



FOSS FACT SHEET

GUT HEALTH AND HORMONES





Gut Health

In your gut (and body) there are trillions of bacteria and scientists are now starting to understand the significance of this bacteria for optimal health. This bacteria is critical for assisting with digestion and the absorption of nutrients. A gut thriving in beneficial bacteria, a healthy intestinal lining and well functioning digestive enzymes provide the perfect environment for the absorption and synthesis of vital nutrients for the body.

You probably haven't given much thought to your gut health, but it turns out that your monthly personal hormonal rollercoaster may be hugely influenced by the bacteria in your gut.

Your microbiome (gut health) has the capacity to influence your hormones:

- Oestrogen: gets 'packaged' up in your gut ready for excretion
- Metabolism: via thyroid hormones, think weight management
- Happy hormones: via the neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine
- Sleep hormone: melatonin

Common menopausal symptoms such as anxiety, fluctuating mood, sleep issues and energy levels may be eased and eliminated when you focus on supporting the beneficial bacteria in your gut.

The Science Bit

Numerous studies in the last two decades suggest that the bacteria in the gut:

- Supports hormone balance
- Supports your immune system,
- Helps prevent illness,
- Boosts your mood,
- Influences behaviour,
- Impacts digestion,
- Helps digest food whilst synthesising vitamins
- Controls your appetite and weight

Scientists have also demonstrated links between the diversity of your gut microbiome and autoimmune diseases, mental health and cancer.

The list of benefits for improving your gut health (also known as your gut microbiome) now goes far beyond digestion.

It is suggested that humans have about 300 to 500 different species of bacteria in their digestive tract, and whilst some may be harmful to our health, many are extremely beneficial and could even be considered necessary for optimal health.

Your digestive system is also involved in regulating hormones and excreting toxins (alongside your liver), so keeping a healthy balance of beneficial bacteria in your gut is crucial for hormone balance.

Nutrition Guidance

- Eat 30 different plant foods per week (vegetables, fruits, quinoa, oats, brown rice, beans, pulses, nuts and seeds), these foods feed and nourish the beneficial bacteria in your gut and will help to create an abundant and diverse microbiome
- Avoid processed foods, as this encourages the growth of non beneficial bacteria to thrive
- Remove refined sugars from your diet, these can encourage the growth of yeasts and non beneficial bacteria, whilst damaging the delicate ecosystem in your intestines
- Consume fermented foods (sauerkraut, kefir, kombucha, miso, tempeh, kimchi and organic natural yogurt) as these are high in probiotics (beneficial bacteria)
- Stay hydrated - dehydration slows down your digestive system and makes things stagnant, we need regular bowel movements to get rid of spent hormones
- Chew your food thoroughly - you don't have teeth in your stomach. Digestion starts in the mouth and chewing starts the process of breaking down food with enzymes in your saliva



Lifestyle Guidance

- Exercising regularly helps your digestive system because the increased blood flow to your organs, stimulates muscles within your gastrointestinal tract
- Get outside more as this exposes you to more bugs and this will help build your immune system
- Manage stress levels as prolonged stress can impact your digestive health, due to the decreased blood flow to this area and lack of nutrient absorption, your body is in the fight or flight mode when it is stressed
- Sleep well, you are much more likely to make poor food choices when you are tired
- Avoid or limit alcohol because it can irritate and cause inflammation in your digestive system (it also impacts your liver health and function)

Supplements

Probiotics - Live bacteria that influence your gut

bacteria - Choose a well researched, brands such as: OptiBac Probiotics, Biocare, Proven or Bio-Kult.

Saccharomyces boulardii (yeast)- may help to support gut lining and integrity (OptiBac Probiotics, Pure Encapsulation).

Prebiotics - classed as non-digestible food ingredients that feed probiotics. They help to support the population and diversity of beneficial bacteria in the gut.

