



Brampton: 220 Wexford Road Unit 2 Brampton, ON L6Z-4N7

Ph: (905) 840-WELL Fax: (905) 840 -LIFE

www.drjustineblainey.com

www.blaineywellness.com

The Many Medicinal Properties of Food

August 10, 2015 |By Dr. Mercola

Gut-Healthy Foods

Supporting your gut microbiome is perhaps one of the most beneficial things you can do to boost your overall health. Indigestion, gas or bloating, constipation or diarrhea, or virtually any chronic disease, are signs indicating your gut flora is out of balance. Traditionally fermented, unpasteurized foods are key here, as they help reseed your gut with a wide variety of beneficial bacteria. Not only does about 80 percent of your immune system originate in your gut, microbes carry out important roles in many other biological systems as well. Examples of foods known to support your gut health include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Fermented vegetables**, which you can easily make at home, typically contain higher levels of probiotics than probiotic supplements, making them ideal for optimizing your gut flora. Ideally, you'll want to consume a variety of fermented foods to maximize the variety of beneficial bacteria, as each have their own set of benefits. Kimchi, for example, a traditional Korean dish made from fermented vegetables and a spicy blend of chili peppers, garlic, scallions, and other spices, is an excellent source of lactic acid bacteria, which research suggests can help you detoxify insecticides. These man-made neurotoxic chemicals bioaccumulate in your body, where they can remain for long periods of time if you don't take steps to eliminate them. According to a 2009 study, the organophosphate insecticide Chlorpyrifos degraded rapidly during kimchi fermentation, and was over 83 percent degraded by day three. By day nine, it was degraded completely.
- **Bone broth** is extremely healing to your gut and forms the foundation for the GAPS diet, which is based on the Gut and Psychology Syndrome (GAPS) principles developed by Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride. The GAPS diet is designed to heal leaky gut, which is the root of many allergies and autoimmune disorders. When combined with toxic overload, you have a perfect storm that can lead to neurological disorders like autism, ADHD, and learning disabilities.
- **Moringa**, a plant native to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, has a long history of medicinal use. The leaves contain plenty of vitamins and minerals, and can be used in the same ways as spinach (raw, steamed or cooked). It's also high in fiber, and has antibacterial activity. Importantly, moringa contains isothiocyanates shown to protect against *Helicobacter pylori* (H. pylori) infection, which has been implicated in ulcers, acid reflux, and gastric cancer.
- **Aloe vera** aids the absorption of nutrients, and helps heal your gut lining to prevent leaky gut and other intestinal problems, including Crohn's disease, colitis, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and acid reflux. Aloe vera juice (made from the inner clear gel) should ideally be made from home-grown aloe with leaves that are one half to one inch thick before harvesting. Species that produce thick leaves are best. It takes about two years to grow a tiny four-inch aloe plant to one that you can regularly harvest leaves from. I have about 300 thick leaved aloe plants in my front yard but only started with a few dozen.
- **Chia seeds** contain about 10 grams of fiber in just two tablespoons, and they're rich in anti-inflammatory phytochemicals for soothing gastrointestinal distress. Along with fermented foods, fiber is very important for optimal gut health. Some microbes ferment fiber, and the byproducts nourish your colon. Some of these fermentation byproducts also help calibrate your immune system, thereby preventing

inflammatory disorders such as asthma and Crohn's disease.

Psyllium is another excellent choice, but make sure it is organic as this is a crop that is typically very heavily contaminated with pesticides.

Taking psyllium three times a day could add as much as 18 grams of soluble and insoluble fiber to your diet. In addition to supporting healthy digestion, soluble fibers such as organic psyllium are prebiotics that help nourish beneficial bacteria.

Foods with Specific Medicinal Value

While nourishing your microbiome with gut-healthy foods helps lay a solid foundation upon which to build good health, other foods are known to have medicinal qualities that can help you address more specific problems. CNN and the Epoch Times recently reviewed a number of foods that have potent medicinal benefits, including the following:

Ginger for menstrual cramps	According to Dr. John La Puma, a practicing physician and professionally trained chef: " <i>Ginger probably works as well as ibuprofen for menstrual cramps. It works taken as a ginger capsule or chewed.</i> " A recent meta analysis concluded that taking 750-2,000 milligrams of ginger powder during the first four days of your menstrual cycle was an effective treatment for cramps.
Peppermint for irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)	Peppermint is another food commonly used to treat cramps; in this case those associated with IBS. Dr. Gerard Mullin, associate professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine told CNN: " <i>[W]hen compared to the various medical therapies for IBS, peppermint is the most effective and the least toxic.</i> " In fact, in a 2005 review of 16 trials the authors suggest peppermint oil "may be the drug of first choice in IBS patients with non-serious constipation or diarrhea to alleviate general symptoms and to improve quality of life."
Hibiscus tea for hypertension	Hibiscus flowers contain anthocyanins — water-soluble pigments that give the plant its color — which can be helpful to lower your blood pressure. According to the featured article, "multiple studies back up the blood-pressure-lowering abilities of hibiscus, including one published in the <i>Nigerian Journal of Physiological Sciences.</i> "
Tumeric for rheumatoid arthritis	Research shows curcumin, the active ingredient in the curry spice turmeric, possesses potent anti-inflammatory and anti-arthritis properties. One highly bioavailable form of curcumin was found to be more effective in alleviating rheumatoid arthritis (RA) symptoms than the NSAID drug Voltaren. Not only that, but those who took the curcumin actually experienced the most improvement across the board, with no adverse side effects.
Wild-caught Alaskan salmon for inflammation	Salmon is an excellent source of healthy omega-3 fats that are important for the prevention of inflammation in your body. Omega-3 fat is also important for brain and heart health. Avoid farmed salmon, however, as it contains far less omega-3 than wild salmon, along with a number of potentially hazardous contaminants. The two designations you want to look for are "Alaskan salmon," and "sockeye salmon," as Alaskan sockeye is not allowed to be farmed.
Shiitake mushrooms for improved immune function	Shiitake mushrooms contain a number of health-stimulating agents, including lentinan, which has antitumor properties. It also has antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal, and immune-boosting effects. In one recent study, shiitake mushrooms were found to significantly improve participants' immunity parameters, including a 60 percent increase in $\gamma\delta$ -T cells; 100 percent increase in natural-killer T-cells; increased IgA levels (corresponding to increased immunity); reduced C-reactive protein levels (corresponding to reduced levels of inflammation); and increased levels of anti-inflammatory cytokines (interleukin (IL)-10, IL-1alpha, IL-4, and tumor necrosis factor [TNF]-alpha). It's important to eat ONLY organically grown mushrooms, as they absorb and concentrate whatever they grow in — good or bad. Mushrooms are known to concentrate heavy metals, and air and water pollutants, which would defeat their medicinal value.