

IMPROVING GUT HEALTH

Athlete Information Sheet

Your gut plays a huge role in your overall health, with around 70% of your immune system linked to it. When your gut is in a good place, it supports better digestion, stronger immunity, and helps you perform at your best. A big part of this is gut diversity, basically having a wide range of beneficial gut bacteria. The more variety you've have, the more resilient and better your gut can function.

What you eat plays a key role in this. Your food choices influence the type and diversity of bacteria in your gut, helping how well your gut supports your health and performance.

Four dietary recommendations to improve your gut functioning

Eat a variety of foods and meals each day/week



A diverse diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins supports a more diverse and resilient microbiome (bugs) by providing a wide range of nutrients that feed different types of gut bacteria.

Prioritise your fibre and plant variety goals



Aim for 25–30 grams of fibre per day and include at least 30 different plant foods each week from sources like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds. Fibre fuels beneficial gut bacteria, supporting digestion, immune function, and the production of compounds such as butyrate, while greater plant variety promotes a more diverse and resilient microbiome

Include pre- and probiotic foods daily



Foods like garlic, onions, chickpeas, bananas, and asparagus contain prebiotics that *feed* the bacteria in your gut.

Fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, miso, sauerkraut, sourdough bread and kimchi contain probiotics that *introduce live* bacteria to your gut.

These foods work together to maintain a healthy gut environment.

Keep hydrated



Adequate hydration is essential for digestion and nutrient absorption. Aim for at least 8–10 cups of water daily (adjusting for activity level), as fluid helps break down food, absorb nutrients, and work alongside fibre to maintain regular, comfortable bowel movements.

Your gut and brain are constantly talking to each other. When stress is high or you are sleep-deprived, it can disrupt your gut bacteria and impact digestion, recovery, mood, and focus. That's why prioritising 7–9 hours of quality sleep and building in simple stress-management habits like yoga, meditation, or even a few minutes of deep breathing can make a real difference.