



The Wellness Watch

promoting healthy lifestyles

August 2015

August: Go with your Gut

The Important Role of Bacteria

The body is home to hundreds of different types of microbes (bacteria, yeast, etc.), including billions of each kind, totaling over 100 trillion! In fact, for every one cell in the body, there are ten microbes. The most diverse and largest number of these microbes can be found in the digestive tract (gut).

Gut bacteria is important because it:

- Assists with proper digestion of food and absorption of nutrients
- Helps in the making of some vitamins
- Plays a roll in regulation of blood sugar
- Influences hormone response
- Affects how fat is stored

Recent research indicates that having fewer different types of bacteria in the gut, increases the risk of major health problems like obesity and diabetes.

People living in western countries (the U.S) have a lot less diversity in gut bacteria compared to other countries. Some contributing factors to this are:

- Excessive concern with cleanliness
- High intake of processed foods
- Overuse of antibiotics

How can you increase the variety of gut bacteria? Look at your diet. You can help re-populate your gut with a diverse bacteria by eating more colorful, plant-based foods, such as:

- Bananas and blueberries
- Broccoli, kale, cabbage, and cauliflower
- Beans
- Fermented plant-based foods like sauerkraut, tempeh, kimchi, kombucha and soy sauce
- Polenta
- Jerusalem artichokes
- Cultured dairy foods; such as yogurt, kefir, sour cream and buttermilk



KOMBUCHA, to drink or not to drink?

Kombucha is a type of yeast, although it is sometimes described incorrectly as a mushroom. Kombucha tea is made by fermenting kombucha and bacteria with black tea, sugar, and other ingredients.

The Bad: Kombucha tea, especially batches made at home where it's hard to maintain a germ-free environment, can become contaminated with fungus (*Aspergillus*) and bacteria (including anthrax) promoting more harm than good to the digestive tract.

The Good: Benefits of kombucha tea are primarily based on personal reports and a few animal studies. There are no clinical trials or sound scientific evidence to substantiate the numerous claims. That is not to say there aren't benefits from drinking the tea; it simply means there is no evidence that proves the benefits it claims.

Tech Corner



Fooducate:

Phone Apps for Android and iPhone
<http://www.fooducate.com/>

- This app allows you to:
 - Compare foods to see which is healthiest
 - Scan barcodes to quickly get health information
- Includes daily tips and recipes
- Offers an on-line community to ask questions and share experiences

No More Artificial Trans Fats

On June 16th, the FDA took action to remove all partially hydrogenated oils, also known as Trans Fat from food.

- Trans fats are used by food manufactures to increase a product's shelf life, keep artificial colorings, and make food taste better
- Trans fats are common in things like popcorn, cookies, crackers, and pie crusts
- **Trans fats cause heart disease.** The goal is to have **ZERO** trans fats in your diet
- While food companies have reduced trans fats in their food manufacturing since 2003, they now have until June 18, 2018 to completely remove it from all products
- What do you do until then? Avoid foods with *partially hydrogenated oil*, which are trans fats.



Healthier Cooking

1. Make enough food for a couple of meals and freeze it. That way you have something healthy that is quick and easy when you are tired or short on time.
2. Steam it or Stir Fry – these cooking methods help keep nutrients and color in vegetables.
3. Add flavor without the salt and fat – use herbs, tomatoes, onions, vinegar, or fat-free, low sodium salad dressings and sauces; try salt free seasoning mixes – they are tasty!
4. Make a Smoothie. Blend together a banana (can keep in the freezer) along with berries, other fruits, spinach, and some 100% fruit juice. Add fat-free or low-fat yogurt or peanut (or other nut) butter to increase the protein.
5. Steer clear of regular canned veggies – they are usually high in salt. Instead, look for “low-sodium” veggies or try the frozen varieties.
6. Reduce the amount of butter, lard, shortening or oil when baking. Substitute 3 ripe, mashed bananas for ½ cup of these ingredients or substitute the fat with equal amounts of applesauce.
7. Choose whole grains instead of highly refined products. Use whole-wheat flour, oatmeal and whole cornmeal. Opt for whole grain bread, pasta and cereal.

Planks for a Stronger Core

Plank exercises are a great way to increase core strength without a trip to the gym or the need for fancy equipment. All you need is a well cushioned floor and your own body weight.

Standard Planks

- Start face down on the floor with elbows bent at 90 degrees and directly under your shoulders
- Set core muscles by pulling your belly button towards your spine, then lift up onto your toes and forearms
- Keep your back flat and breathe regularly
- Hold for up to 60 seconds



Side Planks

- Lay on your left side with your right leg resting on your left leg
 - Place your left elbow under the same shoulder
 - With core muscles set, lift your upper body off the floor
 - Hold for up to 60 seconds
 - Repeat on the right side



Work up to 2-3 reps in each position.

Do these seem too hard? Try using your knees instead of your feet as contact points. Making your legs “shorter” will decrease the difficulty until you gain the necessary strength for regular planks.



If you have an acute injury or significant pain, see your doctor before trying.