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EAT WELL, AGE WELL. GUT HEALTH

The food that you eat can influence the types of bacteria that live inside of you. The good bacteria, or beneficial bacteria, are known to prevent infection in your gut while also producing important vitamins and nutrients to help regulate your immune system. Your digestive tract is the home base for the bacteria, and it is there to help break down your food. Your body will only make bacteria when needed. When they run out of food then the bacteria will stop growing.

Artificial Sweeteners – Replace sugar to make foods and drinks still have a sweet taste. The downside is that they have been known to negatively affect the balance of the good bacteria in your gut.

Plant-Based Diet – Assists in the growth of different types of intestinal bacteria more than animal-based foods do. The high fiber contents and the lack of meat intake is what has been known to benefit the gut microbiota. The best sources of nutrients for a healthy microbiota are fruits and vegetables.

**WEEKLY
CHALLENGES**

**ADD SPICES TO
YOUR MEALS**

**LIMIT ARTIFICIAL
SWEETENERS**

**TRY A NEW FRUIT OR
VEGETABLE**

**SWAP OUT MEAT
FOR TOFU, BEANS
OR LENTILS**

For more information about
gut health go to:

[https://www.healthline.com/
nutrition/improve-gut-
bacteria](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/improve-gut-bacteria)

Note to Nutrition Directors and Site Managers:

Thank you for helping to promote Eat Well, Age Well. Please encourage folks to form weekly action plans to help them incorporate gut-healthy foods into their eating habits. You can help create excitement to try new foods. These foods will help their digestive tract digest food and benefit their gut microbiota.

If they ask how they should record if they reach their weekly action plan. They can write words like, "Nailed it" or just a short note like, didn't use artificial sweetener today or I replaced meat with plant-based foods, etc. on the *Monthly Tracking Calendar*.

Week 1: Give out/Post

- The 1- page overview handout *Gut Health*
- Placemat/handout – *Broccoli Cauliflower Soup*
- Table Tent- *Simplified*
- *Monthly Tracking Calendar*

Week 2: Give out/Post

- Placemat/handouts – *Homemade Coleslaw*
- Table Tent- *Foods that Help Gut Health*

Week 3: Give out/Post

- Placemat/handouts – *Banana Smoothie*
- Table Tent- *The Mediterranean Diet*

Week 4: Give out/Post

- Placemat/handouts – *Homemade Pickles*
- Table Tent- *Fermented Foods, Exercise, Vegetarian*

To print the placemats on legal size paper, just hit print, they should be set up for that size of paper. To make them into a handout, go to Print and then go down to the last item that should say, 1 page per sheet and click on the drop-down menu to select "Scale to Paper Size" and select "letter" size paper.

The table tents are available in a full-size version that you can post on a bulletin board, give as a handout or place in a full-size table tent holder or print the 4 x 6-inch version and place in a 4 x 6 or 5 x 7-inch holder.

I appreciate your input and feedback so please feel free to call me at 608-228-8095 or email me with any comments at pam.vankampen@gwaar.org