

Health

Resetting your digestive system can improve your health and boost weight loss

Heal your gut and LOSE WEIGHT

Gut issues can affect your mood and energy levels, as well as your weight — particularly around your middle — leading to difficulties in dropping the pounds.

Lee Holmes, Clinical Nutritionist from Supercharged Food and the Love Your Gut range (superchargeyourgut.co.uk), says: 'The gut, comprising trillions of microbes, plays a crucial role in influencing metabolic processes, ultimately impacting how our

bodies utilise energy, store fat, and regulate weight.' Lee, who sees thousands of women at her clinic for gut issues, reveals what you can do to achieve better gut health.

Why is your gut unbalanced?

Lee explains: 'Modern lifestyles often involve high levels of stress, irregular eating habits, and processed foods that are lacking in essential nutrients. Stress, in particular, can have a deeply profound impact on our gut health, as it disrupts the balance of the microbiota — the community of microorganisms residing in the digestive system.'

She points out that hormonal changes during menstruation, pregnancy and menopause can also influence gut function, as they can impact the body's metabolism and the way it uses nutrients.

How to eat

Lee says: 'As a clinical nutritionist, I firmly believe

in the transformative power of a gut reset for weight loss. Our gut plays a pivotal role in nutrient absorption, metabolism and overall wellbeing. Resetting the gut creates an optimal environment for effective digestion and absorption of essential nutrients, fostering a more efficient metabolism. This, in turn, can contribute significantly to weight management.'

To reset your gut, Lee suggests giving your body a break from hard-to-digest foods.

She says: 'These can include raw foods, high-fat foods, spicy foods, and rich and creamy sauces. This can help support the healing of the gut lining and reduce inflammation.'

'To shift your microflora balance, consume more prebiotics and probiotics to get a healthier microflora. Include foods like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut and kimchi.'

'Avoid gut-inflammatory foods. These are alcohol, gluten, dairy, sugar and caffeine. Also minimise processed foods, added sugars and artificial additives,

which can negatively impact gut health.'

Ensuring you stay hydrated also helps your gut.

Lee explains: 'This is crucial for maintaining a clean gut. Drink plenty of water and enjoy gut-friendly beverages like kombucha, and ginger or peppermint tea. Add gut-cleansing agents such as diatomaceous earth (a powder that's rich in silica and essential trace minerals) or fulvic humic minerals (natural organic mineral substances).'

'Prioritise foods that support gut health, such as lightly steamed or sautéed vegetables, bone broths, fermented foods, extra-virgin olive oil, and a Mediterranean-style diet.'

'Enjoy fibre-rich foods to promote bowel regularity and give sustenance for beneficial gut bacteria. These include sprouted grains, soaked or fermented gluten-free grains, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables.'

Lee says that it's important to consume plenty of omega-3 fatty acids too.

She says: 'Good sources are fatty fish, like sardines, which

can help reduce inflammation and support overall gut health. Have hormonal-balancing foods that also help your gut. Good choices are 2-3 cups of leafy greens a day, like spinach, watercress and kale, which are all great for anti-inflammatory benefits.

'Flaxseeds are excellent for their omega-3 content and lignans, which support heart health and digestion — have 1-2tbsp daily.'

Lifestyle tips

As well as eating a gut-friendly diet, Lee also recommends some simple lifestyle tweaks.

She says: 'Practise mindful eating by savouring each bite and paying attention to hunger and fullness cues.'

'Incorporate stress-busting practices, such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, or mindfulness. These can help activate the body's relaxation response, which can positively influence gut function.'

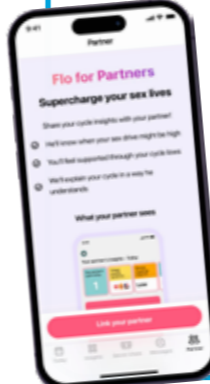
'Try gut-health-balancing supplements. Superstars are aloe vera, slippery elm, probiotics, prebiotics, digestive enzymes, dietary fibre, fulvic humic concentrate, turmeric and curcumin. Check out the range at superchargeyourgut.co.uk.'

Edited by Julia Smurthwaite

'APPY families

Flo Health, the globally popular women's health app that tracks ovulation and periods, now offers Flo for Partners. It takes your info, including real-time menstrual cycle intel, to give them

medical insights and proactive tips, so they can better support you. Priced £29.99 per year for Premium subscription, visit flo.health



Our Health SOS

My husband was struggling to swallow his meals. Just how bad would the diagnosis be?

'My food is STUCK'



From Sarah Keyworth, 51, of Farncombe, Surrey

The chicken biryani I'd cooked up for dinner looked delicious, and my husband Graham tucked in. But suddenly, he started to struggle.

'What's up, love?' I asked. 'The rice is getting stuck,' he replied.

Then he rushed to the bathroom to be sick.

'I think it's gone down the wrong way,' he coughed.

'You don't sound too good,' I replied. 'I think you should get checked out.'

Next morning, Graham managed to get a telephone appointment with his GP.

Afterwards he told me: 'The doctor says I need an endoscopy in a few weeks to rule out cancer.'

My heart sank. 'Cancer?' I said.

'I'm sure it's just routine,' Graham replied.

But he was diagnosed with stage three oesophageal cancer.

I was devastated. 'Don't worry, love, I'll beat this,' he said.

He had tests and scans before he was booked in for an operation.

'Through robotic surgery, we'll remove your oesophagus and pull up your stomach to make a new one,' the doctor explained.

After an 11-hour operation, Graham began immunotherapy. His

immune system was used to help fight the cancer cells.

To help me cope, I started journaling my thoughts and feelings, and eventually it turned into a book.

I wanted to help other people who might be going through it, and to let them know they were not alone.

Six months on, my lovely husband is now in remission. And he's got used to his brand-new oesophagus.

He can only have small meals now, and he has to eat little and often, and take small bites.

There are certain foods he can't have any more, such as white bread. But he's swapped that for wholegrain, as it's easier to digest and less likely to get stuck.

We also have to keep an eye out for 'dumping syndrome', which is where he could be sick if he eats too much or too quickly.

His stomach shrank, so he lost weight and we're

working towards helping him gain it back.

Every four weeks, he still has to have immunotherapy to help prevent the cancer coming back. But he's been optimistic throughout the entire journey.

'I told you I'd beat it!' he says.

Please never brush these sort of things off — it could be the difference between life and death.

● Sarah's book, *Our Oesophageal Cancer Journey from a Wife's Perspective*, is available on Amazon.



Graham in hospital

Oesophageal cancer

● **What is it?** Cancer found anywhere in the oesophagus, also known as the gullet or food pipe.

● **What are the symptoms?** Can include difficulties swallowing, nausea, acid reflux, or a cough

that's not getting better.

● **What's the treatment?** Options include surgery, chemo and radiotherapy.

● **Where can I find out more?** Visit cancerresearchuk.org

Photos: Shutterstock

Sudocrem, a superhero soother for a range of skin conditions and a household staple for decades, is now available in a mini format. My Little Sudocrem is perfect for skin-soothing on the go. Available nationwide, priced £3.

