

Words on Wellness

Good Gut Health



Did you know that your digestive system plays an essential role in your overall health? Nurturing a population of good gut bacteria is good for your health. What you eat may encourage the growth of good or bad bacteria. For example, avoiding processed foods, high-fat foods, and foods high in added sugars is important for maintaining a healthy gut. Eating high-fiber and fermented foods actively promotes the growth of good gut bacteria.

High-fiber foods are a good source of prebiotics. Prebiotics are the fuel for your good gut microbes. High-fiber foods include legumes, like black beans and chickpeas; whole grains, including whole wheat and oatmeal; vegetables; nuts; and fruits. Eating high-fiber foods may help build a strong immune system; improve digestion, sleep, and brain health; and support heart health.

Fermented foods are great sources of probiotics. Probiotics are living friendly bacteria. The goal is for these helpful organisms to take up residence in your gut and replace other less helpful or even harmful bacteria. Fermented foods include yogurt, sauerkraut, kefir, and kimchi.

This month's recipe, Berry and Greens Smoothies, has both high fiber and fermented foods. Bananas, frozen berries, and greens are high in fiber and yogurt is a fermented food; try it today!

Sources: [Healthline](https://www.healthline.com/health/gut-health), www.healthline.com/health/gut-health
Tufts University Health and Nutrition Letter, nutritionletter.tufts.edu/



Berry and Greens Smoothies

Serving Size: 8 ounces | Serves: 8

Ingredients:

- 2 medium bananas
- 2 containers (6 ounces each) nonfat vanilla yogurt
- 3 cups leafy greens, washed (kale or spinach)
- 1 package (16 ounces) frozen berries
- 1 cup nonfat milk

Directions:

1. Put bananas, yogurt, and greens in the blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Add berries to blender. Blend until smooth.
3. Add milk to blender. Blend until smooth.
4. Serve immediately or freeze in individual servings.

Nutrition information per serving:

100 calories, 0g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 50mg sodium, 23g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 12g total sugar, 4g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu

Cool Food the Right Way to Protect Your Family

Every year in the United States one in six people get sick from contaminated food. Cooling food quickly helps reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Avoid the Temperature Danger Zone (temperatures between 40°F and 140°F) by refrigerating perishable food within two hours—one hour if it is a hot day (above 90°F). Keep your fridge temperature at 40°F or below and use a fridge thermometer to keep food safe.

Keep food safe by dividing leftovers into smaller portions and storing in shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator, putting perishable foods in the refrigerator or freezer as soon as you get them home from the store, and always marinating food in the refrigerator.

Source: [Partnership for Food Safety Education](https://www.fightbac.org/), www.fightbac.org/



Water Is Essential for Good Health

Water makes up about 50% to 70% of your body weight. It is essential for maintaining body temperature; lubricating and cushioning joints; and getting rid of waste. Drinking water during or after a meal also aids digestion. The amount of water your body needs depends on many factors, including your health, how active you are, and where you live.

You are likely getting enough water if you rarely feel thirsty and your urine is colorless or light yellow. You will need more fluids to keep hydrated during exercise or on hot summer days. To make sure your body has the fluids it needs, make water your beverage of choice. It's a good idea to drink water with meals; before, during, and after exercise; and when you feel thirsty.

Source: [Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org/), www.mayoclinic.org/

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If you or someone you know is skipping meals, going hungry, or choosing between food and medicine, call 1-855-944-3663 to apply for assistance today.

Call Iowa 2-1-1 or Iowa Lifelong Links, 1-866-468-7887, for additional resources.

