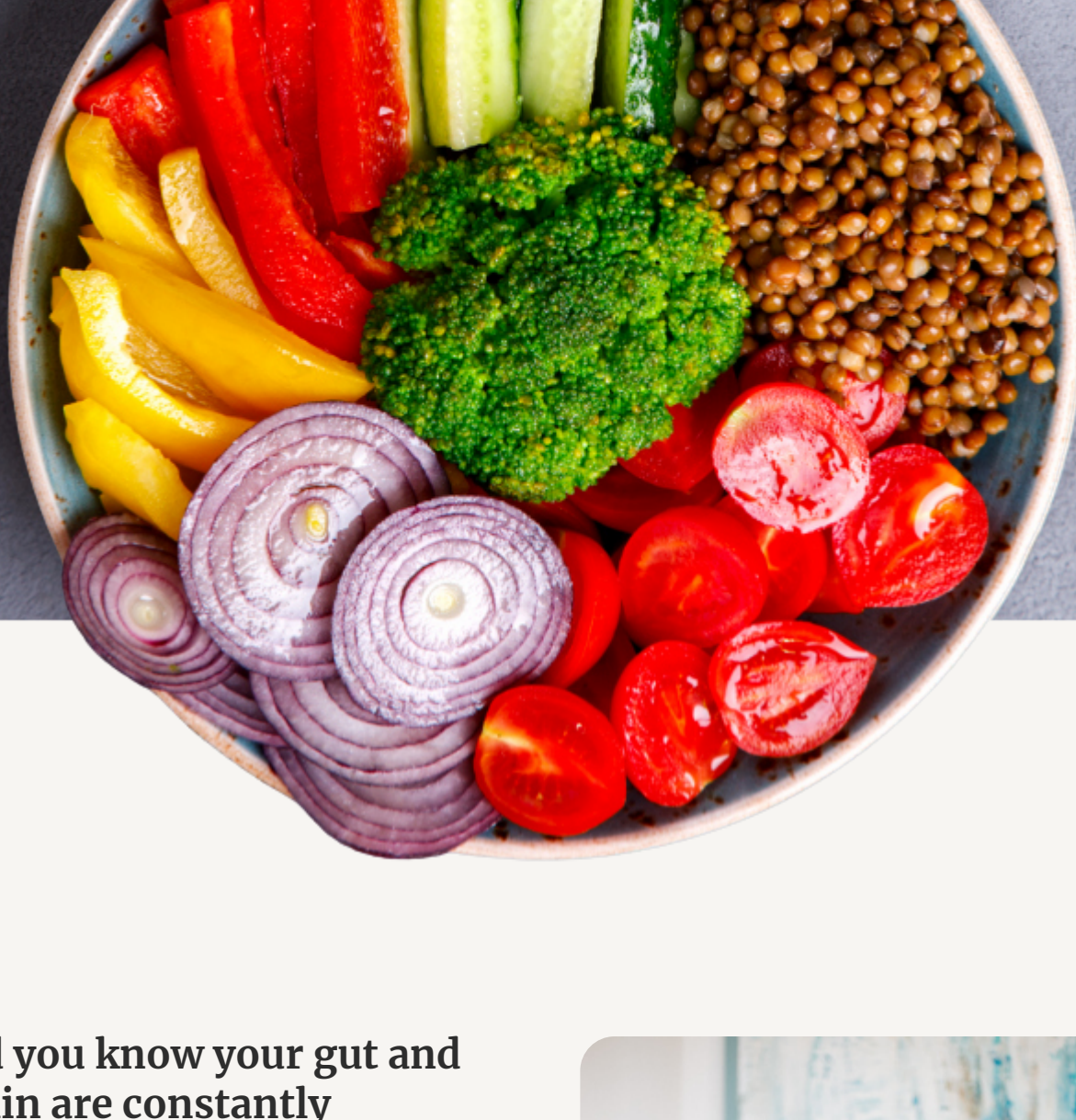


Gut Health and the Brain Connection



Did you know your gut and brain are constantly communicating?

The digestive system and nervous system are closely connected through what is known as the gut-brain axis — a communication network linking the brain, gut, hormones, immune system, and nervous system. Because of this connection, digestive health may influence many aspects of overall wellness, including mood, stress levels, sleep, focus, and energy.

At DENT's Brain-Gut Clinic, providers recognize the important relationship between neurologic and digestive health, taking a comprehensive approach to supporting patient wellness.

This month, we're exploring simple ways to nourish both the gut and brain through nutrition, lifestyle habits, and mindful daily routines.



Understanding the Gut-Brain Connection

The gut contains millions of nerve cells and trillions of bacteria that play an important role in overall health. In fact, the gut is often referred to as the "second brain" because of its strong connection to the nervous system.

Stress, sleep, movement, hydration, and nutrition can all influence gut health — and in turn, may affect how we feel mentally and physically.

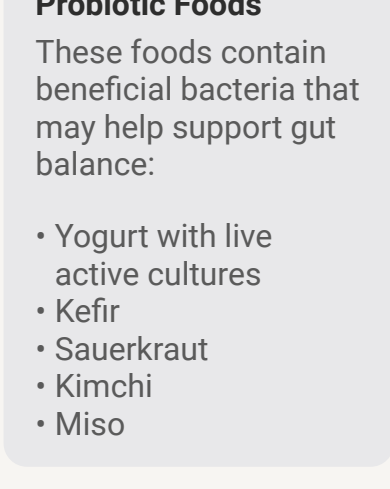
When the gut is out of balance, some individuals may experience:

- Bloating or digestive discomfort
- Fatigue
- Brain fog
- Changes in mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased stress or irritability
- Sleep disturbances

Supporting gut health is not about perfection. Small, consistent habits can make a meaningful difference over time.



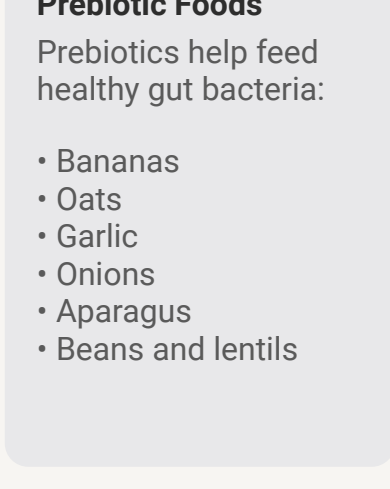
Foods that support Gut Health



Probiotic Foods

These foods contain beneficial bacteria that may help support gut balance:

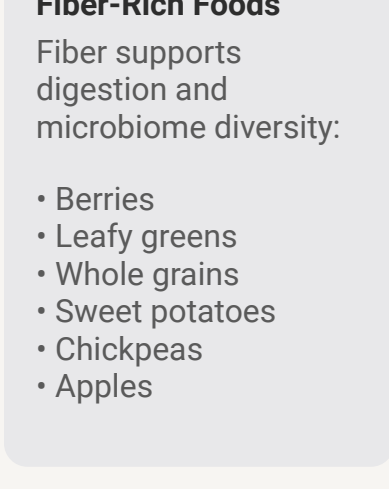
- Yogurt with live active cultures
- Kefir
- Sauerkraut
- Kimchi
- Miso



Prebiotic Foods

Prebiotics help feed healthy gut bacteria:

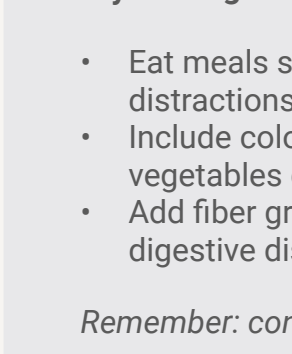
- Bananas
- Oats
- Garlic
- Onions
- Asparagus
- Beans and lentils



Fiber-Rich Foods

Fiber supports digestion and microbiome diversity:

- Berries
- Leafy greens
- Whole grains
- Sweet potatoes
- Chickpeas
- Apples



Hydration Matters

Water supports digestion, nutrient absorption, and overall wellness. Try carrying a reusable water bottle throughout the day and increasing fluids gradually if needed.

Wellness Tip Box

Small Habits, Big Impact

Simple daily habits can help support both digestive and nervous system health:

Try these gut-friendly wellness tips:

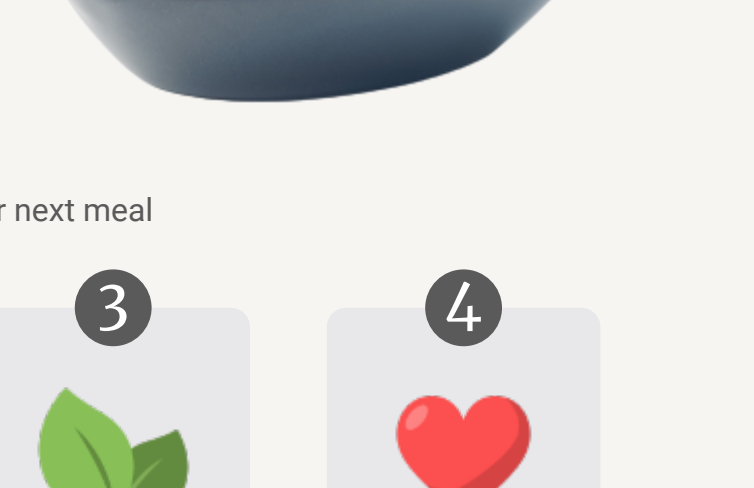
- Eat meals slowly and without distractions
- Include colorful fruits and vegetables daily
- Add fiber gradually to avoid digestive discomfort
- Move your body regularly
- Stay hydrated throughout the day
- Aim for consistent sleep routines
- Practice stress management techniques like deep breathing or stretching

Remember: consistency matters more than perfection.

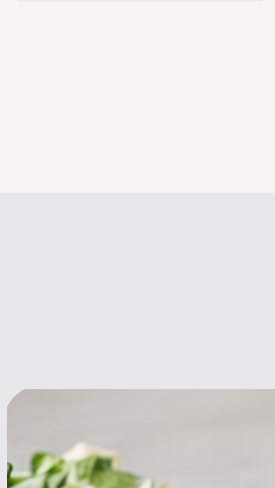
Lifestyle Modification Technique

Practice Mindful Eating

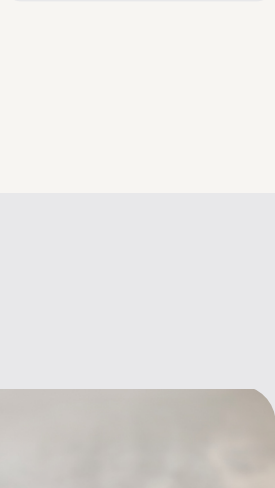
Many of us eat while multitasking, rushing, scrolling on our phones, or working through meals. Slowing down and becoming more present while eating may help support digestion and improve awareness of hunger and fullness cues.



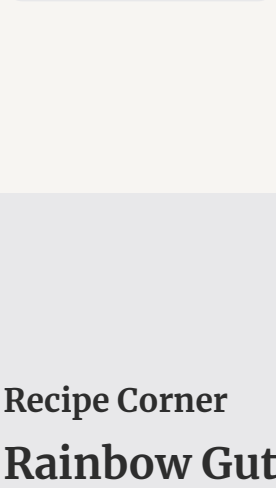
This Month's Mindful Eating Challenge: Before your next meal



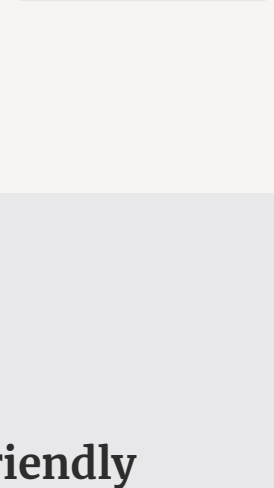
Pause and take one slow, deep breath.



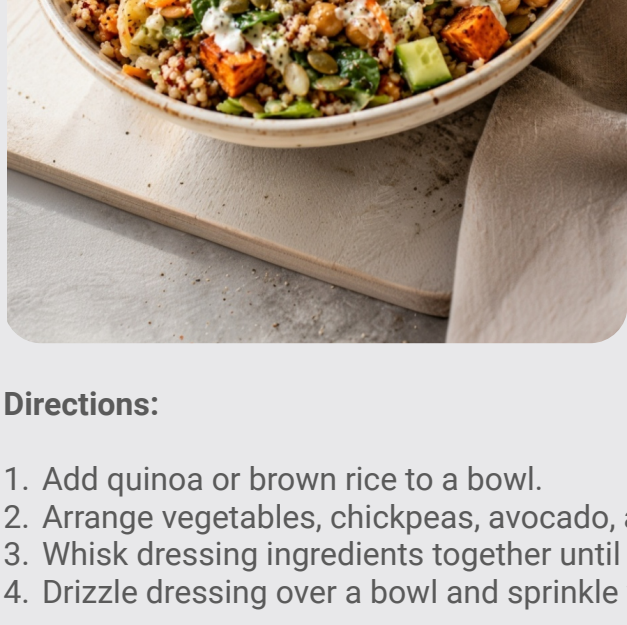
Sit down and remove all distractions.



Chew slowly and savor each bite.



Check in halfway and notice how you feel.



Recipe Corner

Rainbow Gut-Friendly Grain Bowl

Ingredients:

- 1 cup cooked quinoa or brown rice
- 1 cup spinach or kale
- ½ cup roasted sweet potatoes
- ½ cup chickpeas, rinsed
- ¼ cup shredded carrots
- ¼ cup cucumber, chopped
- ¼ avocado, sliced
- 2 tablespoons sauerkraut
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin seeds

Simple Yogurt Dressing:

- ¼ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- Pinch of garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

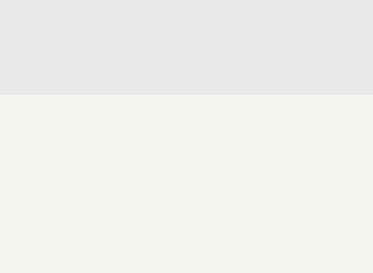
Directions:

1. Add quinoa or brown rice to a bowl.
2. Arrange vegetables, chickpeas, avocado, and sauerkraut on top.
3. Whisk dressing ingredients together until smooth.
4. Drizzle dressing over a bowl and sprinkle with pumpkin seeds.

Why We Love It

This colorful bowl provides:

- Fiber to support digestion
- Probiotics from fermented foods
- Healthy fats for brain health
- Plant-based nutrients that support microbiome diversity



Mind-Body Wellness

Stress & Digestion

Have you ever noticed "butterflies" in your stomach when you're nervous?

Stress and digestion are deeply connected. When the body is under stress, digestion may slow down or become disrupted. Over time, chronic stress can influence both gut and nervous system function.

Simple stress-management habits may help support digestive wellness:

- Gentle movement
- Deep breathing
- Spending time outdoors
- Stretching
- Journaling
- Connecting with supportive people
- Prioritizing rest

Even a few minutes of intentional relaxation each day can help calm the body and mind.

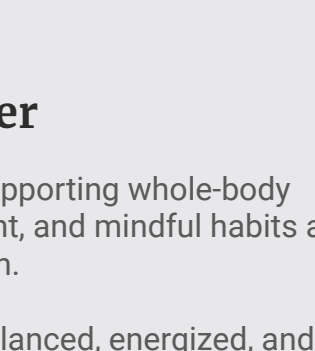
Ask Yourself

Relationship Prompts

Take a moment to check in with yourself this month:

- How do I typically feel after meals?
- Am I eating in a rushed or relaxed environment?
- What foods help me feel energized and nourished?
- How does stress affect my digestion?
- What is one small habit I could practice to better support my gut health?

Awareness is an important first step toward wellness.



This Month's Wellness Reminder

Caring for gut health is about more than digestion — it's part of supporting whole-body wellness. Nourishing foods, hydration, movement, stress management, and mindful habits all work together to support both the gut and brain.

This month, focus on small, sustainable habits that help you feel balanced, energized, and supported from the inside out.

