

Three Good Gut Trends for 2019 – and How to Get on Top of Them



These days, there is so much information available on how to nourish your gut that it can be difficult to keep track. Buying a probiotic supplement used the only way to boost good bacteria in our gut; we now have a whole range of options for gut-friendly foods and a longer than ever list to bring with us on the grocery run.

As well as probiotics, which are live bacteria that can be consumed to improve the health of our gut and our overall health, we now have prebiotics. These are found in certain foods and selectively feed the beneficial microbes that live in your gut to promote your health. This has been linked to the production of beneficial metabolites, anti-inflammatory compounds and the 'good mood' chemical, serotonin.

So, what are the good gut trends for 2019 and what should you be putting in your shopping trolley?

1. Eat a variety of plant-based foods

A [recent large study](#) of the gut found that people who ate [30 different plant-based foods](#) a week had a more diverse population of microbes living in their intestine. And the golden rule of gut health is the more diverse, the better.

Plant-based foods include fruits and vegetables as well as legumes, lentils, kidney beans, soy and tofu.

Grocery shopping tips to increase your plant-based food variety:

- Try a new fruit and vegetable each week, or rotate your choices
- Mix it up with different herbs
- Buy a variety of beans and lentils, for example a can of mixed beans with kidney beans, chickpeas and cannelloni beans
- Stock up on frozen fruit to add to yoghurt, smoothies, oats and homemade muffins
- Swap meat for tofu/a soy-based meat alternative one day a week

2. Feed your gut for your mind

Emerging research is finding a link between mental health and dietary intake. And this all seems to stem from the community of microbes in our intestine and its ability to communicate with the brain.

For example, the 'Mediterranean diet' has been shown to reduce symptoms and risk of depression. This traditional way of eating focuses on high amounts of fruits and vegetables, wholegrains, olive oil, nuts and seeds, moderate amounts of fish, eggs, chicken and legumes, and small amounts of red meat.

It also highlights the importance of adequate rest, eating with others, and enjoying seasonal produce. As a consequence, it is high in a range of gut and brain friendly nutrients including fibres, B vitamins, folate, antioxidants and long chain omega 3 fats.

Grocery shopping tips to give your mind a boost:

- Choose extra virgin olive oil for pastas, salads, sauces and cooking
- Try seeds in oats, smoothies, cereal and salads
- Grab some mixed unsalted nuts including walnuts as an easy snack or addition to cereal and salads
- Stock up on wholegrains to add to each meal, such as rolled oats, wholemeal pasta, brown rice, wholemeal couscous and grainy/sourdough bread
- Choose some vegetables you can eat raw and others you plan to cook

3. Eat your fermented foods

The fermentation foods including meat, vegetables, dairy and beverages is another tradition that has existed across the world for thousands of years.

A fermented food or drink has had microbes populate within it, which partially breaks down the food and often changes the taste and texture. For example, milk is fermented to produce yoghurt. Although not all fermented foods contain live probiotics (such as sourdough and tempeh), they all feed our gut.

Emerging research is telling us that the consumption of fermented foods may be beneficial for our mood, our digestion and absorption of nutrients and our immunity.

Grocery shopping tips to feed your gut:

- If you are buying Kimchi and sauerkraut, get them from the fridge section – this will ensure the probiotics are live
- Look for Kefir in the dairy section – this fermented milk drink is both delicious and good for you
- Buy natural yoghurt and look out for a product with at least 10^6 colony forming units (CFU)/mL or g, as this is the amount of microbes needed to have a positive effect
- Choose a sourdough bread
- Try tempeh, a soy-based meat alternative that can be marinated and baked or used in stir fries, salads and curries

Keeping on top of gut health can seem daunting – but don't worry, following these few basic tips will get you off to a great start this year!