



DOING THE **HOLIDAYS**

WELL

WITH IXCELA

This gut-healthy holiday guide includes
five holiday recipes, a quick workout, and
three 2-minute relaxation sessions.

IXCELA

The Internal Fitness™ Company



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Introduction

Did you know the gut is home to over one trillion microbes? The microbes in the gut are called the gut microbiome and are responsible for a variety of physiological processes in the body that are essential for optimal function.

Like anything, the gut works best when it is properly fueled and maintained. Nutrition, exercise and lifestyle factors all affect the gut, and when one or several factors are out of balance the gut microbes can become imbalanced. This is called dysbiosis. Dysbiosis is common during the holidays and can lead to poor digestion, tiredness, headache, inflammation, stress and even anxiety.

But, we have good news—maintaining gut health through the holidays is possible! By including nutritious foods, exercise, good sleep habits, and stress management, you can conquer the holiday season.

In this eBook, you will find tips on how to maintain gut health, such as two-minute mindfulness exercises, 10-minute workouts, and gut healthy holiday recipes. Ixcela Gut-Healthy Holiday Guide is here to help you through a happy and healthy holiday!

Internally yours,

The Ixcela Team



“Dysbiosis is common during the holidays and can lead to poor digestion, tiredness, headache, inflammation, stress and even anxiety.”



10 Interesting Facts About Gut Health

1. The gut microbiome is made up of tens of trillions microbes with over a thousand different species.
2. The gut microbiome is important for the breakdown and utilization of both macronutrients (protein, carbs, and fat) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals).
3. Probiotic foods like sauerkraut, yogurt, kimchi, and kefir, help maintain the health and population of the gut microbiome.
4. Physical fitness does not suggest optimal gut health. A regular exercise routine paired with poor diet, inadequate sleep and stress can wreak havoc on the gut. Optimal gut health is reached by finding balance in all aspects of life.
5. The gut microbiome can be damaged by medications, stress, poor diet, and chemicals found in products we use.
6. Optimal gut health can improve athletic performance, mental clarity, gastrointestinal fitness, immunity, and emotional health.
7. Seventy percent of the bodies immune system is housed in the gut.
8. Serotonin, sometimes referred to as the “happy chemical”, is produced in the gut, not the brain.
9. Prebiotics are plant-based indigestible fibers that help facilitate the growth of gut bacteria. Prebiotics containing foods include asparagus, apples, onions, and garlic.
10. The gut and brain are closely connected through a relationship called the gut-brain axis. This is why stress can cause gut imbalances and gut imbalances can cause stress.





Mind

The holidays turn to-do lists into novels and no matter how much you prepare it's tough to keep stress and anxiety under control. Taking time to relax and give back to yourself is just as important as giving to others through a busy holiday season. Meditation, mindfulness, and relaxation can help combat stress and anxiety throughout the year and through the holidays. Taking just two minutes to reflect can help reduce stress, calm nerves and help you get a restful nights sleep. Sleep and stress management are two extremely important lifestyle factors for maintaining gut health and avoiding sickness.

Below you will find three 2-minute mindfulness exercise. These exercises can be added to your morning routine, a lunch break or as a way to wind down before bed. Do yourself a favor and take two minutes to relax your mind, you won't regret it!

2-Minute Relaxation Exercise

Place your hand on your wrist or upper neck to find a pulse. Once you have located your pulse, focus on the rhythm and try to slow your breathing.

Once you feel relaxed consider adding a simple mantra to your relation exercise like one of the mantras listed below:

- "I am productive."
- "I am right where I am supposed to be."
- "I am grateful for today and all the days to come."

Repeat the mantra slowly and in rhythm with your breath.





2-Minute Intentional Breathing

- Sit in a cross-legged position on the floor, with a straight back and your hands resting on your knees.
- First, slow your breathing and focus on your breath.
- With your mouth closed inhale slowly while counting to four.
- Hold the breath in your lungs for seven seconds.
- Then slowly exhale for eight seconds
- Repeat 3–4 times

2-Minute Balance Challenge

“Christmas” Tree Pose

- Standing with feet hip-width apart, and hands on your hips, ground down through the right leg.
- Bring the left foot to the inside of the right ankle. Keep your left toes on the ground and open your knee out to left.
- If you are feeling balanced, lift the toes from the ground.
- If you are still feeling balanced, try bringing your foot higher up the inside of the right leg so that your left heel is just below your right knee.
- If you are feeling extra stable here, extend your arms up above your head reaching for the sky.
- Hold for 5-8 breaths and repeat on the other side.





Body

Just ten minutes of exercise can make a world of difference during the holidays. Whether it's a walk around the block or a high-intensity interval training session, every little bit of movement counts. Exercise has been shown to help reduce stress, improve digestion and combat illness. Both strength training and cardio based training are important for maintaining physical fitness.

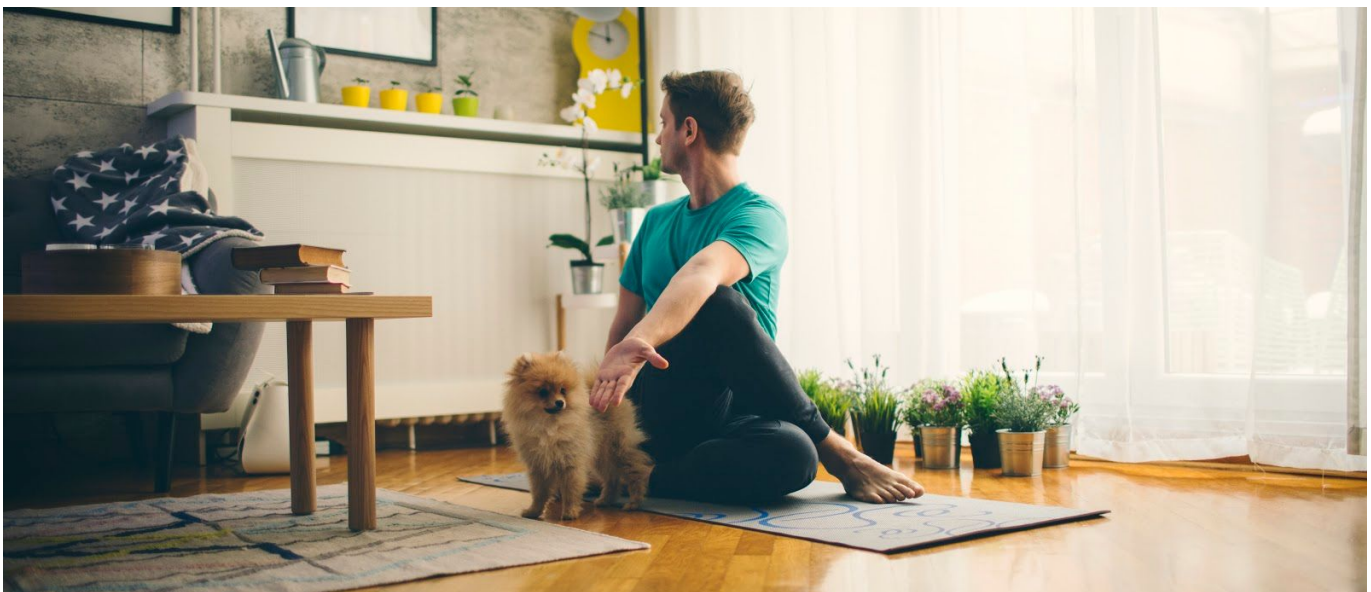
Try to create a positive relationship with exercise instead of stressing about not being able to make it to the gym. Think about exercise as a gift to yourself a few times a week. Get rid of the expectations of duration, reps or distance on the treadmill. Instead, just get yourself there and moving. Start slow and then set your goals once you're up and moving. A positive mindset will always be more powerful than the burden of a negative one!

10-Minute Do-Anywhere Workout

Stretch

Hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds

- Pike stretch (standing touch your toes)
- Seated V-sit stretch, reach between legs
- Seated V-sit stretch, reach for left side
- Seated V-sit stretch, reach for right side
- Left arm across body stretch (right hand holds left elbow)
- Right arm across body stretch (left hand holds right elbow)
- Seated lumbar twist to the right (sit cross-legged and twist torso to the right)
- Seated lumbar twist to the left (sit cross-legged and twist torso to the left)
- **REPEAT!**





Strengthen

- 10 push ups (modified or regular)
- 10 seconds rest
- Repeat 2 exercises above 3 times
- 20 seconds plank hold (modified or regular)
- 10 seconds rest
- Repeat 2 exercises above 3 times
- 20 seconds air chair hold
- 10 seconds rest
- Repeat 2 exercises above 3 times
- 30 seconds jumping jacks



Sweat

- 60 seconds run in place
- 30 seconds bodyweight squat
- 15 seconds frog jumps
- 15 seconds rest
- 30 seconds alternating split squat
- 15 seconds split squat jumps
- 15 seconds rest
- 30 seconds jumping jacks
- 15 seconds star jumps
- 15 seconds rest
- 60 seconds run in place
- **REPEAT!**





Nutrition

Cookies, pies, and cocktail, oh my! When the holidays are in full swing, following a healthy eating plan can feel impossible. While completely cutting out your favorite holiday treats is not realistic, slowing down and taking time to enjoy them is. Instead of overdoing it with sweet this holiday, make a plan of action.

First, make a list of your favorite healthful foods including lean protein sources, non-starchy vegetables and complex carbohydrate sources like sweet potatoes, berries, and whole grains. Take this list to the grocery store and stock your fridge and pantry with these foods to ensure you have plenty of healthy options on hand for meals and snack. Do your best to make lean protein and vegetables the foundation of your diet so that you don't feel as guilty when you allow yourself to enjoy a holiday treat or beverage.

Then, create a standard for when are you going to say pass and when are you going to allow yourself to indulge. Consider making the weekends your time to have a treat or at a certain time of the day, or maybe if you've hit your workout goals that week. Here's an example:

"I will allow myself to enjoy two cookies on the weekend if I exercise three times through the week. And for every two cookies enjoyed I will drink an additional eight ounces of water."

Below you will find five gut healthy holiday recipes to add to your meal prep or holiday meal.





Holiday Power Bowl

Nutrition Information

Serving size: See below

Calories: 470 calories

Protein: 40 grams

Fat: 10 grams

Carbohydrates: 50 grams

1 hand protein, 1 thumb of fat, 2 fists low carb, 1 cupped hand high carb

Ingredients

2 cups raw baby kale

6 ounces of turkey breast

2 tablespoons low sugar cranberry sauce

½ cup roasted brussels sprouts, or vegetable of choice

½ cup roasted butternut squash or high carb vegetable of choice

¼ cup quinoa

Directions

Layer all ingredients in large bowl, toss and enjoy! Top with one tablespoon of vinaigrette dressing if desired. Remember to add an additional thumb of fat to hand breakdown above if including dressing.

Meal Suggestions

- Switch out cranberry relish for dried cranberries
- If adding cranberry relish, reduce the amount of dressing and top with slivered almonds or pumpkin seeds
- Switch out roasted butternut squash for another roasted vegetable side, like sweet potatoes, green beans or replace with a small side of mashed potatoes





Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

Servings: 4

Nutrition Information

Serving size: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

Calories: 180

Protein: 5 grams

Fat: 10 grams

Carbohydrates: 20 grams

1 cupped hand of high carb and 1 thumb of fat

Ingredients

4 c butternut squash, cubed (1 medium sized squash)

$\frac{1}{2}$ c white onion, diced (1 small onion)

1 clove garlic, minced

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp curry powder

Salt and pepper to taste

3-4 Tbsp canola, grapeseed or coconut oil for roasting

3 c vegetable broth

Plain Greek yogurt, for garnish

Pumpkin seeds, for garnish

Directions

Preheat oven to 375-degrees fahrenheit.

Arrange squash, onion, and garlic in a single layer on a baking sheet. Drizzle olive oil and toss until squash and onions are completely coated with oil. Sprinkle salt, pepper and curry powder over the entire tray of squash. Bake for 30 minutes.

Once squash is tender use a blender or transfer squash to a pot and use an immersion blender to blend together roasted squash and vegetable broth. Blend until smooth.





Dijon Roasted Brussel Sprouts

Servings: 3-4

Nutrition Information

Serving size: 1 cup of brussels sprouts

Calories: 160 calories

Protein: 3 grams

Fat: 10 grams

Carbohydrates: 15 grams

1 fist low carb and 1 thumb of fat

Ingredients

2 pounds brussels sprouts, cut in half

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon dijon mustard

½ teaspoon garlic powder

½ teaspoon onion powder

Salt and pepper to taste

Fresh parsley, for garnish

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Remove ends of Brussel sprouts and cut in half.



In a medium-sized mixing bowl, mix together olive oil, dijon mustard, and various spices. Add chopped brussels sprouts to a bowl and toss until sprouts are evenly coated. Transfer to a baking dish and bake for 35 minutes or until edges are slightly crisp.





Pie Filling Yogurt Parfait

Servings: 1

Ingredients

1 cup plain yogurt
¼ cup pie filling of choice
¼ cup high fiber granola
1 tablespoon chopped nuts

Directions

Layer yogurt, then pie filling, and finally top granola and chopped nuts. Enjoy in place of dessert or as a gut-friendly breakfast.

Pie fillings to consider: Apple, pumpkin, key lime, lemon meringue, strawberry rhubarb, cherry, or mixed berry.



Cinnamon Apple-Cran Crumble

Ingredients

FILLING

2 cups apples, sliced thin
1/3 cup fresh cranberries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 1/2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon whole wheat flour

CRUMBLE

1 cup rolled oats
1/2 c almond flour
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 Tbsp maple syrup
1/2 cup butter or coconut oil, melted

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. In a large bowl mix sliced apples, cranberries, lemon juice, maple syrup, and cinnamon.

Transfer apple-cranberry mixture into a square baking dish or pie pan.

To make the crumble, mix oats, almond flour, cinnamon (1 tsp), maple syrup (1 Tbsp) and butter or coconut oil in the bowl used to make the apple-cranberry mixture. Mix oil and oats until oats are coated evenly with oil.

Top apple-cranberry mixture with oat crumble. Bake for 25 minutes or until oats are golden brown and fragrant.





No mess—just a simple pinprick of blood!

We hope you enjoyed the tips, exercises, and recipes included in the Ixcela Gut-Healthy Holiday Guide. By following a balanced diet, moving your body, and carving out time to relax during the holidays, you will move one step closer to reaching optimal gut health.

Now, it is time to take your gut health to the next level with the Ixcela gut health test and program. Our test is an at-home, pinprick blood test that offers cutting-edge insight into the health of your gut. By testing the metabolites in your blood, we create a report that shows your gut health scores, recommended nutrition and fitness plans, and lifestyle recommendations to help you reach optimal gut health. A healthy gut does more than maintain regular digestion—it also supports your immune system, supports brain and heart health, and improves your energy level.

This is the ultimate self-care investment. Trust your gut. [Order your kit today](#) and we'll ship it directly to you.

Wishing you and your family a gut-healthy holiday!

The Ixcela Team

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