

It takes GUTS to be healthy!

Have you got what it takes?

Gut health is super important for many reasons – it ain't all about the 🍌

As well as staying 'regular' and avoiding any 'embarrassing' symptoms 👁️ our gut is responsible for so much more.

70% of our immune system is contained within our gut, and 90% of serotonin (our happy hormone) is produced there too.

So gut health is some pretty serious shit (literally) 🤢

The good news is there are a bunch of things we can do to improve our gut health, so I'm gonna take you through a couple of the most important ones here.

Masticate

I said MASTICATE - filth! 😬

I see you there, wolfing your lunch down with phone in one hand and one eye on your emails.

Swallowing without biting 😬

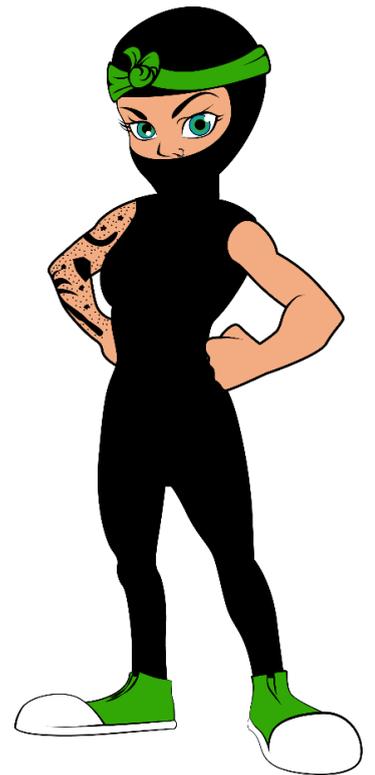
Digestion starts before we even put the food in our mouths!

The smell of food triggers the salivary glands in your mouth to secrete saliva, causing your mouth to water – literally drooling 😬

When you chew you're physically breaking down your food into small pieces and then enzymes in your saliva, such as amylase which helps break down carbohydrate, breaks down your food even further.

Not masticating enough 😬 makes it harder for your gut. You may have heard me talk about eating mindfully and without distractions and this is one of the reasons why.

Try to chew each mouthful 20-30 times before swallowing, put your cutlery down before mouthfuls, sit down at a table to eat if you can, and definitely put that phone away!!



Fibre is your friend

Fibre is the unsung hero of the nutrition world and around 90% of us aren't getting enough.

Ideally, we should be getting around 30g per day - to put this into context one slice of sourdough bread is 2.2g, so it's quite a target!

Variety is key (try and get both soluble and insoluble), as different foods have different benefits and feed different bacteria!



Soluble fibre dissolves readily in water, takes a long time to digest and slows the release of other nutrients into the blood. Its counterpart, insoluble fibre, doesn't dissolve in water and enhances your body's ability to bulk up stools 🍌 and keep food moving through your digestive system, which supports gut transit time and prevents constipation.

As well as digestive assistance, another benefit of a fibrous diet is feeling full. It's effect on this is due to two main factors: adding bulk to the diet and slowing down digestion.

When you eat high-fibre foods, this increased volume takes up more space in your stomach and as your stomach is a "volume counter," the more space you take up with food or fluids, the fuller you feel.

Foods high in soluble fibre slow down the digestion and absorption process in the body by creating a gel once ingested. A slower rate of digestion helps keep you fuller between meals and allows satiety signals to be sent to your brain, which help stop you from eating as much. Certain types of fibre can be fermented by beneficial gut bacteria (food for the bacteria basically!), which produce short-chain fatty acids, which are a source of energy and it also slows down the breakdown of sugars found in carbohydrates, which helps stabilise your energy levels.

Fibre also promotes an environment favourable to beneficial gut bacteria (and we know we need to keep them happy) and more seriously, a diet high in fibre can reduce the risk of developing high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes, and bowel cancer.

So it has so many benefits beyond helping your food 'in transit'

Not sure how to boost your intake.....take a look at this chart.

	Portion (g)	Fibre (g)	Notes
Grains			
Oats	40	3.1	Great in overnight oats with fruit and seeds.
Brown rice	160	2.4	Longer to cook but a lovely nutty taste
Sourdough bread	50 – 1 slice	2.2	Avo on toast anyone?
Rye bread	50 – 1 slice	3.6	
Corn	200 – medium cob	2.4	Great with Mexican food
Quinoa	90	5.6	Use as a salad base instead of rice
Vegetables			
Onion	60 – 1 small	1.3	Good base for all soups, stews and curries
Broccoli	71	2.8	Broccoli cheese is way better than cauliflower cheese
Cauliflower	74	1.4	Great roasted with turmeric
Asparagus	84 – 5/6 spears	1.4	Throw it in the same pan as your steak
New potatoes	160	2.9	Great cooked and cooled in a salad for some resistant starch
Courgette	80	1.6	Great in a tray of roasted veg
Peppers	80 – ½ a pepper	1.8	Go for a mix of colours for all the nutrients
Green beans	80	3.3	Steam & add butter and a squeeze of lemon juice
Leeks	89 – 1 leek	1.8	Good alternative to onions for soups and stews
Fruit			
Medium apple	174	2.1	Apple slices dipped in peanut butter 😊
Raspberries	64	4.3	Low in cals, high in fibre and nutrients
Blueberries	80	1.2	Fresh or frozen is fine
Strawberries	160	6.1	Taste good with a little black pepper – try it!
	Portion (g)	Fibre (g)	Notes
Medium plum	70	1.6	Great stewed and added to porridge
Medium banana	100	1.4	You're no-one until you've made Lockdown Banana Bread
Avocado	70 – ½ avo	2.4	The ultimate hipster food
Medium Pear	162	4.3	Another low calorie, high fibre winner
Medium Orange	160	1.9	Can be added to salads as well as a good portable snack
Tomato	85	0.9	The most versatile fruit
Nuts & Seeds			
Sunflower seeds	28	2	Amazing sprinkled on porridge
Sesame seeds	28	2.6	A good addition to Asian dishes

Chia seeds	28	11	A good vegan egg substitute
Almonds	28	4.5	Enjoy as is, or in their various butter forms.....beware as they're calorie dense!
Cashews	28	1.2	
Walnuts	28	1.7	
Pistachios	28	2.3	
Legumes (all tinned)			
Green lentils	200	9.2	An easy way to boost the fibre content of a salad
Chickpeas	41	2	Roast & add plenty of spices
Butter beans	124	5.1	A good hummus alternative to chickpeas
Black beans	100	5.1	Try them in a bean chillil
Cannellini beans	172	7.2	Try mashing and adding paprika

So there we have it Ninjas!

Some easy ways to up the fibre and keep your gut healthy.

Got any other favourite fibre boosters? Let me know and I'll update the table 🤪