



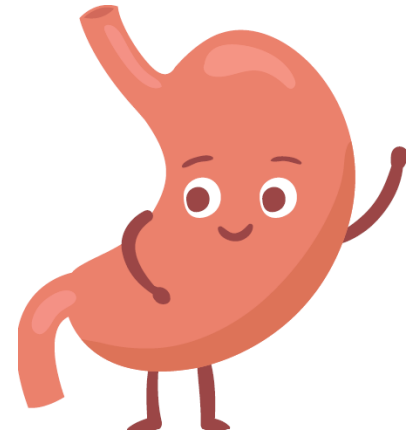
NEWS

**Nutrition Education
with Seniors!**

Spring 2025 | HealthierLiving.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov | www.HealthierLivingSD.org | 858-495-5500

Hello Gut Health – Caring For Your “Second Brain”

Did you know your gut is often called your second brain? Research suggests that gut health may affect our brain function, mental health, weight, and even our risk for chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and digestive disorders. Our gut includes organs like the stomach and intestines that break down food, absorb nutrients, and support our overall health—including our immune system and mood. It houses trillions of microorganisms, like bacteria, fungi, and viruses, that play an important role in how we feel and function. A healthy gut helps us digest food comfortably, absorb nutrients, and fight off infection. As we age, our gut health naturally changes. However the good news is, there are many things we can do to support it! For example, eating more **prebiotics** (dietary fiber that feeds good bacteria) and **probiotics** (good bacteria we consume) help keep our system balanced. Read on to learn more simple ways to support and improve your gut health.



My Commitment to Gut Health

Try these gut-friendly actions:

- ☐ Eat lots of foods that come from plants
- ☐ Reduce stress through movement, rest, or relaxation techniques
- ☐ Include prebiotics (like bananas, garlic, oats) and probiotics (see page 3)
- ☐ Choose foods rich in omega-3 (like salmon, walnuts, and flaxseeds)
- ☐ Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
- ☐ Cut back on ultra-processed foods (like packaged snacks)





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Know Your Label: Fiber

Dietary Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that makes you feel full and stay satisfied longer. It plays a key role in supporting gut health by aiding digestion and feeding the beneficial bacteria in your gut, allowing them to grow and thrive. These good bacteria support your immune system, reduce inflammation, and can influence mood and brain health. A diet rich in fiber from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and nuts helps keep your digestive system balanced and functioning well. Gradually increase your fiber intake and drink plenty of water to help your body adjust.

Nutrition Facts

Serving size 1/2 Cup (130g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories **110**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 1g 1%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g

Sodium 182mg 8%

Total Carbohydrate 18g 7%

Dietary Fiber 6g 21%

Total Sugars 0g

Includes 0g Added Sugars 0%

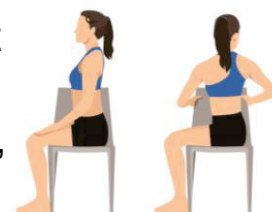
Protein 6g 0%

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Improving Digestion through Stretching

Supporting optimal digestion, stretches like the ones described below can improve blood flow to the gut, reduce bloating, and tone core muscles.

Seated Twist - Sit up tall with a straight spine and your feet flat on the floor. Place your right hand on the back of the chair and your left hand on your right thigh. Inhale to lengthen your spine, then exhale and gently twist to the right, turning from your torso. Keep your hips facing forward. Hold for a few breaths, then slowly return to center and repeat on the other side.



Knees to Chest - Lying on your back with your legs extended and arms by your sides, bend your knees and gently draw them toward your chest, wrapping your arms around your shins. Keep your head and shoulders relaxed on the floor. Hold for a few breaths, feeling a gentle stretch in your lower back, then slowly release your legs back down.





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Eat Healthfully This Spring

San Diego offers a wide variety of fresh produce! In-season produce is often cheaper and at its peak of nutrition. Here's what's in-season this Spring:



Asparagus



Scallions



Arugula



Orange



Strawberry



Broccoli

Gut Health Quiz: Test your Knowledge!

Put a check mark next to all the things below you think support a healthy gut. Put an X next to all the things that are not beneficial to gut health.



1. ____ Light to moderate exercise a few times a day
2. ____ Reducing life stress
3. ____ Eating the same thing every day
4. ____ Eating highly processed foods
5. ____ Eating fish
6. ____ Drinking caffeine-free soda
7. ____ Eating lots of foods that come from plants
8. ____ Eating red meat everyday
9. ____ Being fed breast milk as a baby
10. ____ Eating foods that have live beneficial bacteria

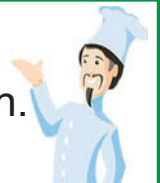
Source: Leah's Pantry, *Food Smarts 3rd Edition*, 2022.

Chef Tip - Foods Rich in Probiotics

Eating fermented foods that are rich in probiotics is great for gut health. Fermented foods enhance the diversity of gut microbes and help fight



disease, aid in digestion and nutrient absorption, produce vitamins, and boost the immune system. Examples include yogurt, kefir, fermented cottage cheese, kimchi, fermented vegetables, and kombucha tea. These foods help increase microbial diversity.





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CFHL Group Spotlight: San Ysidro Senior Center Participants Enact Community Change



San Ysidro Senior Center
on a transit field trip to
Balboa Park.

After completing a *Food Smarts* series, older adults at San Ysidro Senior Center set out to improve their community! They conducted a walk audit to address issues in their local infrastructure. They also worked together to become experts at using public transportation. They identified community concerns and proposed solutions that were eventually presented to San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria.

Resource Spotlight: GI Research Foundation

The GI Research Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of gastrointestinal (GI) diseases. By funding cutting-edge research, supporting physician-scientists, and promoting education, the foundation plays a vital role in improving GI health and patient care. On their website, listen to free webinars, find easy gut-friendly recipes, and more! Visit <https://giresearchfoundation.org> or call (312) 332-1350.



Gut-Friendly Asparagus and Lemon Quinoa Salad

Serves 5 | 10 minutes |

Ingredients:

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 bunch asparagus, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- Juice + zest of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- Optional: fresh parsley or mint



Directions: Cook the quinoa according to package directions and let it cool. In a large bowl, combine the quinoa, asparagus, lemon juice and zest, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Toss everything together, then top with fresh herbs if using. Serve chilled or at room temperature.