



THE GOOD GUT GUIDE

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A short helpful guide to celebrate
Good Gut Week 2022



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GOOD GUT GUIDE

Welcome to Cytoplan's Good Gut Guide created to support this year's Good Gut Week! Good Gut Week is dedicated to highlighting the importance of the role our guts play in our overall health and wellness. *Hint: our gut health is super important!*

In this guide you'll learn about the microbiome from our in-house Nutritional Therapist Ruth Turner, expert good gut tips ahead of the festive season from Registered Nutritional Therapist Eli Brecher alongside an exclusive gut healthy festive recipe and a link to our new quiz designed to find the perfect probiotic for you.

So what are we waiting for,
LET'S GUT STUCK IN!



Top tips for a gut-healthy Christmas

Registered Nutritional Therapist Eli Brecher gives her top tips for a gut-healthy Christmas

During the festive season, we tend to consume more high-sugar and high-fat comfort foods, as well as increasing our alcohol consumption. In addition, we may be overdoing it with late nights, social events and Christmas parties, leading to a lack of sleep. All of these factors can negatively impact our gut microbiome (the trillions of bacteria and other organisms that live inside our guts), causing digestive issues, as well as influencing our mood, skin and weight.

Here are 6 tips to help you have a gut-healthy Christmas:

1 Start the day right with a healthy breakfast

Use the first meal of the day to get in a good dose of nutrients, balance your blood sugar levels and keep you feeling full (so you don't graze on leftover Christmas pudding!) Some breakfast ideas include live yoghurt with oats and stewed apples or plums, porridge with berries and almond butter, a blueberry and avocado protein smoothie or baked eggs with spinach and tomato.

2 Diversity is key

Consume a colourful and diverse range of plant-based foods, including vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds, whole grains, beans and legumes. All of these contribute to a healthy and diverse gut microbiome. Take advantage of delicious seasonal gems such as beetroot, carrots, pumpkin, wild mushrooms and pears, all of which are at their prime right now.

3 Incorporate fermented foods

Sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, miso, tempeh and live yoghurt all contain good bacteria, which support and nourish your gut microbiome and may help improve digestion, support immunity and aid weight management. These good bacteria can also be found in probiotic supplements, which may be worth exploring if your gut needs some extra care at this time of year.



By Eli Brecher, Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr) and founder of online nutrition clinic, Eli Brecher Nutrition.

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4 Get moving

Poor digestion has been associated with lower energy levels, increased psychological stress and may be a contributing factor to weight gain. Staying active has so many perks, from keeping your digestive system regular to reducing stress levels which often creep up at this time of year. A brisk morning walk and some yoga or gentle stretching is a great way to get the blood flowing and keep food moving through your gut in a healthy way.

5 Stay hydrated

Whether you're battling a hangover or you've overdone it on the mince pies, adequate hydration levels are essential to support our body's natural detoxification organs (mainly the liver, kidneys and intestines). Sip on herbal teas throughout the day and infuse your water bottle with a few slices of lemon and cucumber to encourage you to keep drinking.

6 Relax!

The gut-brain axis is the two-way communication system between your gut and your brain, which is why stress can often manifest as digestive symptoms, and digestive issues may be linked with increased levels of anxiety and depression. The lead-up to Christmas can be a particularly stressful and busy period for many of us, so it can be helpful to support your nervous system with relaxation techniques, to move your body out of "fight-or-flight" mode and into "rest-and-digest" mode. We can do this by integrating a regular meditation or breathwork practice into our morning routine – or simply taking a few slow, deep breaths before each meal.

HAPPY
holidays



By Eli Brecher, Registered Associate Nutritionist
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Good Gut Week Recipe

Mince Pie Porridge

Ingredients:

Mincemeat Filling

Makes about 1 cup – use extras over a few days to top porridge/yoghurt/granola

- ½ cup chopped apples (58g)
- 4 tbsp raisins/sultanas (37g)
- 2 tbsp dried cranberries
- 2 tbsp chopped dates
- 2 tbsp orange zest
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp ground cloves
- 1 whole star anise
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice

Porridge (Serves 1)

- ½ cup (50g) rolled oats
- 1 tsp chia seeds
- ½ cup (125ml) almond milk
- ½ cup (125ml) water
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp orange zest
- Optional: 1 tsp date syrup/maple syrup

Toppings:

- 2 tbsp plain yoghurt (can use dairy-free)
- 2 tbsp chopped pecans
- ½ tsp grated orange zest

Method:

To make the mincemeat, chop the apples into small cubes (leave the skin on) and add to a pan with all other mincemeat ingredients.

Stir well, then cover with a lid and leave to simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. You can add a splash of water if it looks like all the liquid has been absorbed before it's finished cooking. Remove from the heat and allow to cool while you make your porridge.

Add the oats and chia seeds to a pan, pour over the water and milk and turn the heat to medium. Stir in the cinnamon, ginger and orange zest and cook for 5 minutes, stirring regularly. Then reduce the heat to low and continue cooking for a further 2 minutes, or until your desired consistency is reached. Stir in 2 tbsp mincemeat, along with your maple/date syrup if using.

Transfer to a bowl and add a dollop of yoghurt on top, followed by 2 tbsp of the mincemeat, a sprinkle of chopped nuts and an extra pinch of orange zest or cinnamon if you like.



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The microbiome

With Ruth Turner,
Registered Nutritional Therapist
at Cytoplan

What is the microbiome?

The microbiome is the collective name for all our microbes, such as bacteria, fungi, viruses and their genes, that live naturally on and inside our bodies. The human microbiome is diverse, and each body site, for example the skin, oral and nasal cavities and urogenital tract has a different community of microbes.

Each of us has around 100,000 billion live bacteria living in our intestines – which are referred to collectively as our 'gut microbiome' and is unique to each of us.

How does it work?

In optimal conditions, our gut microbiome is made up of specific bacteria that complement each other and fulfil various functions, dependent upon the species. For instance, some will synthesise vitamins such as vitamin K and the B vitamins, as well as neurotransmitters such as serotonin (the "happy hormone"). Meanwhile, other strains will stimulate our immune system, help with the digestion and absorption of nutrients, and support the structure and function of the lining of our digestive tract – which is one of our most important protective barriers.

How do we keep it healthy?

The microbiome contains microbes that are both helpful and potentially harmful. Most are **symbiotic** (which means both the body and the microbiota benefit) but small numbers are pathogenic. In healthy people, the two can coexist with no issues but if there is a disruption to the balance, for example from antibiotic use, illness or poor diet, **dysbiosis** can occur, leaving the body more susceptible to disease.

Diet can play a huge role in supporting a healthy, balanced microbiome and a varied, colourful diet, containing a wide range of plant-based wholefoods is advised. Fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir and natural live yogurt are all rich in cultures of friendly bacteria. **Prebiotics** can help to support the growth of our healthy bacteria, and particularly rich sources are asparagus, onions, leeks and Jerusalem artichokes.

Some people may also benefit from taking a probiotic supplement, rich in *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* strains. They are known as lactic acid bacteria because they convert sugars in food into lactic acid, which lowers the pH of the gut, and an acidic gut is more hostile to pathogenic bacteria. These strains have a long history of safe usage and form part of the commensal microbiota in humans, so will be compatible with the natural bacteria in our digestive tract. Diversity is key here, as different strains bring different health benefits, so we always recommend a multi-strain probiotic supplement.

Lifestyle changes can also help to keep your gut healthy. Taking steps to reduce your stress levels, getting adequate sleep each night and taking regular moderate exercise can all support a balanced microbiome – so why not find a local yoga class or get out for a walk with friends?

Why is it so important for good gut health?

An imbalance in our microbiome can be a contributing factor to a number of gut related conditions including irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and inflammatory bowel diseases. For instance, bloating and cramps, frequently seen in IBS, can be caused by pathogenic bacteria in the gut fermenting undigested foods and producing gas. Likewise, dysbiosis can be at the heart of unwelcome symptoms such as constipation, diarrhoea and nausea.

Aside from helping to support the health of your gut, a balanced microbiome can have far reaching effects, and benefit our immunity, skin health, mood and sleep – to name but a few!

Fun fact about the microbiome

There are as many bacteria in the human body as there are human cells, and possibly even more!



Ruth Turner,
Cytoplan Nutritional Therapist



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A probiotic for everyone

With the most extensive range of probiotics, Cytoplan has a probiotic from baby to senior that works in harmony with the body, allowing you to choose what's right for you.



To find out which probiotic is perfect for you, take the quiz here



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