

# Gut Feeling — Your Microbiome Action Guide

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## Why your gut matters

Your colon hosts ~**39 trillion** microbes that influence **digestion, immunity, metabolism, hormones, and mood**. When that community is **diverse and well-fed**, you feel it: steadier energy, calmer gut, clearer mind. When it's imbalanced (dysbiosis), we are prone to inflammation, fatigue and disease risk (diabetes, obesity, cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, constipation, depression, anxiety, cardiovascular disease and so on). The best news? **Food and lifestyle choices can shift your microbiome in as little as 24 hours!**

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## FEED — Fuel your microbes (Fiber • Color • Diversity)

### F-GOALS: Load your cart like this

**Aim for 30+ different plant foods each week — every plant feeds unique species.**

#### F – Fruit & Fermented

- Fruit (fresh/frozen): **Berries** (blue/black/rasp/str), **kiwi** (great for regularity), apples, pears, citrus, pomegranate, mango, grapes, stone fruit.
- Fermented (see SEED for servings): plain **yogurt/kefir**, **sauerkraut**, **kimchi**, **miso**, **tempeh**, **natto**, **pickled veg** (naturally fermented).

#### G – Greens & Grains (whole)

- Greens: spinach, kale, arugula, Swiss chard, romaine, bok choy, rapini, mixed salad greens, herbs (parsley, cilantro, dill, basil).
- Grains: **oats** (steel-cut/rolled), **quinoa**, brown/wild rice, farro, barley, buckwheat, millet, bulgur, whole-grain sourdough.

#### O – Omega-rich nuts & seeds

- **Flax (ground)**, **chia**, **hemp**, walnuts, almonds, pistachios, pumpkin & sunflower seeds, sesame/tahini.

#### A – Aromatics

- Onion family: onions, leeks, scallions, shallots.
- Garlic, ginger, turmeric, black pepper, rosemary, thyme, oregano, cumin, coriander, fennel.  
(*Tip: Chop/crush garlic, wait 10 minutes before cooking to activate sulfur compounds.*)

#### L – Legumes (plant protein powerhouse)

- Lentils (green/brown/red/black), chickpeas, black/white/pinto/kidney beans, edamame, split peas, pea-based foods, **tofu/tempeh/natto**.

## S – Sulforaphane family + Shrooms + Sea vegetable

- Crucifers: **broccoli**, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, kale, radish, mustard greens.
  - Mushrooms: cremini, shiitake, oyster, portobello, enoki.
  - Sea veg: nori, wakame, dulse (great in soups or sprinkled).
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## Plant Protein Spotlight (aim for ~25–35 g/meal; ~1.0–1.2 g/kg/day for most active women\*)

**Protein-with-plants combos (microbiome win):** Pair protein with plants for fiber and steady energy.

- Breakfast: steel-cut oats cooked in soy milk + **ground flax + hemp + chia + walnuts + berries** (+ Greek yogurt if desired).
- Lunch: **lentil/bean-quinoa** bowl + kale, roasted veg, tahini-lemon.
- Dinner: **tofu & broccoli stir-fry** (ginger-garlic-tamari) + brown rice.
- Snacks: edamame pods; apple + peanut butter; hummus + veg; chia pudding; kefir smoothie with berries & oats.

**Fatty, low mercury fish, like salmon, sardines, anchovies, and Greek yogurt/kefir are best animal-based protein sources.**

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## SEED — Replenish with fermented foods

**Daily target:** 1–2 small servings; **ambitious option:** 4–6 servings/day (mix & match).

- **Yogurt/kefir (plain)** ½–1 cup • **Sauerkraut/kimchi** 1–3 Tbsp • **Miso** 1 tsp in warm water • **Tempeh** ½ cup • **Natto** ¼ cup • **Fermented pickles** 1–2 spears • **Kombucha** ½ cup.
- Gentle start:** Begin with 1 Tbsp fermented veg/day and increase slowly.  
**If you're sensitive (prone to bloating):** start lower, choose **yogurt/kefir** first, and add slowly.
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## SOOTHE — Lifestyle is microbiome medicine (S.O.O.T.H.E.)

### S — Sleep & Sunlight

- **7.5–9 hours**; similar wake time daily.
- **AM light** (5–15 min outdoors) sets your clock; **dim lights** 90 minutes pre-bed.
- Cut **caffeine after noon**; keep **alcohol minimal** (it disrupts gut + sleep, ↑cancer risk).

### O — Observe & Nourish Mindfully

- **Pre-meal pause:** 3 slow breaths; feel calm arrive.
- **Eat without rushing:** chew thoroughly (aim ~10–20 chews/bite), put utensils down between bites.
- **Hydrate:** 2 glasses on waking; 1–2 glasses with meals; sip between.
- **Gentle TRE** (if appropriate): **12–13 hours** overnight of fasting; early, consistent dinner. (*Skip if you have a history of disordered eating.*)

## O — Oxygenate with Movement

- **Post-meal 10–20 min walk** (best glycemic and motility boost).
- **Week plan:** 150 min moderate/vigorous activity + **2–3x strength** + natural movement
- Variety = microbial diversity: walk/run • lift • yoga • cycle • swim • dance.

## T — Tend to Your Nervous System

- **4-7-8 breath** (4 in, 7 hold, 8 out) × 4 cycles twice a day; or **box breathing** (4-4-4-4).
- **Micro-resets** (60–120 sec): step outside, hand on heart + long exhale, 5-senses check.
- **Rituals:** gratitude at meals; 5-minute evening stretch; short meditation/prayer, mindfulness

## H — Human Connection & Nature

- Social bonding and outdoor time diversify microbes. 20 minutes in nature lowers cortisol ~25%.
- Daily **connection dose:** text/call, walk with a friend, unhurried dinner.
- **Nature goal: 20–30 minutes** outdoors/day; add a weekly longer green/blue-space outing.

## E — Ease into Evenings

- **Digital sunset:** screens off 60 minutes before bed
- **Evening cadence:** earlier dinner → gentle light → wind-down (bath, herbal tea, reading).
- **Bedroom:** cool, dark, quiet; reserve for sleep + intimacy.

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## Smart swaps & micro-habits (start with 1–3)

- **Count plants, not calories** → aim **30+ plants/week** (herbs/spices count!).
- **Eat the rainbow** — colour = polyphenols = microbial diversity.
- **Front-load fiber** at breakfast; **add legumes** to lunch; **crucifers** at dinner.
- **Two fermented bites/day** (e.g., 1 Tbsp sauerkraut + ½ cup yogurt).
- **Walk after meals** (set a 12-minute timer).
- **Hydrate early** (2 glasses on waking).
- **One “green thing” per meal** (leafy or crucifer).
- **Digital sunset** + **4-7-8** before sleep.
- **Sunday prep:** cook a pot of lentils/beans and a grain; wash/chop veg; make a tahini or yogurt herb sauce.

## Sample “microbiome day” (mix & match)

- **Breakfast:** oats cooked with soy milk + **ground flax, chia & hemp** + blueberries; side kefir or Greek yogurt.
  - **Lunch:** warm quinoa-lentil bowl, roasted broccoli & carrots, arugula, pumpkin seeds, tahini-lemon.
  - **Snack:** edamame + orange; or apple + peanut butter.
  - **Dinner:** ginger-garlic tofu & mushroom stir-fry, mixed greens, brown rice; **1–2 Tbsp kimchi**.
  - **Evening:** herbal tea; devices off; **4-7-8**; lights low.
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## Bottom line

Gut microbiome is **KEY** in reducing disease risk and **improving our health and longevity**.

**Feed** with diverse plants. **Seed** with fermented foods. **Soothe** with sleep, rhythm, movement, joy and connection. **Progress over perfection!**

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## Resources

### 1. Books:

- Fiber Fueled by Will Bulsiewicz, MD
- Love Your Gut by Megan Rossi, PhD/Dietitian
- The Good Gut: Taking Control of Your Weight, Your Mood, and Your Long-Term Health by Justin Sonnenburg & Erica Sonnenburg
- The Mind-Gut Connection by Dr. Emeran Mayer
- The Gut-Immune Connection by Dr. Emeran Mayer
- The Fiber Fueled Cookbook by Will Bulsiewicz, MD

### 2. Websites:

- <https://theguthealthdoctor.com/recipes>
- <https://theguthealthmd.com/>
- <https://zoe.com/learn/category/nutrition/recipes>
- <https://www.bluezones.com/recipes/>
- <https://www.thedoctorskitchen.com/>