



Trust Your Gut: Looking at the Role of Gut Health and How it Effects Your Wellness

Why is Gut Health Important to our overall Functioning?

- Our immune system fights off illnesses.
- A healthy metabolism helps avoid chronic conditions: High Cholesterol, Hypertension, Insomnia, Diabetes, Cancer, Alzheimer Disease.
- Sleep quality improves our mood and regulates our sleep cycle.
- Digestion directly impacts gastrointestinal disorders which can interrupt our daily caretaker responsibilities.

Important Note: Gut health is the very foundation for physical and mental wellness.

The Definition of Wellness is ***the act of practicing healthy habits daily to attain better physical and mental health outcomes***, so that instead of just surviving, you're thriving.

Wellness, like all human conditions, has specific components. There is nutrition, physical activity, sleep, mental health and mindfulness. These components comprise the very core of our beings, if one area is “out of whack” then it can be difficult to maintain balance in all other areas.

- **Nutrition** includes the six food groups that we need to eat each day to promote gut health. These include:
 1. Grains
 2. Fruits
 3. Vegetables
 4. Dairy
 5. Proteins
 6. Fats
- **Physical Activity** recommendations are at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week. This can include:
 1. Yoga
 2. Walking
 3. Biking
 4. Swimming
 5. Strength Training
 6. Group Exercise Classes



- **Sleep** helps your body maintain healthy brain function and physical health. Sleep routines provide comfort to our bodies and brains. This may include:
 1. Shutting off screens 30-60 minutes before going to bed.
 2. Brushing your teeth
 3. Washing your face
 4. Reading a book

- **Mental Health** interventions like Cognitive Behavioral Health (CBT) help people change their thoughts and behaviors to better manage stress by learning coping skills. CBT can be used to stop the harmful effects of the fight or flight response by instead turning on the “rest and digest” response.
What Resources are available to support Gut Health and Mental Health? Locate a mental health provider who offers Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Or check out free fitness and meal tracker apps:
 - Yummly
 - My Fitness Pal
 - Meal Board
 - Mealime
 - Fit Notes
 - Nike Training Club
 - All Trails
 - Samsung Health (Android)

Mindfulness activities can help turn off your body’s stress response and activate your relaxation response. Some include:

1. Progressive muscle relaxation
2. Meditation
3. Mindful eating
4. Yoga
5. Body Scan
6. Walking
7. Gratitude practice

Did you know that 90% of the serotonin created in your body is stored in the gut?! Serotonin is a neurotransmitter signal that helps regulate bodily functions ranging from heart rate to appetite. Serotonin tells the body how to work and helps control our happiness, memory, sleep, body temperature & hunger.