

# Gut Check

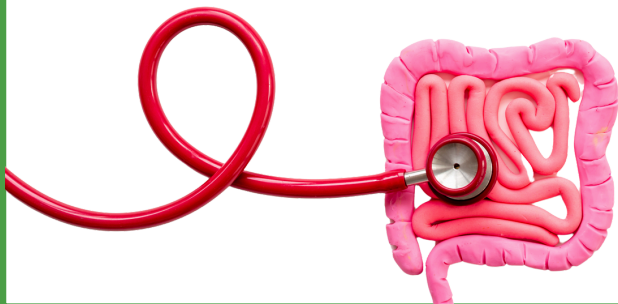
Metabolism • Immunity • Mental Health



**CommonHealth**  
DHRM - Office of Health Benefits

## SIGNS YOU MAY HAVE AN UNHEALTHY GUT

- Food allergies or sensitivities
- Skin problems
- Frequent illness or infection
- Autoimmune conditions
- Type 2 diabetes
- Poor concentration/memory
- Mental health conditions
- Obesity
- Digestive issues



## 5 REASONS GUT HEALTH MATTERS

### 1. Nutrient Absorption

A healthy gut helps the small intestine absorb nutrients from the foods we eat to be used for growth and energy.

### 2. Immunity

About 70% of the immune system is in the gut. A strong gut helps fight infection and prevent disease.

### 3. Inflammation

A weak gut barrier can trigger the immune system, causing inflammation which can lead to various chronic diseases.

### 4. Mental Health

Gut bacteria produce neurotransmitters, like serotonin, which affect mood and mental health.

### 5. Metabolism

Gut bacteria help control weight, insulin levels, and the risk of metabolic diseases such as type 2 diabetes.

## A PATH TO A HEALTHIER GUT

**Eat more fiber.** Include fiber rich foods in every meal. Vegetables, fruits, beans, seeds, and nuts are great options.



**Stay hydrated.** Drinking water is the best option but eating fruits and veggies is also very beneficial. Aim for at least 8 cups per day.



**Include probiotics.** Some great choices include yogurt, kefir, kombucha, fermented pickles, and sauerkraut.



**Limit ultra-processed foods and added sugars.** Be wary of most fast food options and packaged snacks, like cookies, crackers, and chips.



### HOW PROCESSED IS YOUR FOOD?

For help selecting less processed foods, try tools like:

- **Processed:** Get the app at [processedapp.com](https://processedapp.com). Find out how processed foods are by using the app to scan barcodes or take pictures of ingredient lists.
- **TrueFood:** Browse the database at [truefood.tech](https://truefood.tech). The lower the score, the less processed the food.

**Be active.** Exercise improves digestion and insulin sensitivity. Try light activity after a meal, such as walking or stretching.



Consider seeing a health care provider if you have symptoms that last more than 2-3 weeks or disrupt your daily life, feelings of fullness after eating very little, unexplained changes in bowel movements, family history of digestive conditions, or unexplained weight loss.