



Supporting Gut Health



This article discusses the general health benefits of probiotics, which are strain-specific, and is not meant to imply that Activia® provides the benefits mentioned in this article. Activia is a probiotic yogurt that may help reduce the frequency of minor digestive discomfort when consumed twice a day for two weeks as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. Minor digestive discomfort includes bloating, gas, abdominal discomfort, and rumbling.

The gut's role in overall health

The gut is an extremely complex environment that performs many vital functions.¹

	The small intestine acts as the main site of enzymatic digestion of foods and absorption of nutrients.
	The large intestine or colon absorbs large quantities of water and electrolytes and helps to remove waste matter and other substances the body does not use. The large intestine is also responsible for the regulation of intestinal well-being, particularly through its complex microbiome that contributes to the maintenance of intestinal function.

The importance of the gut microbiome

Our body's largest population of microorganisms resides in the gut. The gut microbiome is made up of trillions of microorganisms that assist with digestion and defense functions in the GI tract. Each individual has a unique composition of gut microbiota, similar to a fingerprint, that can be influenced by various external factors.² While factors like genetics and aging are less controllable, we can make positive lifestyle choices to help support gut health.²

Healthy habits to support gut health

Encouraging a daily routine incorporating a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle is important to overall health. Further, taking a positive approach to managing lifestyle factors such as:

- Getting enough sleep
- Exercising regularly
- Managing stress
- Incorporating a fiber-rich eating pattern that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, fermented foods
- Regular consumption of specific probiotic strains

Probiotics have been shown to provide strain-specific health benefits such as supporting gut and immune health. While probiotics generally do not colonize the gut, many do provide their benefits in the colon, having a beneficial impact on the bacteria already living there.³

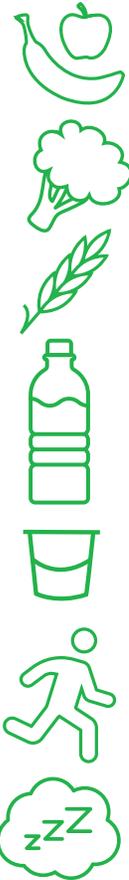




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Nutrition and lifestyle tips to promote gut health with clients & patients:^{4,5}

- Eat a variety of nutrient-dense foods as part of a well-balanced diet.
- Make half the plate a mix of fruits and veggies – challenge them to include 30 different plants⁶ per week.
- Include foods rich in fiber, such as fresh fruits, raw vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, nuts, and beans.
- Select lean meats and poultry and low-fat or fat-free dairy products.
- Consume 8 ounces of “oily” seafood per week.
- Incorporate fermented dairy products into their diet.
- Add probiotics or good bacteria that are found in foods like probiotic yogurt, kefir with probiotic strains, and dried fruits and juices with probiotics added.
- Drink plenty of non-sugary beverages. Aim for eight 8-ounce glasses per day.
- Reduce intake of saturated fats. Cut back on greasy, fried foods that are high in fat and hard to digest.
- Eat smaller more frequent meals without increasing overall caloric intake.
- Don't rush eating. Eating slowly and chewing food properly encourages a "full" feeling.
- Exercise regularly. While most people know that exercise offers overall health benefits, most people don't know that it's good for the gut, too.
- Get plenty of sleep, encourage 7-8 hours per night.
- Reduce stress by focusing 10 minutes per day on meditation or mindfulness.
- Eliminate the use of tobacco.



REFERENCES

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