



## Day Six: Adding Delicious Gut-Healthy Foods

Okay – now that we’re a few days into eliminating two of the top stressors to our guts, so it’s time to add some yummy foods that can help nurture the healing of our gut and building the all-important microbiome. Probiotics and prebiotics.

We talked about the microbiome in days 2 and 4, so we don’t need to review what it is again, but it’s important to always keep this community in your gut in mind as you’re going forward.

Every time you choose something to eat – ask yourself:

“Am I nurturing my gut, or am I hurting my gut?”

When you remember that hurting your gut hurts your brain, it’s a lot easier to continue to make the right food choices.

<b>Microbiome</b>	
>	100 trillion bacteria, etc.
>	10,000 unique species
>	10 X cells in human body
>	Goal: 85/15% good/bad bugs



The mindset work we did yesterday should help you here, too.

## Nutrients

For the microbiome to be optimal, you need to have optimal levels of all nutrients including and especially Vitamin D3 and K, Vitamin A and Omega-3 fatty acids. We’re going to talk more about nutrient levels later in the course, but for now, know that these are especially important for gut and brain health.

To nurture a balanced microbiome, meaning one with good diversity and a healthy balance between good and bad “bugs” you must feed it with probiotics and prebiotics. Probiotics are the bacteria. Prebiotics are the foods that feed the bacteria.

## Probiotics and Prebiotics

Here's a list of foods that help nurture our gut:

**Probiotics** –are the foods that contain live bacteria that help populate the microbiome.

- Kefir, kombucha, and unsweetened yogurt (goat or coconut)
- Kimchi, pickled fruits, and vegetables
- Sauerkraut
- Supplements

**Prebiotics** - are the foods that feed those bacteria

- Apples (organic for sure!)
- Beans
- Cabbage
- Psyllium
- Artichoke
- Garlic
- Onion
- Leeks
- Asparagus
- Root Vegetables
  - Sweet potatoes, yams
  - Squash, jicama, beet
  - Carrots, turnips



Adding fermented, probiotic foods like kimchi and sauerkraut to your diet is a great and gentle way to introduce good bacteria to your microbiome. Kefir water and kombucha tea are also beneficial. Yogurt is traditionally recommended as a source of probiotics, but dairy products cause inflammation, so go for plant-based yogurts like coconut or organic soy.

You'll need to give those good microbes some food, so also add plenty of wholesome prebiotics to your diet. Prebiotics are in fresh produce like Jerusalem artichokes, fresh dandelion greens, spinach, leeks, radicchio, frisee, endive, onions, asparagus, chicory, jicama, bananas, and garlic. There are lots of choices here, so no excuses.

One of the most powerful prebiotic foods: organic apples! (Definitely organic – because this fruit is sprayed heavily in conventional farming.)

Apples contain polyphenols which support gut health in numerous ways. Apples can lower inflammation in the gut lining. Apples also contain pectin. Apple pectin and apple peels act as prebiotic fiber to feed the microbiome and help with healthy bowel elimination and good immune function. Grate or dice, and slow cook to release all of these beneficial properties. Adding a few dashes of cinnamon helps blunt the naturally occurring blood sugar impact on insulin and offers additional anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial benefits.

In the chapter called “Foods to Eat and Why” in [“Don’t Let the Memories Fade”](#), I provide a whole list of great foods, including fermented ones, that help build a happy gut microbiome.

## Fermented Foods



### What are they?

Fermentation is a process in which carbohydrates are broken down to alcohol or organic acids by bacterial exposure.

Fermentation is a desired process as it improves the foods' digestibility and offers a variety of health benefits.

Beneficial bacteria found in fermented foods include species like Lactobacillus,

Bacteroides, Bifidobacterium, and Enterococcus.

The earliest record of fermented foods was in the Fertile Crescent in 6000 B.C. Fermented foods have been reported in nearly every culture since then.

Many studies show the value of fermented foods for maintaining gut and cognitive health.

### How to Add Them to Your Diet

When you are introducing these powerful foods to your body, you should do so slowly. One tablespoon of sauerkraut on a salad. Four ounces of kombucha tea. Even kefir water, which is very mild, takes getting used to. But don't let that scare you off.

They are essential to gut health, and most people have no problems. Just take it slow and easy.

It's easy to make your own fermented foods. Beets, cabbage, tomatoes, onions, garlic, and green beans are just a few of the veggies you can use. It's very inexpensive and surprisingly easy. Recipes for sauerkraut and kimchi are included today in your extra materials.

It's especially important to buy organic produce to make your fermented food. In addition to avoiding the pesticides, this produce should come from healthy soil because that will give you more of the microbes needed to create a more valuable fermented product.

You can certainly buy fermented products at most natural food stores and some supermarkets. Fermented foods are full of live organisms that must be kept cool to survive, so choose fermented items only from the refrigerated section of the store. Tempeh, tofu, natto, and miso are fermented, but be sure they are made with non-GMO soy.

Apple cider vinegar is one of the most widely used fermented products. Start with a teaspoon in a cup of warm water as an excellent start to your day. You can build up to a tablespoon.

### **Other Ways to Improve Gut Microbiome**

Spend time outdoors in natural environments. Interact with the local biome through hiking, swimming, and other activities to help not only diversify the biome but also educate your immune system.

Interact with pets or livestock to improve microbial diversity. Gardening and walking barefoot are also excellent ways to improve the microbiome.

### **Today's Assignment:**

**Add one fermented food to your diet.** It could be apple cider vinegar, kombucha tea, kefir water, sauerkraut, kimchi, or plant-based yogurt (NO SUGAR!)

If you're not quite ready to do that, you could choose probiotic supplements, and if you have had antibiotics in the last 6 months, that might be a good way to kick-start, but with capsules you won't get all the other nutrients that are in fermented foods. Plus, it's really hard to know if you're getting a good variety of microbes in supplements, especially if they have been sitting around for a while.

**Also, choose 3 prebiotic foods that you can add to your diet this week.** If they aren't already in your pantry or fridge, pick them up when you are at the store.

**Today's Extras:** I have included recipes for sauerkraut and plant-based yogurt in the Extra Materials for today.

And if you'd like to learn a bit about kimchi, I just came upon this article from Food Revolution. <https://foodrevolution.org/blog/what-is-kimchi-and-should-you-eat-it/>

There are directions at the end of the article on how to make it. This is something I make frequently, and really love it because it's spicy.