



HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR DIET

TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

- + Foods that are good for your health are also good for your gut microbes.
- + Eat plenty of plants and a variety of them. We recommend aiming for thirty different plants per week.
- + Select plant foods high in fibre and the defence chemicals called polyphenols.
- + Eat fermented foods regularly.
- + Eat foods in their whole, natural form to maintain the optimal level of fibre, and avoid ultra processed foods, (UPF).

TOP FIVE UNHEALTHY FOODS

- + Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) – with extra fat, sugar and salt, as well as other preservatives and additives.
- + Artificial sweeteners in foods or drinks.
- + Highly refined carbs – These are usually UPFs and low in fibre.
- + Foods that produce high blood sugar and blood fat peaks after meals with a lack of natural structure or fibre.
- + Snacks containing a lot of sugar or low-quality fats – even if they have 'healthy' labels saying they contain protein or 'natural' sugars.

TOP TIPS TO SUPPORT YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

- + Eat fermented foods such as blue cheese or some yoghurts, which contain helpful probiotics.
- + Eat foods rich in a variety of prebiotic fibres, such as leeks, onions, artichokes and cabbages.
- + Eat foods rich in polyphenols, such as colourful plants like blueberries, beetroot, blood oranges and nuts and seeds.
- + Eat foods that dampen any inflammation after meals such as green leafy vegetables.
- + Reduce consumption of meat and non-fermented dairy to occasional meals.

FOOD STORAGE AND COOKING TIPS

- + Frozen or canned fruits and vegetables can retain nutritional value and are good options to access out-of-season foods and reduce food waste.
- + Storing, heating and consuming foods exclusively from plastics may not be a good idea – glass, ceramics and wood are safer.
- + Many vegetables are better cooked lightly. Avoid boiling vegetables unless it's for hearty soups.
- + Cook at home as often as possible with whole, unprocessed ingredients using good-quality extra virgin olive oil rather than butter.
- + Fermenting is a great way to preserve foods and enjoy added flavour and probiotic benefits.

KEY TIPS ABOUT FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

- + Virtually all vegetables are good for you. Bright colours and bitter or strong flavours indicate high polyphenol content.
- + Eat a diverse range of plants each week, including beans, herbs and spices.
- + Vegetables are a great source of polyphenols and fibre for your microbiome. Try leaving the skin on potatoes and don't peel apples.
- + Eat whole fruit, don't drink fruit juice. Juice removes fibre leaving lots of sugar. One orange will do but you will drink four in a glass of juice.
- + How we cut and cook vegetables affects their nutrients: mixing with fats and oils and fermenting can enhance benefits; light steaming is often optimal – avoid boiling for long periods.
- + Beware of clever marketing of rare and expensive vegetables that may not be any healthier.

FACTS AND TIPS ABOUT BREADS

- + Bread is a good source of fibre and protein but can cause sugar spikes.
- + Many bakeries and supermarkets now reheat frozen loaves up to a year old.
- + Choose rye, wholegrain and mixed-flour breads with added seeds for fibre and variety.
- + When buying bread, pick a low Carbohydrate:Fat ratio (C:F ratio) and a simple ingredients list.
- + Where possible, make your own or buy slow-fermented sourdough bread.

KEY FACTS ON SWEET TREATS

- + Honey produces a similar effect on the body as table sugar, but it may help tickly coughs and hay fever thanks to its active ingredients.
- + Dark chocolate has large amounts of polyphenols and fibre and is good for your gut. Look for the high- quality dark chocolate bars with only three or four ingredients.
- + Most commercial chocolate bars are highly processed with dubious ethical credentials – pick high- cocoa varieties where possible.
- + Beware of the many sugar aliases on food labels.
- + 'No added sugar' products can contain sugar alcohols or sugars by other names, which are not necessarily good for us or our gut microbes, or artificial sweeteners, which may have a negative impact on our metabolism.

KEY FACTS ABOUT NUTS AND SEEDS

- + It's hard to have too many nuts and seeds, ideally in their unprocessed form.
- + There is reasonable evidence that both seeds and nuts have health benefits against heart disease and cancer.
- + They are increasingly being used as vegan dairy alternatives and are a great source of protein and healthy oleic acid fats.
- + There is better health evidence for some (such as flaxseeds) than others.
- + Eat a mixed variety of nuts and seeds to boost your weekly plant intake. Keep a jar of mixed seeds and ground-up nuts to hand and add to yogurts and smoothies, sprinkle onto salads or into baking dough.

MEATY FACTS

- + There is little evidence that occasional good-quality meat consumption is associated with poor health outcomes.
- + On the other hand, cheap processed meat products are definitely bad for our health.
- + Eating fish provides us with essential vitamins, minerals and omega-3 fatty acids. But not all fish are equal. Trout, oysters, sardines, anchovies, herring, pollock and mussels are all the best for these nutrients.

SUPPLEMENTS

- + If you are following the kind of diet described here, then most supplements should only be on your Doctors' advice.
- + Vitamin D, at low to moderate doses, particularly in the British winter is often recommended.
- + A vitamin B12 and folic acid supplement may be suggested by your Doctor

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