
QUICKSTART GUIDE

to GREAT GUT HEALTH FOR KIDS!



HOW TO USE THIS HEALTHY GUT HAPPY CHILD GUIDE

Why do we care about our child's gut health?

The gut is the source of our child's

- ★ immune system
- ★ hormone production
- ★ neurotransmitter generation
- ★ digestion and nutrient absorption
- ★ and more!

If a child's gut is out of balance, the immune system gets confused... leading to allergies, asthma, eczema and a whole host of other issues.

If a child's gut is "leaky" then the wrong things end up in their bloodstream, triggering inflammation all over their body! Did you know that if your child's gut is leaky, their brain is leaky too?

Your child's attitude and energy, growth and development, even their ability to focus and socialize and learn is rooted in the gut.

Can we really support our children's health and happiness through their GUT???

YES!

I'm giving you quick and easy tips start with, so get out your pencil and...

1. mark the steps you want to try
2. circle a step you can try today
3. DO IT!

1. Feed the “Good” Microbes!

Diversity is the foundation of resilience and strength in nature... and in our bellies, too!

How do we foster a diversity of beneficial microbes in our child's belly? With a diversity of their favorite foods! VEGETABLES, that is :)

Eat leafy green, cruciferous, and a rainbow assortment of different-colored vegetables with your child to feed the widest diversity of beneficial bacteria, so they can:

- repair the gut lining with butyrate
- support regular daily bowel movements
- help generate beneficial “good-mood” neurotransmitters like GABA and serotonin
- digest nutrient rich food into the nutrients our child needs
- crowd out the “bad” bugs that cause problems

Ready, Set, VEGGIES!!!

Try this:

- ✓ **Self-Serve Veggie Snacks** Cut up a bunch of colorful veggie sticks at the beginning of the week! For little kids, store on a low shelf in your fridge where your child can serve him or herself a snack. For bigger kids or teenagers, put them out in an attractive bowl on the counter where they can't miss it - and don't mention its there ;) Putting a container of no-sugar/no-chemical dip, mayo, or hummus within reach may be helpful!
- ✓ **Veggies First!** Start your dinners by eating the vegetables FIRST! Your eating patterns will make the biggest positive impact on your baby, child, or teenager (even if your teens resist - I promise they'll remember it and benefit in the future!) so make sure to do this yourself while eating with your child!
- ✓ **Eat a Rainbow** Make a game of including at least three different colors of vegetable in every lunch, or every day. For kids this could be different shapes and colors of veggies in their lunch, and for babies that have started solids, you can steam and puree most veggies with some sea salt and olive oil.

2. Fermented Veggies ROCK!

Raw, unpasteurized fermented vegetables are LOADED WITH BENEFICIAL BACTERIA! Waaaaayyyy more than in any probiotic pill, and with more variety. Find them in the refrigerated section of the grocery - they have to keep cool with all those live "good guys" living in the jar! These beneficial microbes support:

- digestion and nutrient absorption
- good moods and stable temper
- gut-wall maintenance and repair
- proper metabolism
- so much more! (if you know your child is sensitive to histamines, address their histamine intolerance first.)

Every time your child gets even a tiny bit of probiotic bacteria from fermented veggies into their mouth, their brain and gut together will recognize the full-body benefits of that bacteria and associate it with that sour flavor... in a positive way! Be patient, treat it as a long-game, and stick with the process... you will be amazed!

Try this:

- ✓ **Touch, Sniff, Taste, Spit!** Let your child explore and become familiar with fermented veggies, so they can gradually decide they like them and even ask for them! A tried and true method is to (when feasible) request your child taste a tiny, tiny bit and spit it out right there at the table! It's an irresistible offer :) For babies, just put a little brine on your finger and let them taste it - watch their face pucker, then watch them search for more!
- ✓ **Party Pickles** Slice up some raw, fermented pickle spears, put them out on a low table at a party with kids, and watch them disappear. That's all.
- ✓ **Sneaky Snacky Ninja Moves** When no one's looking, mix that sauerkraut or pickle brine into the jar of mayo, the no-sugar/chemical-free salad dressing, the tuna salad, the hummus... and silently put it back in the fridge...

3. Trade the Triggers for the Tamers

Triggers are anything that causes a reaction in your child - the sniffles, eczema, unusual tiredness, foul mood or temper meltdowns, an increase in asthma symptoms, headaches, constipation... you get the picture! Triggers cause inflammation, and inflammation is meant to be temporary. Continued, "chronic" inflammation damages your child's organs and tissues. Inflammation in the gut makes it harder for the beneficial bacteria to survive, and easier for the pathogenic bacteria to expand.

Gluten and dairy are well-documented triggers in children (and adults!). Chemical food dyes & additives are outlawed in many countries because research shows they cause toxicity, hyperactivity and more. Sugar and processed foods cause inflammation, blood sugar spikes and crashes and more. By removing triggers and taming inflammation other "sensitivity" foods may be reintroduced without reaction.

Try this:

- ✓ **Skip Common Triggers for One Week** Skip gluten, dairy, refined sugar and processed food/ingredients (food colors, chemical food additives) for a week or more and see what happens in your child's body, appetite and mood. Or choose one at a time - your choice!
- ✓ **Add in a Tamer for One Week** Add in bone broth to help seal and heal the gut, and reduce dysbiosis by supporting beneficial gut microbes. Serve home-made or purchased organic bone broth at breakfast, lunch, snack time or dinner, several times during the week or every day!
- ✓ **Quit the Hangries!** Constant munching on sugary snacks feeds energy spikes and crashes, and drives insulin resistance and the diabetes/obesity epidemic in children and adults. Did you know that powdery processed grains like flour are equivalent to sugar in many ways? Instead of crackers, puffs and bread, try nutrient-rich and healthy-fat filled snacks like:
 - veggie sticks (or steamed) with pureed herb/oil/salt dip, a nut butter dip, or a bean-based dip with plenty of fats
 - a bowl of nuts (if your child tolerates them and is old enough to chew and swallow reliably)
 - dried meat or fish bars/jerky (no sugar/preservatives)
 - homemade coconut milk popsicles sweetened with fruit or stevia

4. Get Into Rest and Digest

Rest and Digest is another way of saying "parasympathetic" mode. We've got two basic ways of operating, based on a long history of being human. Most of the time, we were calmly gathering food and hanging out with our tribe - in parasympathetic mode. Once in a while something scary and stressful would happen - like being chased by a hungry lion! Our body would switch to "fight or flight," also know as "sympathetic" mode. Simply put, blood flow increases in the muscles of our legs (to run) and arms (to fight) and drastically decreases in our digestive system. It would be unfortunate if you had to stop and poop while you were trying to out-run a lion, right?

These days we have lots of stressors all day long. Not from lions! From having to get the kids into the car and off to school before work, having to remember the lunch and the snack and the homework, and did someone feed the dog? Then there's the news - terrible things happening everywhere, and the bills, and figuring out what's for dinner, violent video games and movies, and more. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Our child is tightly wired into our energy, so if we're stressed, they're stressed, even if they don't show it the way we do. Trust me on this one! So, every one of those little stresses sends us **AND OUR CHILD** into the fight-or-flight sympathetic mode — on or off like a light switch, there's no in-between — and virtually shuts down their digestive system. Again and again, all day long! We and our child can get stuck in stressed-out, not-digesting "fight-or-flight" mode!

Let's be honest here - I know we can't stop the stress of our busy lives. We **CAN** get really good at returning to "rest and digest" (many times a day!) and teaching our kids to do the same.

Turn the page to find out how...

Try this:

- ✓ **Thanks and Laughs Before Dinner** Sit down together, no electronics, and each share three things you're thankful for while everyone else listens quietly (and smiles). Bonus - TELL A JOKE after everyone shares their gratitudes. Then serve the food. Connecting with others, expressing gratitude and laughing are all great for digestion!

- ✓ **Get Dirty** Get outside with your child, and together touch the soil or grass or a tree or a rock with your bare hands or bare feet! Start with one day, and aim for every day for a week. Besides the antioxidant/free electron grounding effects of connecting with the earth, contact with some kinds of soil microbes actually improves digestion and makes people feel happier for weeks! And on top of all that, there are documented calming benefits from:
 - seeing nature
 - breathing fresh air
 - getting sunlight and vitamin D
 - unstructured imaginative play

- ✓ **Breathe** Big breaths are a quick way to find peace (rest and digest mode), and easy to do anywhere, any time. If your child is upset, take three big slow breaths together. Or hold your smaller child to your chest and breathe those big calming breaths yourself, for them to feel. If you are stressed, holding your breath, or upset, take three big breaths and notice how it calms you. Your child will notice. If you are away from your child, you will prepare yourself to greet them in a better mood. Yes!

So, how did it go?

These are just a few tips - if you want an individualized plan, I'm here for you.

What you feed your child matters.

Apply to join a select group of mamas that will keep you laughing, learning and energized, as you master each of the Healthy Gut Happy Child ROOTS - so you and your family can live your very best life.

Email me at elissa@babyeatsvegetables.com.

Love,
Elissa