

Nutrition to Improve Gut Microbiome Diversity

A healthy gut microbiome is essential for overall well-being. Your gut is home to trillions of microorganisms that play a vital role in digestion, immunity, and even mood regulation. The most effective way to promote a diverse and balanced gut microbiome is through what you eat. This handout provides guidance on how to improve gut microbiome diversity through dietary choices.

Consume at Least 25 Different Plant Foods Each Week:

Diversity is key when it comes to feeding your gut microbiome. Different types of plants contain various fibers, antioxidants, and nutrients that nourish a wide range of beneficial microbes. Aim to incorporate at least 25 different plant foods into your weekly diet. Here are some examples:

- Vegetables: Spinach, carrots, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage.
- Fruits: Apples, berries, citrus fruits, and bananas.
- Legumes: Chickpeas, lentils, black beans, and peas.
- Nuts and Seeds: Almonds, walnuts, flaxseeds, and chia seeds.
- Whole Grains: Quinoa, brown rice, oats, and whole wheat.

Consume All Five Colours of the Rainbow Daily:

Eating a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables daily ensures you receive a broad spectrum of nutrients and antioxidants that can benefit your gut microbiome. Aim to include foods of different colours, as each colour represents unique compounds that nourish specific microbes. Remember the rainbow:

- Red: Tomatoes, red apples, strawberries, and watermelon.
- Orange: Carrots, sweet potatoes, oranges, and mangoes.
- Yellow: Corn, yellow capsicum, pineapple, and lemons.
- Green: Spinach, broccoli, kiwi, and green beans.
- Blue/Purple: Blueberries, grapes, eggplant, and blackberries.
- White & brown: Cauliflower, mushrooms, olives, and almonds.

Aim to include all colours on a daily basis.

Include Fermented Foods:

Fermented foods are rich in probiotics, which are beneficial bacteria that directly contribute to gut microbiome diversity. Including fermented foods in your diet can help maintain a healthy balance of microbes. Examples of fermented foods include:

- Yogurt: Look for plain, unsweetened yogurt with live active cultures.
- Kefir: A fermented milk or water drink with probiotics.
- Sauerkraut & kimchi: opt for products with no preservatives or added acids. Just water & salt.
- Kombucha: A fizzy, fermented tea with probiotics.

Additional Tips:

- Gradually increase fibre intake to prevent digestive discomfort.
- Stay hydrated, as water supports a healthy gut environment.
- Limit processed foods and added sugars, as they can negatively impact gut health.