you with managing your weight.
- enhance your immune system.
- balance cholesterol levels.



*A healthy gut is essential to overall health & wellbeing!*

## What affects gut health?

Different factors of the modern lifestyle directly contribute to an unhealthy gut. Some of these include:

- ✓ **Poor nutrition:** Inflammatory foods such as gluten, refined sugars and trans fats kill good bacteria, allowing bad bacteria to thrive and damage the intestinal lining and thus causing leaky gut.
- ✓ **Medications,** especially antibiotics which can affect the balance of your gut microflora for 2 years but also others such as the oral contraceptive pill.
- ✓ **Chronic infections** (i.e candida, parasites, worms)
- ✓ **Stress**
- ✓ **Bad sleep**

## How do you know if you have an unhealthy gut?

Symptoms include:

- ✓ Digestive issues such as bloating, constipation etc.
- ✓ Food sensitivities
- ✓ Digestive problems
- ✓ Skin issues like eczema or acne
- ✓ Joint pain
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Headaches, brain fog
- ✓ Weight gain
- ✓ Thyroid issues



Sometimes, however you do not have any symptoms at all.

## Diseases associated with unhealthy gut functions

Alzheimer's disease

Anxiety

Asthma

Atopic eczema

Autism

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Depression

Irritable Bowel Disease

Kidney stones

Metabolic syndrome

Multiple sclerosis

Obesity

Parkinson's disease

Rheumatoid arthritis

Type I and Type II diabetes

Coeliac disease

Diverticular disease

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Liver cirrhosis

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease

SIBO

and more

# Restore your (gut) health

## DIET

A good diet is very important for all health matters including gut health. The food that you eat can help you to feed your important gut bugs, decrease inflammation, heal your gut barrier and more. Here are some easy, effective things you can include in your diet:

### Increase gastric juice production:

Most people do not have enough hydrochloric acid (HCl) and other digestive juice components which not only help to digest but also protect from pathogenic bacteria entering. Low HCl is common as it decreases with age, stress & medication. Bloating and heartburn can be symptoms of low HCl. To increase your production:

- Drink the juice of ½ lemon or lime in a bit in of water before meals. 1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar can also help; however many people find it too harsh.

! Use a straw to protect your teeth.

! Stop if you experience heartburn and talk to your practitioner.



- Include bitter foods such as dandelion leaves or Brussel sprouts.

### Drink a minimum of 2L of filtered water per day.



Water is essential for a healthy gut. Water helps matter move through your digestive system and aids the elimination of toxins and metabolic waste.

- Spice your water up with fresh orange juice, ginger, a squeeze of lime, mint leaves, cucumber spears or sliced fruits.



## Include lots of fibre food in your meals.

Fibre aids your digestion and feeds your gut bacteria (microbiome). Fibre can be found in vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, seeds or wholegrains.



- Make sure to include resistant starch (fermentable fibre) which keeps your good bacteria happy: green bananas, legumes, potatoes that have been cooked and cooled (potato salad gets the tick here), cashew nuts and cooled rice salads are all good sources.

## Eat prebiotic-rich & fermented food to feed your good bacteria:

- Prebiotic-rich food: garlic, onions, leeks, asparagus, globe artichokes, legumes, fresh beans, carrots, beetroot, sunflower & pumpkin seeds, brown rice
- Fermented food: Sauerkraut, kimchi, yoghurt, kefir, kombucha

## Regularly drink bone broth

The gelatine and amino acids within the bone broth help heal your mucous membranes of your gut wall.

- Make your own bone broth. Find your recipe [here](#).



## Food that your gut does **NOT** like:

- Refined Sugar and artificial sweeteners
- Processed food
- Unhealthy fats such as refined vegetable oils

## How to eat:

### Practise mindful eating

Turn off the TV or computer and put away the newspaper/book while you eat! When you eat while being stressed or anxious your digestive system shuts down, because during stress the body automatically shifts into the classic fight-or-flight response and shutting down the digestive system is part of it.

### Chew your food carefully

Give your brain enough time to catch up with your belly. Soups and smoothies need chewing too! Tip: Allow those foods to have a bit of time in your mouth before swallowing to activate the enzymes in your saliva.



### Stop eating when you are full!

You don't want your stomach to expand too much.

### Do not snack all the time

Your digestion needs time to recover. Aim to eat no more than 3 main meals and 2 snacks per day.

### Don't drink during your meals

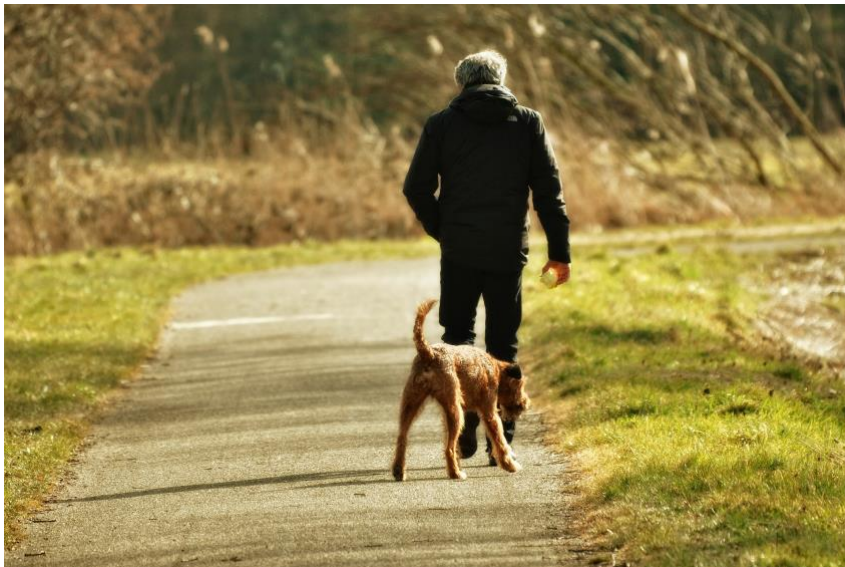
Water dilutes the gastric juices that are vital for the breakdown of our food.

## LIFESTYLE

Your gut health also gets affected by an unhealthy lifestyle. Support your (gut) health by:

### Moving your body

Walk your dog, ride your bike, exercise – chose whatever you enjoy. Movement will help your digestion eliminate food and help your gut flora.



### Managing your stress

Try deep breathing, herbal tea, meditation, herbal medicine.

### Ensure healthy sleep habits

Lack of sleep can have a harmful effect on your gut bacteria.





I hope I have given you lots of easy ideas to support your (gut) health. Make them your regular habits and you will feel the difference soon!



- Make sure to print out the last 2 pages and put them somewhere handy as a reminder.

We all know that 'Health is greater than Wealth'.

I love to help people achieve their optimal health & wellbeing! If you would like us to work together or have any feedback – get in touch with me by email

([info@blnaturalhealth.com.au](mailto:info@blnaturalhealth.com.au)) – **I would love to hear from you.**



Billie Lerch

Print out and keep handy:

- Increase gastric juice production:*  
Drink lemon juice or 1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in ½ glass of water before meals. Use a straw to protect your teeth.  
! Stop if you experience heartburn and talk to your practitioner.  
Include bitter foods such as dandelion leaves or Brussel sprouts.
- Drink a minimum of 2L of filtered water per day.*  
Spice it up with fresh orange juice, ginger, a squeeze of lime, mint leaves, cucumber spears or sliced fruits.
- Include lots of fibre food in your meals.*  
Fibre aids your digestion and can be found in vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, seeds or wholegrains.  
Make sure to include resistant starch (fermentable fibre) which keeps your good bacteria happy: green bananas, legumes, potatoes that have been cooked and cooled (potato salad gets the tick here), cashew nuts and cooled rice salads are all good sources.
- Eat prebiotic-rich & fermented food to feed your good bacteria:*  
Prebiotic-rich food: garlic, onions, leeks, asparagus, globe artichokes, legumes, fresh beans, carrots, beetroot, sunflower & pumpkin seeds, brown rice  
Fermented food: Sauerkraut, kimchi, yoghurt, kefir, kombucha
- Eat bone broth* – gelatine and amino acids within help heal your mucous membranes of your gut wall.
- Food your gut does NOT like:*  
Reduce sugar, processed food, unhealthy fats, caffeine, gluten.
- Move your body*  
Walk your dog, ride your bike, exercise – chose whatever you enjoy. Movement will help your digestion eliminate food and help your gut flora.
- Manage your stress* – try *deep breathing, herbal tea, meditation, herbal medicine*  
Stress does not only contribute to an imbalanced microflora and a leaky gut, but also contributes to other diseases.
- Ensure to have healthy sleep habits

### How to eat:

1. Practise mindful eating: Turn off the TV or computer and put away the newspaper/book while you eat! When you eat while being stressed or anxious your digestive system shuts down, because during stress the body automatically shifts into the classic fight-or-flight response and shutting down the digestive system is part of it.
2. Chew your food carefully – give your brain enough time to catch up with your belly. Soups and smoothies need chewing too! Tip: Allow those foods to have a bit of time in your mouth before swallowing to activate the enzymes in your saliva.
3. Stop eating when you are full! You don't want your stomach to expand too much.
4. Do not snack all the time – your digestion needs time to recover. Aim to eat no more than 3 main meals and 2 snacks per day.
5. Don't drink during your meals – water dilutes the gastric juices that are vital for the breakdown of our food.