

# Gut Health: We are only as good as our gut

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When we use the term *Gut Health*, we refer to the wellness of the entire digestive system aka the GI (gastrointestinal) tract that comprises several organs including the mouth, oesophagus, stomach, small & large intestines and the rectum and organs like the pancreas, liver and gallbladder.

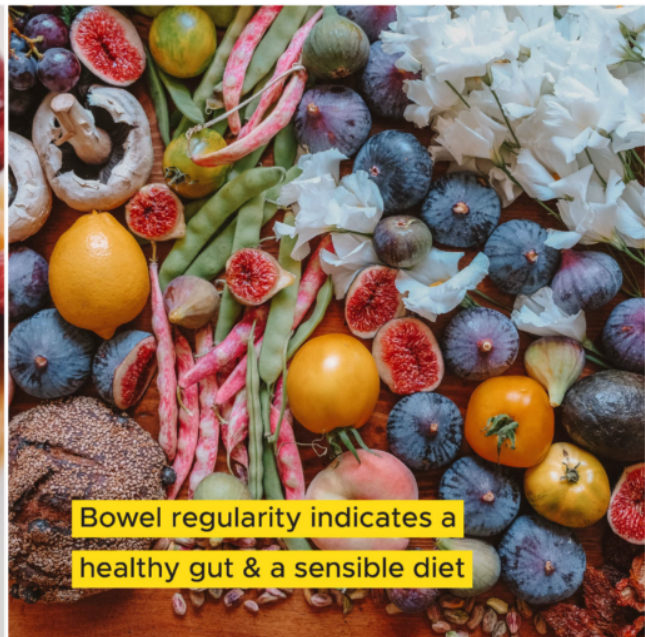
This environment is a host to about 100 trillion living microorganisms that belong to about 500+ bacterial species, collectively the “gut microbiome”. These are in some incredibly choreographed balance, yet not nearly understood that affect our immune system, our metabolism, GI functions & more.

The greatest influence on this balance is our food choice and other chemicals we ingest. Highly processed & acidic foods and certain medications can trigger a false alarm, increasing pathogens and a needless immune response that could result in a “leaky gut” and potentially in several autoimmune disorders.

*Prebiotics, probiotics* and *fermented* foods are crucial to keep these trillion creatures well fed.

**Prebiotics** are plant fibers our bodies can't digest but they serve as food for our gut bacteria. Lentils, whole grains, several vegetables, nuts all have several examples of these fibers, particularly those with complex carbs.

**Probiotics** are living organisms that increase the population of good gut bacteria. Fermented foods like yoghurt, buttermilk, kimchi, miso, tempeh, sourdough, idli, dosas are all good examples of. But remember to feed them with fiber!



### **Raspberries are fiber superstars in managing gastritis**

Gastritis is the inflammation of the stomach lining, most often the result of infection by the *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria. Reach for a range of dietary fibers through a wide base of whole foods to regulate a healthy gut. While we do not condone eating just one food, here's a fun fact: raspberries contain one of the highest levels of fibers, with a 1-cup serving giving up to 30% daily value! They also have proven potency in reducing the growth of *H. pylori* bacteria.

### **Bowel regularity indicates a healthy gut & a sensible diet**

High fiber foods are the best way to stay regular. There are two types of dietary fiber required: Soluble fiber becomes a gel in the gut, softens waste & eases it out, while insoluble does not digest but binds with waste, providing 'bulk' for excretion. Apples, carrots, navy beans, oatmeal, nuts are good on soluble. All vegetables, wholegrains, apples, pears, oranges provide insoluble fiber. Constipation harms the gut, so try including both fibers daily.



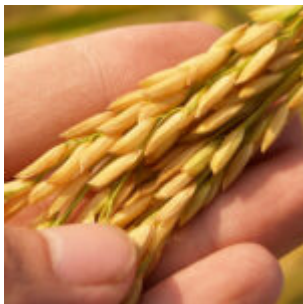
## Acid Reflux: overeating and heavy, acidic foods are culprits

Stomach acid's role is to digest food & kill harmful bacteria. The lower esophageal sphincter (LES) prevents this acid from flowing back into the food-pipe. Heavy foods or overeating causes the stomach to bloat & pushes acid back up, causing 'acid reflux' and heartburn. Diets rich in vegetables, fruits, wholegrains, alkaline foods (bananas, melon, cauliflower, fennel, nuts etc) and hydrating foods (watermelon, cucumber, celery, herbal teas) greatly curb reflux.



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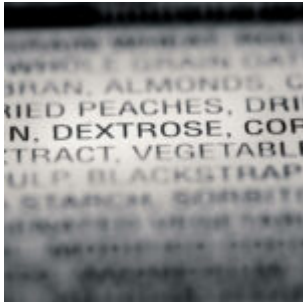


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