

Naturopathic diet for improved gut health

Your digestive system is a complex system that relies on a balance of good and bad bacteria to run smoothly. That is the basics of gut health, even though it is much more complex than this. This information is general, so if you need more specific information to help with specific issues you are having, please get in touch.

There are a few main types of gut pathogens that can attack our good bacteria. These are bacterial, fungal, parasitic and protozoal. Each of these types of pathogens attack the good bacteria in our gut and feed the bad bacteria, which over-time results in gut health issues such as IBS, bloating, constipation and digestion difficulties. These type of issues start gradually and get worse over time and may even take years to get to their worst point and because of this, we tend to accept them as a normal part of life, until the issue is severe and its only at that point that people usually seek treatment.

Your gut health also plays a role in other health conditions because many of your body's hormones are actually made in the gut. If your bacteria balance is out of whack, it is more difficult for your gut to produce the right amounts of these hormones. So poor gut health can contribute to anxiety, depression, insomnia, panic, low immunity and various other illnesses.

Our diet can play a huge role in the health of our gut and in turn, our health can improve dramatically, simply by making some small dietary adjustments.

Here are some tips on how to modify your diet for improved gut health:

-Try to eat as many whole fresh foods as possible

-Minimise processed foods (that means anything that comes in a box or with lots of packaging). Even processed foods that are considered "healthy" are never as healthy as fresh foods because they don't contain the same amount of nutrients.

-Include prebiotic foods a few times a day to stimulate the growth of good bacteria in your gut. Some prebiotic foods include chickpeas, bananas, sweet potatoes, onion and garlic (for those that can tolerate it, however poor gut health generally makes people intolerant of these), lentils, oats and flaxseed. These are just a few examples of prebiotic foods.

-Include probiotic foods to add to and help build up the good bacteria in your gut. Probiotic foods include fermented foods as drinks such as kombucha, sauerkraut and kimchi, apple cider vinegar, tempeh, natural yoghurt (for people

that can tolerate dairy, however poor gut health generally makes people dairy intolerant), and probiotic supplements.

-Start your day with apple cider vinegar in warm water on an empty stomach and you can also do this before each meal. This helps your digestive system a kick-start to the day and helps with digestion, while adding to the good bacteria in your gut.

-Minimise processed sugar or eliminate it completely if you can (at least while your gut is repairing itself)

-Add in some herbal teas such as peppermint and chamomile

-Eat small meals regularly, rather than large meals less often and ensure you have correct portion sizes for you, as overloading your digestive system can be uncomfortable

Remember that these guidelines are general but your gut can be repaired from any illness, it may just take time and dedication to get the balance of bacteria back to normal, just as it took time to get it imbalanced. For more specific information, get in touch.