**Here’s Why You Need to Stop Neglecting Your Gut Health**

The gut is commonly referred to as your body’s “second brain”. This is because, besides the brain, the gut is the only other organ with a nervous system. A healthy gut is extremely important to your overall wellbeing – as it affects your entire body. Unfortunately, gut health is often overlooked and not given the amount of care and attention it deserves.

According to an [article](http://www.navacenter.com/community/article-library/browse/2015/06/01/your-body%27s-second-brain---the-importance-of-gut-health) by Douglas Lord, M.D., the gut is largely responsible for the critical factors of the body’s digestive and immune systems. The good bacteria in your digestive system have the capability to boost your body’s vitamin and mineral absorbency, hormone regulation, digestion, vitamin production, and immune response, along with the eliminating toxins. A healthy gut can even help improve mental health!

So, to summarize, gut health is about way more than just digestion. While your gut does regulate the digestion of food, it also regulates your [immune system](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/easy-natural-ways-to-boost-your-immune-system) and central nervous system – along with other bodily processes. If you’ve been neglecting your gut health, no need to fret. You can adapt some healthy habits to help your body restore and maintain a healthy gut.

Keep on reading to discover the many benefits of a healthy gut and some habits to help support gut health.

**Health Benefits of a Healthy Gut:**

**Supports a healthy immune system.** [About 80%](http://instituteofhealthsciences.com/probiotics-help-immune-system-in-your-gi-tract/) of your immune system is located in your gut. Bad bacteria found in your gut can throw your immune system out of whack. For your immune system to perform its best, your gut needs to be in optimal health.

**Improved brain function.** According to an [article](https://experiencelife.com/article/healthy-gut-healthy-brain/) by David Perlmutter, M.D., your brain’s health is dictated by what goes on in your gut. Your “second brain” sends chemicals and messages to your brain to help improve overall function and clarity.

**Helps you maintain a healthy weight.** [Research](https://chriskresser.com/a-healthy-gut-is-the-hidden-key-to-weight-loss/) has shown that good gut bacteria might play a role in weight loss. It can also help prevent weight gain and metabolic problems like diabetes.

**Mood boost.** Perhaps one of the most surprising benefits of a healthy gut is its affect on your mood. Check out this [article](https://organixx.com/effect-gut-bacteria-on-mood/) to learn more about the link between gut health and your mental wellbeing.

**Healthy complexion.** A healthy gut works to eliminate toxins in the body and absorb essential nutrients. This means a healthy gut might contribute to a beautiful, glowing complexion.

**More energy.** The good bacteria in your gut works to break down food to absorb its energy. It also helps keep your blood sugar balanced.

**Healthy Habits to Adapt to Support Gut Health:**

**Eat for gut health.** A healthy diet is the foundation of a healthy gut. Try adding some fermented foods to your diet. Some examples of gut-supporting foods include:

* Yogurt
* Pickles
* Sauerkraut
* Soy sauce
* Kefir
* Kimchi
* Raw vinegar

**Try a probiotic.** Probiotics are the good bacteria that help your gut function properly. If you aren’t getting enough from your diet alone, you can take probiotics in the form of a dietary supplement. Talk to your doctor to determine if taking a probiotic could be beneficial for you.

**Eat less added sugar.** A diet high in refined sugars can promote the growth of bad bacteria in your gut. These bad bacteria can deteriorate your gut lining. Try to limit processed, sugary foods and stick to foods with natural sugars when you are [craving something sweet](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/put-down-that-candy-bar-here-are-8-healthy-foods-to-eat-when-your-sugar-craving-kicks-in).

**Lower your stress levels.** Too much stress negatively impacts your entire body – including your gut! Chronic stress can cause digestive problems and even lead to health issues such as gastroesophageal

reflux disease (GERD) or irritable bowl syndrome (IBS). To help lower stress, try:

* Meditation
* Daily exercise
* Eating [stress-fighting foods](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/8-of-the-best-healthy-foods-to-eat-when-youre-stressed-out)
* Practicing daily [self-care](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/little-ways-to-practice-self-care)
* Laughing more

Supporting your gut health is just as important as maintaining a nutritious diet, physical activity, and getting enough sleep. Adapt some healthy, gut-supporting habits and always talk with a healthcare professional to discuss any issues with your gut health.