



Gut Health and Plant-Based Diets September 2021

Gut Health and Plant-Based Diets

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What we will talk about today:

- Why is gut health important?
- How food affects gut health
- Probiotics and prebiotics
- How to eat more plant foods
- Your questions

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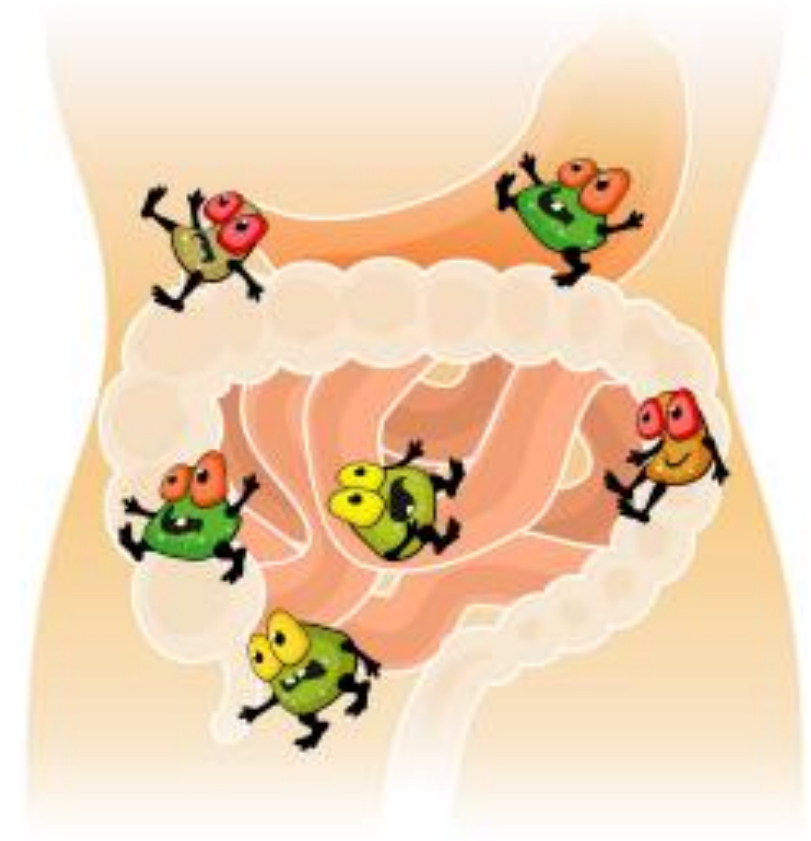
Links between gut bacteria and disease

Microbiota

- Normal bacteria in human body
- Most densely populated and diverse microbiota is in gastrointestinal tract or “gut”

Linked to poor gut health

- Obesity
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure, cholesterol
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Kidney disease



What you eat feeds your gut

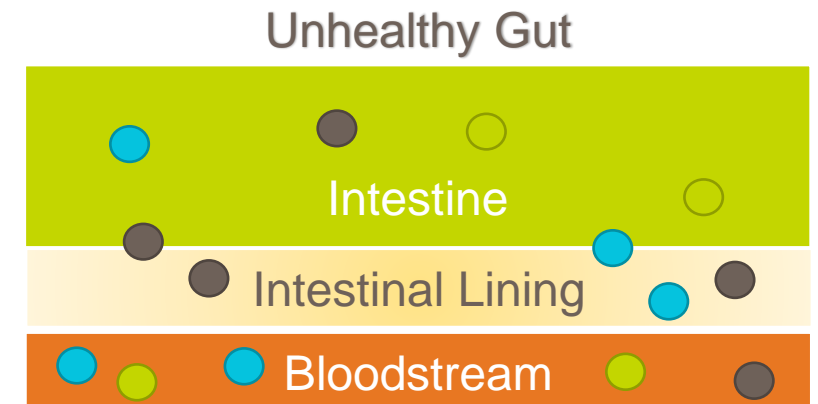
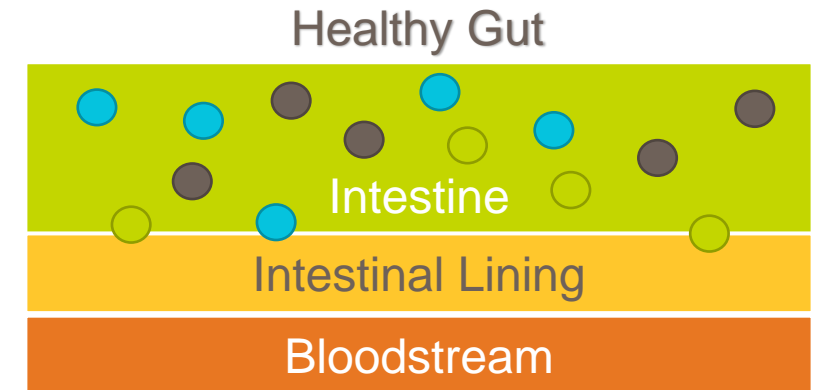
Diverse gut bacteria are associated with better health

- A high fat, high protein diet is associated with a unhealthy gut bacteria
- Plant-based diets higher in fiber are associated with healthier gut bacteria
 - **Carbohydrates for a healthy gut**
 - oats, whole grains, beans, asparagus, garlic, leeks, wheat, onions, legumes
 - Fiber: at least...
 - 25 grams/day for women
 - 35 grams/day for men



What is “leaky gut?”

- May trigger inflammation and changes in gut bacteria
- Can cause problems with the digestive tract
- Plays role in celiac, Crohn’s disease, and irritable bowel syndrome
- Could be associated with autoimmune diseases
- May be helped with food choices



Foods that play a role in immune function

Protect against colon cancer, atherosclerosis; reduces inflammation

- Whole grains
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Nuts and seeds
- Legumes (beans and peas)

Reduce inflammation and may lower cancer risk

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Coffee and tea
- Wine



Grains and fat

Whole Grains

- Offer many health benefits
- Increase gut diversity and may improve metabolism of sugar and fat
- Help you feel full (satiety)

Fats

- Animal fats high in saturated fats are linked to chronic health conditions and inflammation
- Plant fats—avocados, nuts, and olive oil—do not cause these issues
- Walnuts may be one of the healthiest sources of fats for their anti-inflammatory properties



What are prebiotics?

Non-digestible substances in food—help beneficial gut microbiota grow.

- Bacteria that benefit from prebiotics: *Lactobacilli* and *Bifidobacteria*
 - Stronger immune system
 - Better digestion
 - Restored healthy gut bacteria after antibiotic therapy

Healthy gut prebiotics can lead to reduced appetite, lowered body weight or fat mass, and improved glucose tolerance

Examples:

- Artichokes
- Asparagus
- Chicory
- Garlic
- Onion



What are probiotics?

Live bacteria similar to the bacteria in the gut.

Probiotic bacteria common in store-bought foods:

- *Lactobacillus*
- *Bifidobacterium*
- *Saccharomyces boulardii*

Some people find them helpful for GI symptoms: gas, bloating, constipation. More research is needed.

Plant foods may be a good source

- Fermented vegetables: pickles, kimchi, sauerkraut
- Kombucha drink
- Miso



Do I need a prebiotic or probiotic supplement?

- Supplements not a good substitute for healthy and balanced way of eating! Best to eat a variety of nutritious foods.
- Research has not shown that they reduce the risk for heart disease, cancer, and other disease as eating whole plant-based foods.
- May help restore healthy microbiota after taking antibiotic medication.



Make plant foods the focal point of the plate

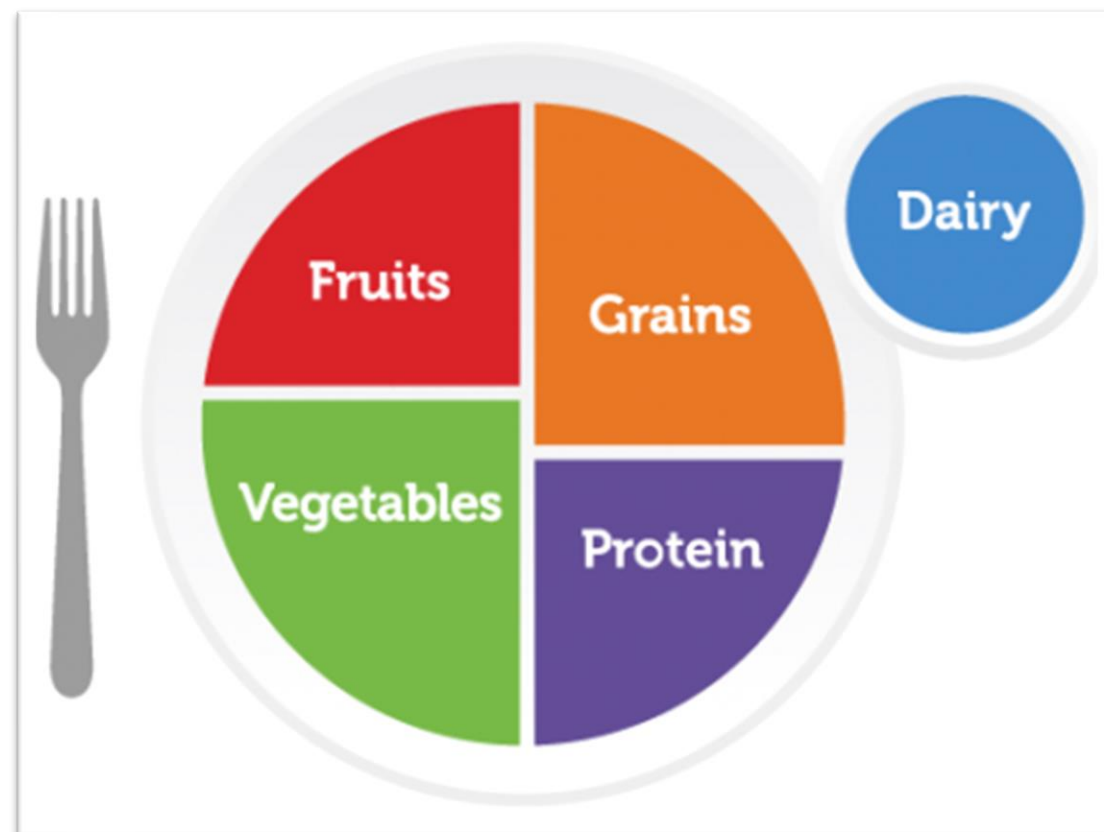
Eating plant-based does not mean vegetarian or vegan. It means more plants and fewer animals.

Tips

- Eat unprocessed plant foods with all meals and snacks
- Eat vegetarian 1 day/week then add gradually
- Make vegetables the “main course” of your meal
- Choose plant proteins: beans, lentils, tofu

Good Measures can help:

- App has recipes and meal suggestions for plant-based eating
- Registered dietitian coach creates a personalized plan for you



Questions?

<http://nm.goodmeasures.com>

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