

5 R's to Rock Your

Gut Health

GOOD HEALTH BEGINS IN
THE GUT. LEARN FIVE KEY
STEPS TO RESTORE YOUR
GUT HEALTH.



YOUR
Functional Health

GUT HEALTH 101

Why it's important

Gut health isn't just some trendy wellness fad. It's the foundation for your health and well-being. In fact, roughly **80% of your immune system lives in your gut.**

Your GI tract is home to roughly 100 *trillion* bacteria (good and bad), known as your gut microbiome. These microbes do A LOT for your body.

They help digest your food, synthesize vitamins, lower inflammation, get rid of toxins, metabolize hormones... and even make around 95% of the feel-good neurotransmitter serotonin!

So when your gut gets out of whack, it can have far-reaching effects. This can lead to a bevy of physical and psychological symptoms.

Signs of Gut Dysfunction

- Digestive issues like constipation, bloating, diarrhea, acid reflux, & gas
- Skin conditions like eczema & psoriasis
- Autoimmune conditions like Hashimoto's, rheumatoid arthritis, or type 1 diabetes
- Depression & anxiety
- Unexplained weight gain or weight loss
- Fatigue
- Brain fog
- Sugar cravings

Around 70 million Americans struggle with chronic digestive problems each year. So if you're one of them, you're NOT alone.

The good news is, it's totally possible to heal your gut. All it takes is a little willingness to change some habits, and of course, a little time...

This guide will introduce you to the 5 R Approach to restoring your gut health. This step-by-step formula has its roots in functional medicine.

It's helped many with chronic digestive issues who'd give up hope finally restore their health. Here's the gist of it...

The 5R's of Gut Healing

Remove

Replace

Reinoculate

Repair

Rebalance

STEP 1: REMOVE

Step one is to remove any irritants, stressors, or infections that are harming the gut. Below are some of the most common culprits:

COMMON GUT IRRITANTS

Food sensitivities or intolerances

Both create inflammation in the gut, which can lead to GI symptoms. The biggest offenders are gluten, dairy, sugar, & soy. Doing an elimination diet like the Autoimmune Paleo Protocol (AIP) can help pinpoint foods that are causing issues. Food sensitivity testing is another option.

Chronic infections

Yeast overgrowth (candida), small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO), or parasitic infections can disrupt the balance of gut bacteria and damage the lining of the gut. Treating these infections via herbs or medications is crucial. Often, stool testing is used to identify these “bad bugs.”

Inflammatory foods

This includes alcohol, coffee, sugar, processed foods, and food additives. Since these foods irritate the gut lining, they're usually eliminated in **Remove** to allow the gut to heal.

Medications

Certain medications are bad news for the gut. NSAIDS damage the gut lining and antibiotics destroy healthy gut bacteria. For this reason, it's advised to steer clear of them while you heal your gut.

Stress

Your gut and brain are deeply connected. Stress increases cortisol, which causes gut inflammation. So reducing stress is key to improving gut health. Stressors can also be environmental like mold or toxins in personal care or cleaning products.

NOTE: Elimination diets, while helpful, are meant to be temporary (anywhere between 1-3 months). After that, you can reintroduce foods one by one every 2-3 days to see if you have any reactions.

STEP 2: REPLACE

The next step is to replace anything that's missing for healthy digestion function. This will be different for everyone. But here are some of the most important things to kickstart digestion:

COMMON GUT DEFICIENCIES

Digestive enzymes

If you're running low on digestive enzymes you can't break down your food properly. This can lead to nutrient deficiencies. Taking a digestive enzyme supplement while you heal your gut is a easy way to make sure you absorb vital nutrients. Gas, bloating, and undigested food in your stool are all signs you may benefit from enzyme support.

Brands: Enzymedica & Pure Encapsulations

Hydrochloric acid (HCL)

Stomach acid helps you digest your food and absorb nutrients. Plus, low stomach acid can lead to bacterial overgrowth. Bloating, burping, diarrhea, and acid reflux are all signs of low stomach acid. One simple way to boost your stomach acid is to mix 1 tbsp of apple cider vinegar with 8 oz of water and drink it before meals. Or you can go the easy route and take an HCl supplement.

Brands: Thorne & Designs for Health

Bile support

Bile helps your body digest fats and escorts toxins out of the liver. So when bile production is weak, you'll have trouble digesting fats and detoxing. Herbs like dandelion, milk thistle, and turmeric all support bile production. Foods like dandelion greens, artichokes, ginger, lemons, and limes can also help.



3 - REINOCULATE

Step 3 is to repopulate your gut with friendly bacteria and make your GI tract an environment where they can flourish. And the way to do that is to consume probiotics and prebiotics.

Probiotics

Probiotic foods contain live cultures of beneficial microbes. These include yogurt, sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir, miso, and kombucha. Aim to eat 1-2 servings of fermented foods each day. You can also take a probiotic supplement for extra support.

Brands: Garden of Life & Microbiome Labs



Prebiotics

To get the “good bugs” to stick around and thrive, you’ve got to feed them well. Enter prebiotics. Prebiotic foods contain indigestible fibers that serve as food for your friendly bacteria. Prebiotic foods include:

- Chicory root
- Dandelion greens
- Jerusalem artichokes
- Bananas
- Asparagus
- Flaxseed
- Oats
- Leeks
- Onions
- Garlic
- Apples

4 - REPAIR

The next step is to repair the lining of the gut. When the gut lining is damaged (known as “leaky gut”), it allows toxins, bacteria, and partially digested food into the bloodstream. This can lead to food sensitivities and chronic inflammation.

So in step 4, we flood the body with nutrients and herbs to restore the integrity of the intestinal wall. This may include:



Collagen rich-foods

Collagen is rich in amino acids like proline, glycine, & glutamine that help strengthen the intestinal lining. You can get your fill of collagen by consuming bone broth or taking a collagen supplement.

Brands: Kettle & Fire Bone Broth & Vital Proteins Collagen peptides



Gut healing herbs & supplements

Other supplements known for their gut healing abilities include:

- L-glutamine
- Aloe vera
- Slippery elm
- Marshmallow root
- Immunoglobulins
- Deglycyrrhizinated licorice root (DGL)

Nutrient support

Vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin D, and B vitamins all play a role in digestion. If you're low on any of these, your gut health will suffer.

Omega 3 fatty acids

Fish oil can be a helpful add-in for calming gut inflammation. You can eat more omega-3 rich foods like salmon or take a fish oil supplement.

5 - REBALANCE

Lifestyle takes center stage in step five. This is because your gut and brain have a bidirectional relationship, meaning stress and sleep affect your gut -- and vice versa.

So this final step is about creating a lifestyle that supports whole body health to prevent future gut dysfunction. Below are some of the foundational elements:



Practice good sleep hygiene

Here are a few ways to do that:

- Stick to regular sleep schedule
- Avoid blue light from electronics 1-2 hours before bed
- Have a relaxation ritual to help wind down



Exercise

Exercise is good for *everything*, including your gut. Research shows it enhances microbiome diversity. Aim to get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week.



Eat a healthy diet

If you heal your gut and then start eating junk, you'll end up in the same boat again. Eating a nutritious diet rich in fruits, veggies, whole grains, protein, and healthy fats is key to keeping your gut in tip-top shape.



Keep stress in check

Stress weakens the microbiome, so managing it is crucial for a healthy gut. Try to set aside time for relaxation practices daily, such as meditation, breathwork, yoga, spending time in nature, or listening to music.