

Eating and activity to help strengthen your GI tract



Your gut is amazingly responsive to both good and bad influences. Fortunately, many good influences can help you strengthen your gut. For example:

Exercise.

Scientists are now studying the link between exercise and a healthy gut. Recent studies suggest that exercise enhances gut health in a variety of ways, including by helping to create a more diverse microbiome (microbial diversity is highly desirable in gut health).¹

Sleep.

The gut microbiome is a crucial player in how often and how seriously we're affected by a range of both acute and chronic conditions. Sleep is one of many behaviors that build and help support a balanced and diverse gut microbiome. Getting adequate sleep not only assists with diversifying our gut health, it also helps reduce stress, which may help prevent many gastrointestinal disorders.²

Foods your gut loves.

A high-fat diet can prevent good gut bacteria from flourishing. Saturated fats may increase the number of inflammatory gut microbes. Research suggests there is a correlation between a high-fat, low-fiber diet and colorectal cancer, the third most common cancer in the world.³ Research also suggests that intestinal bacteria may play an important role in the build-up of plaque inside arteries and, thus, the risk for heart disease and stroke.⁴

Incorporate some or all of the eight “super foods” that scientists believe actually super-charge the gut microbiome. These are:^{5,6}

1. Asparagus, Jerusalem artichokes, leeks, and onions
2. Bananas
3. Beans
4. Blueberries
5. Broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables
6. Fermented plant foods
7. Polenta
8. Probiotics

Be sure to participate in *The Gutsy Challenge* and get started today <for your chance to win>! <Visit XX to pick up your copy of the challenge materials.>

¹ Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity, "Exercise modifies the gut microbiota with positive health effects," March 2017

² Psychology Today, "How your stomach could be impacting your sleep," November 2018

³ American Cancer Society, "Effects of diet and physical activity on risks for certain cancers," June 2020

⁴ European Heart Journal, "Gut microbe-generated metabolite Trimethylamine-N-Oxide as cardiovascular risk biomarker: A systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis," October 2017

⁵ Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, "Gut bacteria," accessed October 2020

⁶ BMJ, "Role of the gut microbiota in nutrition and health," June 2018

The information and materials included in MetLife's Health and Wellness Information Library, including all toolkits, modules, template communications, text, charts, graphics and other materials, (collectively, the "Content") are intended to provide general guidance on health and wellness matters and are not, and should not be relied on as, medical advice. While the Content is based on resources that MetLife believes to be well-documented, MetLife is not responsible for the accuracy of the Content, and you rely on the Content at your own risk. Each person's condition and health circumstances are unique, and therefore the Content may not apply to you. The Content is not a substitute for professional medical advice. You should always consult your licensed health care professional for the diagnosis and treatment of any medical condition and before starting or changing your health regimen, including seeking advice regarding what drugs, diet, exercise routines, physical activities or procedures are appropriate for your particular condition and circumstances.