



How to Improve Your Gut Microbiome

Your gut microbiome is an amazing ecosystem of trillions of bacteria, viruses, and fungi that live in your digestive tract. A healthy gut microbiome supports digestion, immunity, metabolism, and even mood.

It is crucial for both our physical and mental health that we nurture it effectively.

1. Eat a Diverse, Plant-Rich Diet

- **Why:** Different microbes thrive on different fibres and plant compounds. The more variety, the more resilience.
- **What to do:**
 - Aim for 30+ different plant foods per week (fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices).
 - Include whole grains like oats, brown rice, quinoa, and barley.
 - Eat the rainbow — different colours of vegetables and fruits provide different nutrients and polyphenols.

2. Increase Prebiotic Foods

Prebiotics are fibres that *feed* beneficial gut bacteria.

Examples of prebiotic foods:

- Garlic, onions, leeks, asparagus
- Bananas (especially slightly green)
- Oats, barley
- Apples
- Jerusalem artichokes, chicory root

3. Include Fermented Foods (Natural Probiotics)

Fermented foods add live beneficial microbes to your gut.

Examples:

- Real Greek yogurt has good supply of live cultures

- Kefir (dairy or water-based) – aimed for the sweetened as sweeteners reduce the culture count
- Sauerkraut or kimchi (unpasteurized)
- Kombucha (unsweetened or low sugar)
- Miso, tempeh

Start with small amounts and increase gradually.

4. Limit Things That Harm Gut Bacteria

Some habits and foods disrupt your gut microbiome balance:

- **Avoid excessive antibiotics** (use only when prescribed).
- **Reduce ultra-processed foods**, refined sugars, and artificial sweeteners.
- **Limit alcohol**, especially in large or frequent amounts.
- **Stop smoking** — tobacco alters gut bacteria.

5. Manage Stress

Chronic stress harms the gut–brain axis and microbiome diversity.

- Try mindfulness, yoga, gentle exercise especially in nature or deep breathing.
- Regular sleep (7–9 hours) also supports microbial balance.

6. Stay Active

Physical activity boosts gut microbial diversity.

- Aim for 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week (like brisk walking, cycling, or swimming).

7. Hydrate Well

- Drink plenty of **water** — it supports digestion and healthy mucosal lining where microbes live.
- Limit sugary drinks and excessive caffeine.

8. Consider Probiotic Supplements (When Needed)

Probiotics can help in specific cases — for example:

- After antibiotics
- For IBS, traveler's diarrhea, or mild constipation

Recommended types (examples):

- *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* species (general gut support)
- *Saccharomyces boulardii* (yeast that helps with diarrhoea and antibiotics)
- Symprove has good evidence of being one of the probiotics that can “arrive, survive and thrive” the GI tract in order to deliver the probiotics to your gut.

9. Give It Time

Changes to your microbiome take weeks to months. Consistency matters more than perfection.

10. Track Your Progress

- Watch for improved digestion, energy, mood, and bowel regularity.
- Some people benefit from keeping a **food and symptom journal**.

When to Seek Medical Advice

If you feel your symptoms are actually worsening rather than improving, please come back to see us.