

How to Maintain a Healthy Gut

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In the laundry list of health concerns you need to worry about on a daily basis, your gastrointestinal tract may not immediately top the list, but should it? Dr. Laura Glenn, NMD of Rejuvena Health & Aesthetics explains a possible breast cancer link and provides some insight into how to achieve good gut health.



Why does gut health matter?

A healthy gut can do wonders for your body, from proper absorption of nutrients to boosting your immune system. According to Dr. Glenn, immune system priming and activity takes place in the gastrointestinal tract, so health in the gut has a significant impact on overall health.

What is the link between gut health and breast cancer?

In May, a new research article was published documenting that in a mouse model of hormone-sensitive breast cancer, mice that had an unbalanced level of “bad” gut bacteria had higher levels of systemic inflammation and local inflammation within their breast tissue. This inflammation is associated with more circulating cancer cells and possibly the spread of these cells to other sites. Dr. Glenn notes that this study was done in a mouse model, so researchers cannot directly infer that the same findings would occur in humans. Nonetheless, protective lifestyle habits are still beneficial for humans.

How do I achieve a healthy gut?

The answer is actually very simple: diet and exercise. Dr. Glenn emphasizes that a protective lifestyle complete with regular exercise and a balanced diet rich in fiber and produce is the best way to ensure good gut health.

Eating a wide variety of fiber sources like fruits and vegetables, as well as fermented foods is key to encouraging the growth of friendly bacteria. Physical activity promotes regular bowel movements, which is another important aspect of gut health. Additionally, new data suggests that higher levels of physical fitness are associated with carrying more diverse types of gut flora.