Gut health HELP!

Here's what to give your body for a happy and healthy tummy

We've all heard how important it is to keep our gut health in check – but how exactly do we do that? What should we be eating? Does exercise play a part? What's the impact of stress? Here's everything you need to know...

PICK PREBIOTICS, TOO

Probiotic foods are everywhere when it comes to taking care of gut health, but what are prebiotic foods?

"Probiotic foods contain live 'good' bacteria. Prebiotic foods, on the other hand, don't necessarily contain living organisms, but rather are a rich source of the food that makes our microscopic friends thrive," says naturopath Reece Carter. "Prebiotics are fibre, or indigestible carbohydrates, that pass through the digestive system and feed the bacteria that already live there. The science suggests that they make the good bacteria proliferate, and release compounds called short-chain fatty acids that help keep the gut lining in tip-top shape. Good sources of prebiotics include asparagus, onions, garlic, and leek."

SAY YES TO YOGHURT

Because it's a fermented food, yoghurt contains a bunch of probiotic cultures that build up the strength of your digestive tract. A great one to try is Danone Activia, which contains an exclusive probiotic strain, Bifidus ActiRegularis (and no added sugar), that's scientifically proven to help improve digestive discomfort. Available at Coles and Woolworths, $4.50 for 4 x 125g.

STRESS LESS

Your gut and brain are constantly in communication with one another, so if you're feeling stressed, studies have shown it can affect your digestive system. In fact, when stressed, you're more likely to experience IBS symptoms such as diarrhoea and bloating.

DON'T OVERDO EXERCISE

"It's widely agreed that prolonged or excessive stress – including physical stress like exercise – can have negative impacts on gut health," adds Reece. "Ensure you're getting your dose of daily physical activity, but recognise that it's not always a case of 'more is better.'"

Straight teeth from home

Want a straight smile but don't have easy access to an orthodontist? For $99, EZ Smile will send an impression kit for at-home moulds you post back to have clear aligners made. A new aligner will arrive every two weeks, with the average treatment taking five months. Prices from $41.35 a week. ezsmile.com.au

NEW TREATMENT ALERT!

A breakthrough treatment that helps reverse the side effects of pelvic floor dysfunction – that affects one in two women after childbirth – has launched in Australia. The chair-like device uses electromagnetic energy to engage pelvic floor muscles for 28 minutes – equivalent to 11,200 pelvic floor exercises. $2700 for 6 x 30 minute sessions. elsaclinic.com.au