



NUTRITION CORNER - March



From the desk of the OFA Registered Dietitian: *Patricia O'Neill Ricks, MPA, RDN, CDN*

Let's Talk About Gut Health

Gut Health.... It doesn't sound like a great topic, does it? It is National Nutrition Month and Gut Health as a basis for good Nutrition has finally come around to be a very important topic. It is linked to conditions like Inflammation, Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Irritable Bowel, Diabetes, Heart Disease and even some Cancers.

Signs of a Healthy Gut

- Regular Bowel Movements
- Minimal Discomfort from gas and bloating. No regular occurring pain, nausea, or heartburn.
- Consistent Energy and Mood- Feeling well rested and energetic.

How to Improve your Gut Health

- Eat a Diverse Diet, A High Fiber Diet: A wide variety of plant-based whole foods, such as fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains provide the necessary fiber and prebiotics needed to feed our beneficial body bacteria.
- Include Fermented Foods: Foods with live Cultures such as yogurt, kefir, *Sauerkraut, *kimchi and kombucha. (Some of these are high in sodium and not on a low salt diet). Fermented foods provide probiotics and beneficial live microorganisms.
- Limit Processed Foods, High Sugar and Fat Foods: Ultra processed foods, high sugar intake and excessive saturated fats can promote harmful bacteria and inflammation.
- Stay Hydrated: Drink plenty of water for essential proper digestion and to prevent constipation.
- Manage Stress and Sleep: Chronic stress and poor sleep can negatively impact Gut Bacteria. Incorporate relaxation techniques (such as Yoga or Meditation) and aim for 7-8 hours of sleep per night.
- Regular Exercise: Regular physical activity can positively affect the gut Gut Microbiome and stimulate healthy digestion.

Note that if you have persistent or severe symptoms such as unexplained weight loss, blood in your stool or ongoing severe abdominal pain/bloating it is recommended that you consult your Medical Doctor.

For information on the Home Delivered Meal Program or Meal Cancellation, Call Gateway Hudson Valley: **845-331-2496**

For information on OFA's Community Cafés Call Gateway Hudson Valley: **845 331-2180**

The OFA gratefully accepts **voluntary** contributions. Your contributions help keep senior programs available.

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