

Anthem Wellness News

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This issue

Gut Check: How's Your Digestive Health?

Importance of Fiber

Power of Appreciation

Anti-inflammatory Cherry Spinach Smoothie



“The deepest principle of human nature is a craving to be appreciated.” —

William James



Anthem members: You can view and manage your benefits, access wellness tools and resources to improve your overall wellbeing. Simply scan this QR code with your smartphone's camera to download the Sydney Health app.

Tip: Anthem.com and Sydney Health use the same username and password!



Gut Check: How's your Digestive Health

There's a reason the old saying tells us to "go with our gut." Our gut — also called our digestive system — is a powerhouse in our body. It gets rid of toxins, breaks down the food we eat, and puts the nutrients from that food to work. A healthy gut is also core to our overall well-being — it affects everything from our mental health to our immune system.

Feed your Gut

The billions of bacteria in your gut are like the engine that keeps it running. Eating the right foods helps keep the good and bad bacteria in our gut well-balanced so it works correctly. Here are a few tips:

1. **Eat a diverse diet full of fruits and vegetables.** A produce-rich diet helps make the good bacteria in your gut stronger, which keep things running smoothly.
2. **Focus on fiber.** Fiber keeps you regular. It also helps lower cholesterol and blood pressure.
3. **Make room for prebiotics and probiotics.** Probiotics and prebiotics work together to feed your gut bacteria and keep it healthy. You can take them as supplements or look for them in many natural sources.
4. **Limit artificial sweeteners, red meat, and processed foods.** These all feed the bad bacteria in your gut, which can make you feel sick. They're also linked to other problems, such as heart disease and diabetes.

Other Healthy Habits: Because our gut is so connected to the rest of our body, there's more to keeping it healthy than just eating right.

1. Exercise regularly.
2. Don't smoke.
3. Keep your stress in check.
4. Get enough sleep.

It's also important to stay up on **regular preventive screenings**, such as colonoscopies

Long Term Side Effects: If we don't take care of our digestive system, it can also put us at risk for more serious issues. Poor long-term gut health is tied to:

1. Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)
2. Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
3. Diabetes
4. Obesity

Signs of Trouble: Our body has several ways of letting us know something in our gut might be off, including:

- Persistent bloating, diarrhea, or stomach pain.
- Unexplained weight loss or gain.
- Blood in the stool and changes to how often you need to go.
- Heartburn and indigestion.
- Skin irritations, such as acne or eczema.
- Frequent mood changes, including anxiety or irritability.

Talk to your doctor if you're experiencing any of these symptoms. They can suggest tests or treatment to get to the root of the issue.

Source: <https://timewellspent.anthem.com/employer-planning/2024-wellness-calendar>



Anthem members: Need care now? Utilize a 24/7 urgent care alternative, when the ER is not required, start your virtual visit through Sydney Health anytime! You can also find a care provider in your plan's network, by using the FIND CARE feature. Sydney Health mobile app, select CARE on the bottom navigation bar.

Whys is Fiber Important for Digestive Health?

Fiber is a carbohydrate that the body cannot digest. Yet it is essential for digestive health.

It promotes regularity and prevents constipation. It slows down digestion and keeps blood sugar on an even keel.

Another notable benefit, often overlooked by those outside the medical field, is that fiber acts as fuel for your gut microbiome, that large collection of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other microbes that live in your gastrointestinal tract. These microbes exist symbiotically with the digestive system and, [research](#) shows, support energy harvesting, digestion, and immune defense.

[Eamonn Quigley, MD](#), the chief of gastroenterology and hepatology at Houston Methodist Hospital, says that intact microbiomes protect you from “bad bacteria” that may cause dysbiosis or infection.

“Your immune system is educated by the bacteria in your microbiome,” says Dr. Quigley. “And that’s how you learn to live with the microbes and how you learn to benefit from them.”

Are you getting enough fiber?

The [recommended daily fiber intake](#) for women ages **19 to 50** is **25 grams (g)**, while men of the same age are encouraged to get **38 g of fiber per day**. Women and men **over 50** require less fiber in their diets but should still aim for **21 g and 30 g per day** respectively. American adults, on average, eat 10–15 g of fiber per day, according to [Harvard Health](#).

Easy Ways to Add Fiber



Here are some tips from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health for incorporating more fiber into your diet

- Opt for whole fruits rather than fruit juices.
- Swap white rice, bread, and pasta for whole grains that are minimally processed, such as brown rice, whole-wheat bread, farro, and quinoa. Look for bread that lists “whole wheat” “whole-wheat flour” or another whole grain as the first ingredient.
- Include high-fiber foods in current meals — add 1 to 2 tablespoons of almonds or chia seeds to cereal, add diced vegetables to casseroles, or substitute beans or legumes for meats in soups.
- Make snacks count by eating fresh fruits, raw vegetables, low-fat popcorn, whole grain crackers, or nuts.
- Drink plenty of water to prevent constipation.
- Avoid refined, added, and processed sugars as much as possible. These do not benefit your gut microbiome.

Source <https://www.everydayhealth.com/digestive-health/experts-why-is-fiber-important.aspx>

Anthem members: visit Sydney to access the free [Nutrition Tracker](#) (click the link to get a quick preview) Navigate via Sydney **MENU** to **ACCESS CARE**, then **My Health Dashboard** to access Action Plans, Nutrition Tracker, and **PROGRAMS** to find other resources!



What happens when a person gives an appreciation?

Researchers have established a connection between gratitude and mental and physical well-being. The feel-good hormones released during acts of giving and thankfulness can help you manage stress and feel happy, and in turn, have more energy, a positive mindset and better sleep.

Positive emotions like love, compassion, and appreciation, counteract the physiology of the stress response. They send up feel-good hormones like norepinephrine. Dopamine flows in the brain's pleasure pathways. Heart rhythms relax into a more stable, coherent order.

The Power of Appreciation:

6 Benefits by Showing Appreciation

1. When you give people a sincere compliment, words of encouragement or just a warm smile, you are making their world a better place. You are making them feel appreciated and valuable.
2. When you express your approval or gratitude for something they have done, you will not only enhance their lives, but you will enrich yours as well. You will feel more fulfilled because you have done something to make someone else's life better.
3. One of the laws of the universe states that what you give you get in return. It costs little or nothing and it almost always follows suit that they will demonstrate their gratitude for what you do.
4. When you show an interest in others by noticing the good things they've done, they will be drawn to you like a magnet. It will accelerate the relationship building process and enhance their overall impression of you.
5. It will increase your value to the market. When you show your appreciation to others, their respect for you will grow and so will your influence as a leader. In today's world people have choices. They absolutely prefer to work with people they like and trust and who show an interest in them.
6. It's a free form of currency. People will do more for recognition than they will for money. If you are in a leadership position, remember that people will work harder and do more if they know they will be recognized for their accomplishments. Show them you care and they will be loyal to you, even if better opportunities come their way.



It sure seems like appreciation not only makes us feel great it also empowers others to achieve more. That's an amazing power!

Anti-Inflammatory Cherry- Spinach Smoothie

This healthy smoothie is not only delicious--it also boosts your daily dose of anti-inflammatory foods. It starts with a base of creamy gut-friendly kefir and includes cherries, which can lower the inflammatory marker C-reactive protein. Heart-healthy fats in avocado, almond butter and chia seeds deliver additional anti-inflammatory compounds to the body, while spinach offers a mix of antioxidants that sweep up harmful free radicals. Fresh ginger adds zing, plus a compound called gingerol, which preliminary studies suggest may improve inflammatory markers of heart disease if consumed daily.

Prep Time: 5 mins

Total Time: 5 mins

Servings: 1

Yield: 1 3/4 cups

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain low-fat kefir
- 1 cup frozen cherries
- ½ cup baby spinach leaves
- ¼ cup mashed ripe avocado
- 1 tablespoon salted almond butter
- 1 (1/2 inch) piece peeled ginger
- 1 teaspoon chia seeds, plus more for garnish

Directions

Place kefir in a blender. Add cherries, spinach, avocado, almond butter, ginger and chia seeds; puree until smooth. Pour into a glass; garnish with more chia seeds, if desired.

Nutrition Facts: 1 ¾ cups: 410 calories, 20g fat (4g saturated fat), 13mg cholesterol, 169 mg sodium, 47g carbohydrate (33g sugars, 10g fiber), 17g protein.

Nutrition Profile:

[Anti-Inflammatory](#) [High-Calcium](#) [Soy-Free](#) [Vegetarian](#) [High-Protein](#) [Egg-Free](#) [Gluten-Free](#)

source: <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/274309/anti-inflammatory-cherry-spinach-smoothie/>



Want to learn more about Kefir? [Simply click the link below.](#)

[What Are Kefir and Its Health Benefits?](#)