

Wellness Corner Connection

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I Want To Lose Weight...commonly heard goal?

When the topic of goals arise in a conversation, typically what is communicated is ones desire to “lose weight”. Although having that as an “end goal” is wonderful since losing even 5-7% of ones body weight can have a positive impact on ones overall well-being and future disease prevention, it’s the *process* of getting to that end goal that is of great concern.

We live in a world of instant gratification. With just a few key strokes, we can access answers to any question that comes to mind through Google, Yahoo, Ask, Bing, and on and on. And because many of us want that weight lose *yesterday*, we fall for the empty promises offered by creative marketers promoting the “diet of the month”. More than likely, we all have followed a fad diet in our lives, some maybe are on one right now. Buyer (Dieter) beware! They are typically based on metabolic processes that are manipulated due to dramatic nutritional changes (removing whole food groups from your diet, maintaining a dangerously low daily caloric intake, promising 40lbs in 2 weeks...). If it sounds too good to be true, it is! It’s usually unsustainable; it deprives your body of necessary vitamins and minerals to function properly; it’s typically not supported with reliable research; and it could be dangerous to your health!



What is Gut Bacteria and Why is it Important?

When you hear the word “bacteria”, the typical person would think it is something we need to avoid. The truth is our body’s are already loaded with trillions of bacteria that help in food digestion and play a vital role in our health. Research has shown that our bacteria is tied to our likelihood of getting such conditions as diabetes, obesity, depression and colon cancer. There are 300 to 500 different kinds of bacteria in your gut containing nearly 2 million genes!! These organisms, along with viruses and fungi, make up what is known as the *microbiota*, also called *microbiome*.

Your microbiome is as unique as your fingerprint. It’s determined by your mother’s microbiome (the environment you are exposed to at birth), your diet and your lifestyle. Studies are showing that gut bacteria has the most influence on overall well-being, affecting everything from your metabolism to your mood to your immune system.

Gut bacteria and Disease

Obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, Heart Disease:

- Gut bacteria affects your metabolism.
- Determines calories and nutrients absorbed from the food you eat.
- Too much can make cause fat deposits leading to metabolic

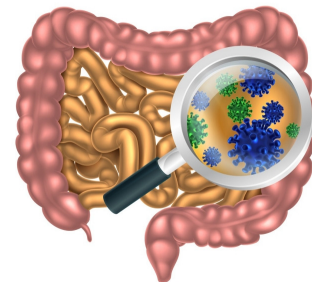
Arthritis:

It’s thought that people with rheumatoid arthritis may have greater amounts of bacteria linked to inflammation.

Inflammatory bowel diseases:

It is believe that people with these disease have lower levels of certain anti-inflammatory bacteria.

Not clear but some bacteria may cause the body to attack its intestines and set the stage for these diseases.



Anxiety, depression, Autism

Studies show a connection between the gut and the brain.

Your gut has nerve endings that communicate with the brain.

Studies also show links between gut bacteria and disorders in the central nervous system, like anxiety, depression and autism spectrum disorder.

Resource: WebMD

Ways to Improve Gut Health (Resource: WebMD)

One easy way to start is to take a look at the food you eat. Not always the easiest thing to change, I know.

- The more **diverse** your microbiota (or microbiome) the healthier it is. Different bacteria need different foods to thrive.
- Eat lots of **whole food** (vegetables, legumes, beans and fruit) contrary to what many of the current fad diets recommend for quick weight loss. The key component here is **fiber**! A “western” diet high in fat and sugar and low in fiber can kill certain types of gut bacteria, making your microbiota less diverse.
- **Limit use of antibiotics** (unless deemed necessary by your doctor) because they can also wipe out healthy bacteria along with problematic bacteria.
- **Exercise**...yes, exercise can actually encourage the growth of a variety of gut bacteria.

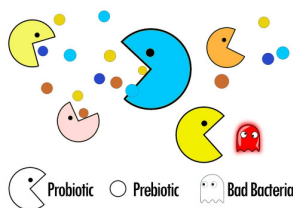
Microbiota Therapy Through Prebiotics and Probiotics

What is the difference?

Probiotics:

Typically two families of bacteria are being referred to when one talks about probiotic bacteria:

- *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* both associated with probiotic formulas.



PROBIOTICS vs PREBIOTICS

Beneficial live bacteria to promote healthy digestive health

Where are they found?

- 1 Yogurt
- 2 Sauerkraut
- 3 Kefir
- 4 Pickles
- 5 Kimchi
- 6 Tempeh
- 7 Supplements

Food to promote growth of healthy bacteria

Where are they found?

- 1 Banana
- 2 Onion
- 3 Artichoke
- 4 Garlic
- 5 Oatmeal
- 6 Honey
- 7 Asparagus

Prebiotics:

They are food for probiotics to help them grow. All prebiotics are a type of fiber. The fiber insulin found in chicory root, bananas and asparagus is a prebiotic that fuels gut bacteria.

Other prebiotic foods: onions, garlic, artichokes, and legumes.

Prebiotics by themselves have not been found to be of much use. They need to be combined with a probiotic.

Although there can be benefits to supplementing gut bacteria, there are some risks and side effects to watch out for.

- Generally safe, however, there are rare instances where a healthy person becomes sick after ingesting certain types of bacteria contained in probiotics (source: CDC).
- When starting a combo of prebiotics and probiotics (known as synbiotic) common side effects include: gas, constipation, loose stool, bloating, acid reflux and loss of appetite.
- Stop using any probiotic if you develop hives or experience extreme stomach pain
- If lactose intolerant, be sure to look for dairy-free probiotics
- If you have a yeast overgrowth, stay away from the ingredient *Candida*.

Resource: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)

Fiber: critical for gut health

- Feeds the good bacteria
- Only 5% of Americans get the recommended fiber they need per day:
 - Adult men: 34g/day
 - Adult women: 28g/day
- The most crucial ingredient for gut health
- Two types: soluble & insoluble



Soluble

helps lower blood glucose levels and LDL cholesterol

Insoluble

offers more of a cleansing effect on your digestive system

July is Social Wellness Month



Social Wellness refers to one's ability to interact with people around them. It involves using good communications skills, having meaningful relationships, respecting yourself and others, and creating a support system that includes family members and friends.

Social wellness follows these tenets:

- It is better to contribute to the common welfare of our community than to think only of ourselves.
- It is better to live in harmony with others and our environment than to live in conflict with them.

The Path to Social Wellness

Those engaged in strengthening their social wellness express value in living with others, same or different, in harmony and seek to establish positive and interdependent relationships with those around them.

Social wellness means nurturing yourself and your relationships. Our social network of friends, colleagues, and close family members who give and receive social support are vital to our well-being.



Social Connections and Work Happiness

As humans we need to feel like we belong. Studies by social psychologist Abraham Maslow, proved that this social connection is as important in motivating human behavior as is food, shelter and safety (human's hierarchy of needs).

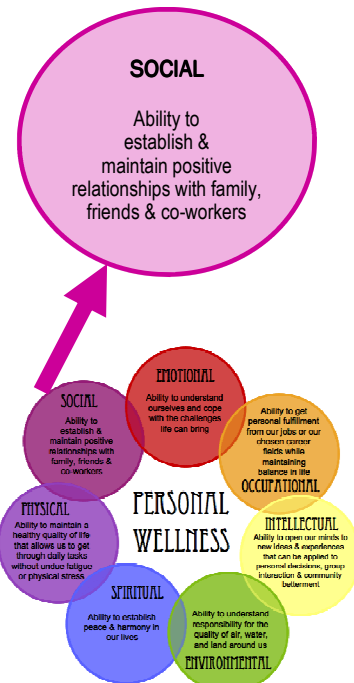
Work friendships and connections are very important to one's overall well-being. They can positively or negatively affect an employee's stress level, productivity and general feelings of happiness. They can increase engagement and loyalty and promote a healthier life for your workforce.

As an employer, here are some ideas to keep in mind:

- Create a "social spot" - an area where your employees can decompress or socialize without disturbing other colleagues. Maybe turn an empty area or "unorganized storage area" into a quiet room or game room. If you don't have an extra room, set up comfortable chairs in the break room or by the water cooler.
- Celebrate - find new ways to celebrate with your employees not just for birthdays or holidays. Maybe hold annual ceremonies to recognize employees for their hard work; have an employee appreciation day once a month or treat your team to a healthy lunch after achieving a company/department goal.
- Connect departments - many times due to the layout of the offices or having various buildings, employees find it hard to connect. Find ways to bring them together.
- Other ways - encourage fun team building exercises (during and after work), inspire a positive work environment, engage in a friendly wellness challenge, share a favorite recipe and then host a healthy potluck lunch. Have a monthly department lunch.

How to Grow Your Social Network out of work:

- Work out. Joining a gym or an exercise group allows you to meet new people while exercising.
- Take a walk with your pet. Starting a walking routine after dinner would not only give you another opportunity to be physically active, but it would also create more opportunities for you to meet your neighbors.
- Volunteer. Donate some of your time and hard work to a charity. You'll feel good about the cause, and you'll meet others with similar passions.



Being alone or isolated has shown to have comparable health risks as cigarette smoking, blood pressure and obesity.

Part of creating a culture of wellness is fostering social connections and supporting social well-being among employees.

Health Benefits of Social Wellness:

- People who have a strong social network tend to live longer.
- The heart and blood pressure of people with healthy relationships respond better to stress making them more resilient.
- Strong social networks are associated with a healthier endocrine system and healthier cardiovascular functioning.
- Healthy social networks enhance the immune system's ability to fight off infectious diseases.

Get a Veggie Boost With Grilled Beef-Mushroom Burgers

Blending finely chopped mushrooms with ground beef adds great flavor, moisture, and even fiber to these no-bun burgers. Garlicky cucumber-yogurt sauce is tasty Middle Eastern-inspired alternative to standard ketchup and mustard.

Served with a juicy slice of fresh tomato and crisp butter lettuce, these burgers are naturally gluten-free. Double the greens and tomato and call it a burger salad. If you're in the mood for bun, try these tucked into warm whole-wheat pitas instead.

Ingredients

- 4 ounces sliced button mushrooms
- 1 pound 90% lean ground sirloin
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1/3 cup chopped cucumber
- 1/4 cup plain whole-milk Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons minced roasted garlic (about 4 large cloves)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 8 large butter lettuce leaves
- 4 heirloom tomato slices
- 4 red onion slices



Nutritional Information:

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|--------------------|----------------------|
| • Calories 304 | • Carb 7g (1g Fiber) |
| • Fat 19g | • Sodium 447mg |
| • Saturated fat 6g | • Potassium 20% DV |
| • Protein 26g | |

Recipe from Cooking Light

How to Make It

Step 1

Preheat grill or a grill pan to medium-high (about 450°F). Place mushrooms in a food processor, and process until minced, about 1 minute.

Step 2

Combine mushrooms, ground sirloin, oil, pepper, and 3/8 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl; gently shape into 4 (4-inch) patties, and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Step 3

Stir together cucumber, yogurt, garlic, lemon juice, parsley, and remaining 3/8 teaspoon salt in a small bowl; set aside.

Step 4

Place burgers on grill grate, and grill, uncovered, to desired degree of doneness, about 4 minutes per side for medium.

Step 5

Place 2 lettuce leaves on each plate; top each with a burger patty, tomato slice, red onion slice, and 1 heaping tablespoon yogurt mixture.

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Targeting Wellness
IN THE WORKPLACE

*I've learned that people will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did, but people will
never forget how you made them feel.*

- Quote by Maya Angelou