

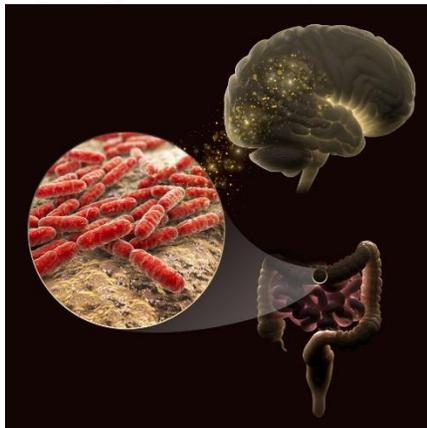
## Tune Up Your Brain Module Two

### Stress, Your Gut and Your Brain

In this program, we're not going to be dealing much with diet; it's covered in depth in [\*Don't Let the Memories Fade\*](#). But if we're going to tune up your brain, we do have to address the issue of diet and how it affects the microbiome and your gut, which has a huge impact on the state of your brain.

You've probably heard of the microbiome. It's a hot topic these days, and for good reason. The microbiome is comprised of beneficial bacteria essential for your health. There is approximately 200 times the amount of genetic material from the microbiome than there is human DNA in your system.

Your microbiome helps you to digest your food, keep your immune system operating at peak performance, and helps to stimulate the production of essential vitamins like B12, thiamine, riboflavin, and vitamin K.



How is the microbiome impacted by stress? You know those butterflies you feel in your stomach when you are getting ready to speak in public or to ask for a raise? That's a physical reaction by the flora and fauna in your gut. They are reacting to the stress, which weakens your microbiome.

Stress can also impact blood and oxygen flow to the stomach and weaken intestinal walls, allowing gut bacteria to enter your bloodstream, which can lead to inflammation – a huge risk factor for brain issues.

The constant presence of cortisol fuels the production of glucose, which is why stress is implicated in weight gain. Cortisol boosts energy to the large muscles but inhibits insulin production and slows metabolism.

But it's important to understand that stress is not just a one-way street. While external or perceived stress impacts the gut, stress can also originate from an unhealthy gut and/or a deficiency in essential nutrients.

Complicating this further, while nutritional deficiency can contribute to stress, stress also increases your need for nutrients. The production of stress hormones and neurotransmitters uses many of your essential nutrients, but stress also shuts down your digestive system. That means that even though you are eating good food, and perhaps even taking supplements, they're not getting absorbed.

So, eating a healthy diet is especially important if you are to deal well with stress. In the video for this module, I went over these steps, but I'm including them here as well so you can review and print out this PDF if you like.

- 1) Try to eliminate all refined sugars and processed foods.
- 2) If you don't already, eat at least 4 servings of vegetables and fruits every day. They will help feed those essential bacteria in your gut.
- 3) Eat consciously and mindfully, which means sitting down in a relaxed environment without lots of noise like television or loud music. Don't do anything else while you're eating. Just eat.
- 4) Chew your food well, savoring every morsel, until it is pureed.
- 5) Avoid consuming large amounts of liquid 20 minutes before and after your meals. Why? Because a lot of liquid dilutes your digestive secretions, making them a lot less effective.
- 6) Do have a glass of room temperature water with a squeeze of lemon juice or 1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar 20 minutes before your meal to help stimulate those digestive juices so that, once your meal arrives, you can digest it properly.



Not only do these practices help with digestion, which helps the gut microbiome, eating in a mindful way helps reduce stress, which in turn improves the absorption of nutrients.