glow
The naturopaths way

The Good Gut Guide

How to feed the garden you want to grow. A practical guide to fibre, prebiotics, polyphenols and the everyday habits that help your gut microbiome thrive.

Your gut garden

Living inside your gut are trillions of microbes, together called your gut microbiome. Think of it as a garden. You're the farmer, and **what grows depends on what you feed it.**

Your microbiome is as unique as a fingerprint, shaped by your diet, lifestyle, medications and environment. And it does far more than digest your lunch.

Digestion
Breaks down the fibre you can't digest on your own.

Immunity
Trains your immune system and supports your gut's front-line defences.

Metabolism
Influences appetite, blood sugar and how you store fat.

Gut lining
Makes butyrate, the main fuel for the cells lining your bowel.

Hormones
Helps decide whether used oestrogen is cleared or recycled.

Mood
Talks to your brain constantly through the gut-brain connection.

Skin
Gut imbalance often shows up as skin flare-ups.

Nutrients
Helps produce some vitamins and other helpful compounds.

Is your garden asking for help?

- [ ] Bloating, gas or tummy discomfort
- [ ] Constipation, loose stools or changing bowel habits
- [ ] Ongoing tiredness or poor sleep
- [ ] Getting sick often, or taking ages to recover
- [ ] New or worsening food reactions
- [ ] Sugar or junk food cravings
- [ ] Skin flare-ups
- [ ] Brain fog, low mood or feeling anxious
- [ ] Heavy periods, PMS or perimenopause symptoms

These can feel unrelated, but they're often connected through your gut.

What harms the garden

- **Too little fibre:** your good bacteria go hungry.
- **Ultra-processed food and additives:** can shift your microbiome in a less helpful direction.
- **Alcohol:** can push the gut towards inflammation.
- **Stress:** changes which microbes survive and thrive.
- **Poor sleep:** linked with a less balanced microbiome.
- **Too little movement:** linked with fewer types of gut bacteria.
- **Smoking.**
- **Some medications,** including antibiotics and reflux medication.

Never stop a prescribed medication without talking to your doctor.

The 5 pillars of a healthy gut Small, steady changes add up.

1 Fibre
The fertiliser. Aim for 40 to 45 g a day.

2 Variety
Aim for 30 different plants a week.

3 Prebiotics
The foods your best microbes love most.

4 Fermented foods
Bring helpful live microbes into the mix.

5 Lifestyle
Sleep, stress, movement and time in nature.

Pillar 1: Fibre, the fertiliser

Most Australians fall well short. Only about 1 in 4 adults eat even the basic recommended amount, and most get around half of what I'd like to see. And remember: **fibre only comes from plants**, so the more plants on your plate, the better fed your garden.

Legumes and beans: your fibre champions approximate fibre per cup, cooked

Haricot (navy) beans	19 g	Kidney beans	13 g
Lentils	16 g	Chickpeas	12 g
Split peas	16 g	Cannellini beans	11 g
Black beans	15 g	Edamame	8 g

One cup of legumes gets you more than a third of the way to 40 g. They're also natural prebiotics, a great source of resistant starch and packed with plant protein. If you make one change after reading this guide, add a serve of legumes every day.

Canned is perfect. Choose organic where you can, and rinse well, which also makes them gentler on your gut. At Woolworths, Macro organic beans and lentils are only about $1.50 a can.

More high-fibre heroes

Chia seeds	2 tbsp	8 g	Brussels sprouts, cooked	1 cup	4 g
Raspberries	1 cup	8 g	Ground flaxseed	2 tbsp	4 g
Blackberries	1 cup	8 g	Kiwifruit	2 small	4 g
Globe artichoke	1 medium	7 g	Apple, skin on	1 medium	4 g
Pear, skin on	1 medium	6 g	Almonds	30 g	3.5 g
Avocado	½ medium	5 g	Pistachios	30 g	3 g
Broccoli, cooked	1 cup	5 g	Quinoa, cooked	½ cup	2.5 g

Pillar 2: Variety Different microbes love different foods.

A diverse microbiome, with lots of different types of bacteria, is linked with better health. Eating the same few foods every day feeds the same few bacteria. The fix? **Aim for 30 different plants a week.** Vegetables, fruit, legumes, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices all count. Focus on adding plants in, not cutting foods out.

- **Herbs and spices count.** Coriander on a curry, basil on a salad, rosemary on roast veg.
- **Switch up varieties.** Purple carrots instead of orange, red cabbage instead of green, a different coloured capsicum each week.
- **Cook from different cuisines.** Mexican, Indian, Middle Eastern and Japanese dishes all bring new plants.
- **Make a mixed nut and seed jar** for snacks and sprinkling.
- **Add one new plant to your smoothie** each week.
- **Try a fruit and veg box delivery** for automatic variety.
- **Track it** with the 30 plants tracker at the end of this guide.

Pillar 3: Prebiotics The foods your best microbes love most.

Prebiotics are the foods your beneficial bacteria, like Bifidobacteria and Akkermansia, thrive on. You can't digest them, but your good bacteria can. When they feed, they make compounds such as butyrate that nourish your bowel lining and support your whole body. There are several types, and the more of them you eat, the better.

Inulin, FOS and GOS

Inulin and FOS foods

Garlic · Onion · Spring onion · Leeks · Asparagus · Globe artichoke · Jerusalem artichoke · Chicory root · Dandelion greens · Broccoli stalks

GOS foods

Lentils · Chickpeas · Split peas · Kidney beans · Borlotti beans · Black beans

Other prebiotic foods

Pistachios · Ground flaxseed · Cacao · Green kiwifruit

> **Start small.** Prebiotics are powerful. Too much too fast can mean wind and bloating, so add one new food at a time and build up over a few weeks.

Polyphenols the deeper the colour, the better

Polyphenols are natural compounds that give plants their colour and flavour. Most of them reach your large bowel, where they help beneficial bacteria thrive and keep less helpful microbes in check.

Fruit	Vegetables and legumes	Nuts and seeds	Herbs and spices	Drinks and oils
Blueberries	Red onion	Walnuts	Cloves	Green tea
Blackberries	Shallots	Pecans	Rosemary	Extra virgin olive oil
Raspberries	Globe artichoke	Skin-on almonds	Thyme	
Strawberries	Purple cabbage	Ground flaxseed	Oregano	
Cherries	Spinach	Cacao	Sage	
Plums	Broccoli		Turmeric	
Blackcurrants	Asparagus		Ginger	
Pomegranate	Olives		Cinnamon	
	Black beans			

Pillar 3: Prebiotics, continued Pectin, ellagic acid and resistant starch.

Pectin a gentle fibre for regularity

Pectin is the natural fibre that sets jam. In your gut, it forms a soft gel that helps keep you regular, and your bacteria ferment it into butyrate.

Apples, skin on | Pears, skin on | Oranges | Mandarins | Plums | Apricots | Peaches | Berries | Kiwifruit | Avocado

Brussels sprouts | Kale | Broccoli | Cabbage | Carrots | Globe artichoke | Bok choy | Green peas | Kidney beans | Almonds

Two easy habits: eat two serves of pectin-rich fruit a day, and don't peel fruit and veg where you can. The skin is one of the richest sources.

Ellagic acid aim for one serve a day

Found in certain berries and nuts, ellagic acid is where your gut bacteria get clever. They turn it into **urolithin A**, which helps your cells clear out worn-out mitochondria, the tiny batteries that power every cell in your body. In human trials, urolithin A **improved muscle endurance in older adults and muscle strength in middle-aged adults.**

The catch? Many people's gut bacteria can't make much of it at all. Feeding your garden well gives yours the best chance.

Food	One serve
Raspberries, blackberries or strawberries	⅓ cup
Pomegranate arils	⅓ cup
Walnuts or pecans	30 g

Resistant starch starch that feeds your bacteria

Resistant starch "resists" digestion in your small intestine and travels to your large bowel, where your bacteria ferment it into butyrate, the main fuel for the cells lining your bowel.

Lentils, chickpeas and beans | Cooked and cooled legumes | Slightly green bananas

Having rice or potatoes? Cook them a day ahead.

When rice and potatoes are cooked and then chilled overnight, some of their starch turns into resistant starch. It feeds your good bacteria much like fibre does, and means a gentler rise in blood sugar.

And yes, you can reheat it. In one study, rice that was cooked, chilled for 24 hours and then reheated had around 2.5 times more resistant starch than freshly cooked rice, and caused a smaller blood sugar rise.

How to do it safely

- Spread cooked rice or potatoes in a shallow container and refrigerate as soon as they stop steaming. Never leave rice on the bench to cool.
- Chill overnight, ideally 12 to 24 hours.
- Eat within a day, and reheat only once, until steaming hot all the way through.

Make it easy

- Cook a double batch at dinner for tomorrow's lunch.
- Make a potato salad with lots of herbs.
- Use day-old rice in a vegetable stir-fry.

Cooling doesn't turn rice and potatoes into low-carb foods. It just makes them a better choice when you do have them.

Pillar 4: Fermented foods Bring in helpful microbes.

Fermented foods are made with beneficial bacteria or yeasts. When they haven't been heat-treated, they contain live microbes that may help increase the diversity of your gut.

Sauerkraut | Kimchi | Coconut yoghurt with live cultures | Tempeh | Miso | Low-sugar kombucha | Fermented vegetables

- **Choose unpasteurised** sauerkraut and kimchi from the fridge section. Shelf-stable jars are usually heat-treated.
- **Start with a spoonful** with meals and build up.
- **Swap soft drink for kombucha** when you're out, choosing a low-sugar one.
- **Probiotic supplements are strain-specific.** Different strains do different jobs, so ask me which one suits you before you buy.

Pillar 5: Lifestyle Your gut feels everything you do.

Sleep

Better sleep is linked with a more diverse microbiome, while poor sleep is linked with more of the microbes associated with poor health.

- Aim for 7 to 9 hours, with a consistent bedtime.
- Keep your bedroom dark, cool and screen-free.
- **Finish eating at least 4 hours before bed.** This gives your gut time to digest, and lets its overnight cleaning waves sweep through between meals.
- Shift worker? Get daylight when you're awake and keep your sleep space dark.

Movement

Regular exercise is good for the community of microbes in your gut, and it helps manage stress and sleep too.

- Move every day, even if it's a walk.
- Add strength training two to three times a week.

Stress

Your gut and brain talk constantly. Stress changes how your gut works and which microbes thrive, and an unhappy gut can affect your mood in return.

- Try 20 minutes of a calming activity before bed.
- Start with a short guided meditation or breathing practice.
- For IBS, gut-directed hypnotherapy can ease pain, bloating and nausea. Try the **Nerva app**, a guided program you can do at home.

Nature and pets

Time outdoors exposes you to a wider range of helpful microbes.

- Garden and grow some of your own food.
- Walk barefoot on grass, swim in the ocean, picnic in the park.
- Play with your pets. Homes with dogs carry a wider range of microbes.

Putting it into practice Go gently, and make it easy.

Go gently with fibre

- **Build up over 2 to 4 weeks.** Jumping straight to 40 g is a fast track to bloating.
- **Drink plenty of water** as your fibre goes up.
- **Chew well** and eat slowly.
- **A little extra wind is normal at first.** It's a sign your microbes are adjusting, not necessarily an intolerance.
- **Uncomfortable?** Ease back slightly for a few days, then build up again.
- **Sensitive gut?** Gentler options include kiwifruit, oranges, firm tofu, carrots, macadamias and small serves (¼ cup) of canned, rinsed lentils or chickpeas.
- **IBS, SIBO or ongoing gut symptoms?** The type and amount of fibre needs to be tailored to you. That's exactly where I can help.

Easy ways to add more

- Stir a tin of rinsed lentils into soups, curries and sauces.
- Use lentils or black beans in bolognese, tacos and chilli.
- Toss chickpeas or cannellini beans through every salad.
- Roast chickpeas with spices for a crunchy snack.
- Sprinkle chia and ground flaxseed on breakfast.
- Keep frozen berries on hand for an easy fibre hit.
- Snack on pistachios, almonds or walnuts.
- Add a handful of fresh herbs to every meal.

Your good gut shopping list

Keep these on hand and a gut-loving meal is never far away.

Pantry

Organic canned lentils · Organic canned chickpeas · Organic canned black beans · Cannellini beans · Split peas · Quinoa · Buckwheat · Chia seeds · Ground flaxseed · Cacao · Extra virgin olive oil · Green tea · Dried herbs and spices

Nuts and seeds

Walnuts · Pecans · Pistachios · Almonds · Pumpkin seeds · Sunflower seeds

Fridge and freezer

Unpasteurised sauerkraut · Kimchi · Coconut yoghurt with live cultures · Tempeh · Miso · Frozen berries · Frozen edamame

Fresh

Garlic · Red onion · Leeks · Asparagus · Broccoli · Brussels sprouts · Leafy greens · Purple cabbage · Carrots · Avocado · Apples · Pears · Kiwifruit · Citrus · Fresh herbs

Three easy gut-loving recipes

Make all three in a day for over 50 g of fibre.

Raspberry chia pudding

about 15 g fibre per serve

Serves 2

- 4 tbsp chia seeds
- 2 tbsp ground flaxseed
- 1 cup unsweetened plant milk
- ½ cup coconut yoghurt with live cultures
- 1 cup raspberries, fresh or frozen
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- To serve: walnuts and pomegranate arils

1. Mix the chia, flaxseed, milk, yoghurt and cinnamon in a bowl.
2. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours or overnight.
3. Lightly mash half the raspberries and swirl them through.
4. Top with the rest of the raspberries, chopped walnuts and pomegranate.

Pillars: fibre, polyphenols, ellagic acid, fermented food.

Lentil, artichoke and pomegranate salad

about 18 g fibre per serve

Serves 2

- 1½ cups cooked lentils (or a 400 g tin, rinsed)
- 1 cup marinated artichoke hearts, chopped
- 2 big handfuls rocket or baby spinach
- ½ red onion, finely sliced
- ⅓ cup pomegranate arils
- A handful each of parsley and mint
- 30 g pistachios
- Dressing: 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, juice of ½ lemon, 1 tsp Dijon mustard, 1 crushed garlic clove

1. Whisk the dressing ingredients together.
2. Toss the lentils and red onion through half the dressing and leave for 5 minutes.
3. Add the greens, artichoke and herbs and toss gently.
4. Scatter with pomegranate and pistachios, then drizzle with the rest of the dressing.

Pillars: fibre, prebiotics, polyphenols, ellagic acid, variety (up to 10 plants).

Smoky black bean and broccoli bowl

about 24 g fibre per serve

Serves 2

- 400 g tin black beans, rinsed
- 1 head broccoli, florets and chopped stalk
- 2 cups cauliflower rice
- 1 red capsicum, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp each ground cumin and smoked paprika
- 1 avocado
- Fresh coriander, lime and extra virgin olive oil
- Optional: sliced chilli and a spoonful of kimchi

1. Roast the broccoli and capsicum with olive oil at 220°C for 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Warm the black beans in a pan with the garlic, cumin, paprika and a splash of water.
3. Lightly pan-fry the cauliflower rice in olive oil for 3 to 4 minutes.
4. Build your bowls and top with sliced avocado, coriander, a squeeze of lime and kimchi if using.

Pillars: fibre, prebiotics, polyphenols, pectin, fermented food.

My 30 plants a week tracker

Can you reach 30? Can you beat it?

Write down every different plant you eat this week. Each one earns a point: vegetables, fruit, legumes, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices all count. Different colours of the same plant (like red and yellow capsicum) count separately.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40

Stuck for ideas? A handful of mixed nuts and seeds can add five plants in one go. A spice blend like garam masala counts for every spice in it.

Want to know what's actually growing in your garden?

Food is the foundation, but if you're dealing with ongoing gut, hormone, skin or energy symptoms, guessing only gets you so far.

GutIQ gut microbiome testing

Maps more than 28,000 microbial species in your gut, plus markers for inflammation, leaky gut, digestion and how well your bacteria are feeding your gut lining. You collect the sample at home, and it includes a 1 hour telehealth consultation with Lisa to go through your results and your personalised plan.

Book gut microbiome testing

https://glow-health-and-weight-loss.simplecliniconline.com/programs/gut-microbiome-testing

This guide is general information only and is not personal medical advice. Fibre amounts are approximate and vary with brand, ripeness and preparation. If you have a medical condition, are pregnant or breastfeeding, or take medication, speak with your practitioner before making significant changes to your diet or starting supplements. © Glow Health