



Food, Mood & Symptoms *Diary*

# Introduction

**A Food, Mood & Symptoms Diary is one of the best methods for identifying foods or food patterns that may be triggering the development of your symptoms. Use this diary to record everything you eat and drink, your mood and your symptoms for at least one week. Also note down your sleep patterns, medication/supplement use and bowel movements. Use a new page for each day.**

You will then have a completely accurate reference to use while discussing your symptoms with your healthcare professional (registered dietitian, GP or nurse with nutritional training) and to help identify potential triggers.

Developed by  
leading experts  
on behalf of  
Love Your Gut



**The health of our gut can impact not only our physical wellbeing, but also our mental health and mood, so it is important to take good care of it.**

This is due to the direct link between the gut and the brain, called the gut-brain axis. When we eat food, our gut and gut bacteria process it and break it down into nutrients and metabolites. Some of the metabolites produced by our gut bacteria, including the 'feel-good' hormones serotonin and dopamine, act as chemical messengers and are used by the gut and the brain to 'talk' to each other. What's more, the gut is the only other organ that also has its own local nervous system, the enteric nervous system. No wonder the gut is also called the second brain!

*“Looking at the gut-brain axis can help us take our health and wellbeing to the next level. A diet including all of the things we traditionally think of as healthy - like fruit, vegetables and wholegrains - not only helps to reduce the risk of developing certain diseases but also affects our cognition, which can start a positive upward trend in physical and mental health.*

*With so many people failing not just to recognise the impact that diet and lifestyle can have on the functioning of the gut, but also not being aware of the gut's relationship with the brain, there is real potential for lots of people to feel a lot better.”*

**Jo Travers BSc, Registered Dietitian,** talks about the role of the gut in improving our mental health and mood.



# What is your Second Brain?

**This two-way communication means that your gut can influence your mood and vice versa so it is important that you reflect on what you can do to love your gut and your brain through it.**

### **Happiness**

While the gut can carry out some functions independently, it is always in close communication with the brain – they ‘talk’ to each other on a very regular basis. One of the ways they do this is using chemical messengers like dopamine and serotonin that are often known as happiness or ‘feel good’ hormones.

### **Did you know...**

The billions of different bacteria in the gut, known as the gut microbiota, can actually produce chemical messengers of identical structure to our brain’s own chemical messengers. In fact, around 90% of the serotonin in our body is produced within the gut!

### **Mental health**

Studies show that there is a link between mental health disorders and gastrointestinal symptoms like heartburn, indigestion, acid

reflux, bloating, pain, constipation, and/or diarrhoea. However, research also shows us that eating a balanced diet rich in fibre, fresh fruit and vegetables can improve mental health and wellbeing.

### **Manage your stress**

We should try to reduce our stress, as recent research showed that 82% of people said that feeling stressed had a negative impact on their gut.

Stress – physical or psychological – can trigger a chain reaction in the body, including the production of the stress hormone cortisol, which can cause impairment of the communication pathways between the gut and the brain (the gut-brain axis).

This can mean changes to blood flow and secretions in the gut, which can create better conditions for unwanted bacteria and inhibit the growth of some helpful bacteria. It can also affect the movement of food through the gut and result in either constipation or diarrhoea.

# Setting the Mood





### Get enough sleep

It is important to make sure you get enough sleep. A good night's sleep allows your gut to recover from the day's activities. Poor sleep increases stress-related hormones that can alter the gut microbiome, leading to stress and anxiety, as well as lowered immunity.

It has been shown that sleep has a direct effect on our microbiota. Just two nights of interrupted sleep has been shown to disrupt the ratio of two strains of bacteria thought to be involved in obesity. To help promote good quality sleep, stick to a regular bedtime and wakeup time, and make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet.

### Moving on Up

Exercise can really help improve your digestive health. But this doesn't mean preparing your body to run a marathon! It could simply be taking more steps each day for better health.

Regular exercise can not only help you lose weight (which in turn eases pressure on the stomach) but can help you relax and feel good also – which then has knock on effects to not only your gut (and gut-brain axis), but your overall wellbeing too.

Try to aim for 30 minutes 5 days per week, this can be simply walking, but it's always good to have some variety! The key is to find something you enjoy, since this will help build up a routine. There is little benefit in forcing yourself do something you dislike, because in the long run it is unlikely that you will commit to it.

See the [Gut Active](#) section of our website for further information.



Get  
enough  
sleep  
*and*  
Moving  
on Up

**What you eat can have an impact not only on your gut health, but also your brain, mood and overall wellbeing, thanks to the gut-brain axis. Looking after your gut may seem like a daunting task; however, the good news is keeping your gut happy, and therefore potentially your brain too, is simpler than you think.**

Many foods that form a gut-healthy diet, such as oats, beans, vegetables, and nuts, might already be sitting in your cupboards or fridge.

Love Your Gut's food expert Dr Joan Ransley is passionate about creating gut friendly recipes that are easy to make and full of nutrition. See some of her top food hero ingredients for good gut health and a selection of delicious recipes - why not give these a try?

## **Hero ingredients for good gut health**

### **Bananas**

Bananas contain both dietary fibre and a prebiotic carbohydrate called fructo-oligosaccharide or FOS for short. FOS cannot be easily digested in the upper part of the digestive tract so they travel through the gut

where they are fermented in the colon by bacteria – helping healthy bacteria to thrive.

Dietary fibre has two important roles. It helps the digested food pass through the gut by bulking the stool. It also provides a base for the bacteria in the colon to ferment and thrive which aids gut health.

### **Pulses - lentils and chickpeas**

A pulse is edible seed that grows in a pod. Both lentils and chickpeas are a type of pulse. They are an important food in the diet because they contain dietary fibre and prebiotic carbohydrates known as galacto-oligosaccharides. These carbohydrates travel through the gut and the colon where they provide the nutrients used by healthy gut bacteria. Healthy gut bacteria help to keep the immune system functioning efficiently and the cells lining the gut healthy and free from disease.

Pulses contain soluble fibre which is important to bowel health. Human studies report overall improvements in bowel health characterised by an increased frequency and ease, and softer stool consistency when regularly eating chickpeas as compared to a normal diet.

# Food Glorious Food!



## Green vegetables

We're always being told to eat our greens – and for a good reason! Green vegetables provide us with a good source of fibre, vitamin K, vitamin C, folate, magnesium, and potassium. Green vegetables are also high in polyphenols– a group of micronutrients that are thought to play an important role in metabolism, cell growth and ageing. Better yet, they provide us with variety to choose from: kale, spinach, spring greens, cabbage, broccoli, Swiss chard and green herbs are just a few members of this nutrient-rich, green family. In addition, eating a variety of plant-based foods provides us with the key nutrients needed for a healthy gut microbiome.

## Berries

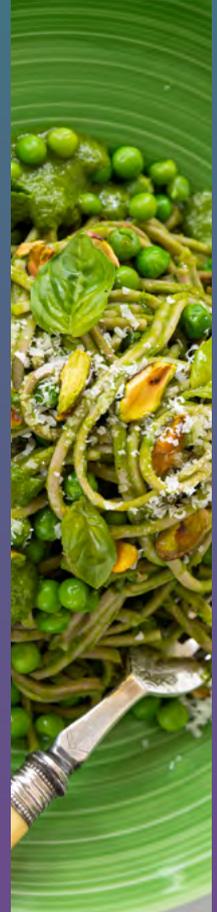
Berries are packed with nutrients that are involved in regulating digestion and gut function, including fibre, vitamin C and polyphenols. Just 1 cup of berries, in particular raspberries and blackberries, can provide up to 20% of your daily fibre intake, which as we know is important for keeping us regular and helping those good bacteria thrive. Berries are also a good source of vitamin C, which helps the gut to absorb minerals including iron and copper. Finally, berries are rich in polyphenol compounds. In the gut, berries have been demonstrated to alleviate symptoms of inflammation and can help to prevent cancer in the colon.

## Nuts

Eating nuts has been long associated with beneficial health outcomes such as helping to prevent heart disease and type 2 diabetes. These beneficial effects have been mainly attributed to the fatty acid profile of nuts. Nuts also provide nutrients for healthy human gut bacteria. Eating nuts such as almonds, regularly, over the course of several weeks has been shown to increase populations of healthy bacteria in the large intestine.

## Cocoa powder

Cocoa is one of the richest-known food sources of polyphenols. Polyphenols act as antioxidants in the body to remove harmful compounds, known as free-radicals. When polyphenols reach the bacteria in the gut, they are broken down and used as fuel to produce chemicals that send messages to the immune system; in addition, they have been shown to have anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative properties, and may even provide nutrients for healthy bacteria, including Lactobacilli and Bifidobacterium.



## Banana and Coconut Overnight Oats

Instead of cooking oats to make porridge, the oats are soaked in a liquid, that is absorbed and softened enough to eat. The soaking time can be as little as 2 hours, or overnight, hence the name 'overnight oats'. The next morning these creamy oats can be topped with fruit, nuts, seeds and yogurt for a more sustaining breakfast.

### SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

100g oats  
15g chia seeds  
300ml semi skimmed milk  
100g plain yogurt  
40g walnuts  
40g dates, pitted and roughly chopped  
1 banana, peeled and chopped into small cubes  
30g coconut shavings

*To serve*  
60g chopped fresh fruit e.g. apples, blueberries, strawberries.  
30g nuts e.g. walnuts, chopped almonds, pecan nuts  
10g maple syrup (optional)

### METHOD

Place the oats, chia seeds, milk, yogurt, walnuts, dates and banana in a large bowl. Add 20g of the coconut shavings and mix well. Cover the bowl and place it in the fridge. The overnight oats will be ready to eat after two hours but can be left in the fridge overnight and eaten the next day.

Serve with a mixture of chopped fresh fruit, the remaining coconut flakes, and a few chopped nuts. Add a drizzle of maple syrup if you like.



### Alternative serving suggestion

Take a portion to work with you in a jar to eat as a snack or as part of your lunch. Sunflower, pumpkin, flax and poppy seeds can be used instead of chia seeds.

### COOKING TIPS

- Oats and chia seeds are very absorbent and will continue to soak up milk for several hours. Add more milk or water to the overnight oats if you think they have become too thick.
- Overnight oats will keep in the fridge for up to 3 days, so it makes sense to make enough to last for several days.



## Super Quick Buckwheat Noodles with a Creamy Green Pea and Kale Sauce

This is a fabulous, quick comforting noodle dish made using soba noodles (buckwheat noodles) served with a vivid bright green sauce made from kale, peas, basil and a little garlic. There are two versions. The vegetarian version adds Parmesan cheese to finish the sauce. The vegan version adds nutritional yeast as an alternative to Parmesan cheese.

**SERVES 4**

### INGREDIENTS

40g shelled pistachio nuts	40g Parmesan cheese, finely grated (vegetarian version)
50g curly kale leaves, central stem removed and shredded	30g nutritional yeast (vegan version)
120g frozen peas, defrosted	30g basil leaves
1 small clove garlic, crushed	400g soba (buckwheat) noodles
1 tbsp lemon juice	1 tsp lemon zest
2 tbsp olive oil	Pinch of black pepper

### METHOD

Carefully toast the pistachio nuts in a hot frying pan until they are just beginning to brown. Remove from heat and roughly chop ready to sprinkle over the finished dish.

Boil the peas for 6 minutes. Add the shredded kale during the last 3 minutes of cooking. The kale needs to wilt and become tender for this sauce but should not be overcooked. Drain the peas and kale and return the cooking water to the saucepan and top it up with boiling water ready to cook the noodles.

**To make the sauce:** Place half the cooked peas, cooked kale, crushed garlic, 3 tbsps (30g) Parmesan cheese (or 4 tsps of nutritional yeast), olive oil, half of the lemon juice and 3 tbsps of cooking water into a blender.

Blitz for 30 seconds until smooth. Taste and adjust the flavour, adding a little more lemon juice, Parmesan cheese or cooking water for



a smooth consistency. Return to a small saucepan and add the reserved peas and keep warm over a very low heat.

**To cook the noodles.** Cook the noodles for 5 minutes. Drain and rinse the noodles under cold water to stop them sticking. Quickly dip the washed noodles in a bowl of boiling hot water to reheat and drain once again.

Serve in four warmed bowls and pour over the green sauce.

Finish the dish with a sprinkling of chopped pistachio nuts, reserved grated parmesan cheese/nutritional yeast, lemon zest and a pinch of black pepper.

### Alternative serving suggestion

Use wholewheat spaghetti instead of soba (buckwheat) noodles. Add florets of broccoli or chopped fine beans to vary the texture and taste of the green sauce.

### COOKING TIP

*You can get ahead with this recipe by cooking soba noodles in advance and reheated in boiling water just before serving.*



## Pan-fried Salmon with Celery, Sweetcorn and Olive Salsa

This pan-fried salmon is served with a colourful vegetable salsa scattered over the top. Salmon is a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to benefit the health of the gut in three main ways. Omega-3 fatty acids have a positive effect on the type and abundance of gut microbes. They also play a key role in the gut immune system which helps to defend the body against infections and, they are involved in the regulation of short-chain fatty acids (SCFA) produced in the large intestine which are vital for keeping the wall of the gut healthy.

### SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

4 x 120g salmon fillets, skin on  
3 tbsp olive oil  
a pinch of ground black pepper  
2 large salad onions, sliced into rounds  
2 sticks celery, finely diced  
30g pine nuts  
150g sweetcorn, either canned or frozen and defrosted

40g pitted green olives, roughly chopped  
1 mild red chilli, seeds removed and finely chopped  
25g parsley, chopped  
1 tsp lemon zest  
1 tsp lemon juice

### METHOD

Check each salmon fillet for any small pin bones and remove. Drizzle with approximately half a tbsp of olive oil, and a twist of ground pepper.

**To make the salsa.** Place 2 tbsps of olive oil into a non-stick frying pan and add the salad onions, celery, and pine nuts and cook gently for 5 minutes or until the pine nuts and onions just begin to brown. Add the sweetcorn, olives, chilli, lemon zest and parsley and heat though. Remove the cooked salsa from the pan and set aside. Place the remaining ½ tbsp of olive oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Place the salmon skin side down in the hot pan.



Cook until the skin is crisp. Turn the fillets over, reduce the heat and cook for a further 3-4 minutes depending on how well cooked you like the salmon.

Place on four warmed plates and spoon the salsa over. Finish the dish with a spritz of lemon juice and a sprinkling of chopped parsley.

### Alternative serving suggestion

The salsa would be a great accompaniment to other fried or baked fish such as mackerel and cod. This dish would be lovely paired with mashed sweet potato.

### COOKING TIPS

- Prepare all the ingredients in advance so that this dish can be cooked quickly and put on the table in minutes.
- Chopping the vegetables up small means they will cook quickly.
- When cooking salmon keep a keen eye on the middle of the fillet which turns opaque when the salmon is cooked through.



## Baked Mixed Berry Pudding with a Coconut and Almond Crumb topping

A simple, quick to prepare baked fruit pudding with an unusual topping. Ground almonds are mixed with chopped dates, eggs and a little non-dairy fat to make a not too sweet, soft crumb crust. The flavour of the berries is complimented by a pinch of ground cardamom rather than loaded with added sugar.

Berries contain naturally occurring sugars (mainly glucose and fructose), vitamins (A, C, E and folic acid) and minerals.

### SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

450g frozen berries, defrosted  
½ tsp ground cardamom seeds  
50g non-dairy fat  
2 medium sized free-range eggs  
100g ground almonds

100g pitted dates, chopped  
1 tsp baking powder  
20g coconut shavings  
15g pumpkin seeds

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the fruit in an ovenproof dish measuring approximately 25cm by 20cm. Sprinkle over the ground cardamom seeds.

Mix the non-dairy fat and eggs together with a fork. It may look a little lumpy but that is okay. Stir in the ground almonds, dates, baking powder, coconut shavings and pumpkin seeds into the egg mixture until well combined. Dot the mixture on top of the defrosted berries. Spread with a fork as best you can. It does not need to look perfectly even. Bake the pudding for 20 minutes or until the topping is golden brown and the fruit is bubbling.



### Alternative serving suggestion

Use seasonal fruit such as sliced rhubarb, plums, blackberry, apple and peaches instead of frozen fruit.

### COOKING TIPS



- There are several types of cardamom and they taste different. Make sure to use 'green' cardamom. Cardamom pods are easier to find than cardamom seeds. To remove the seeds from green cardamom pods; simply crush the whole pods, remove the seeds and then grind in a pestle and mortar.
- Use butter instead of non-dairy fat if preferred.
- Grinding whole almonds rather than using ready ground increases the fibre content of ground almonds. They would work perfectly well in this recipe.



**Visit our website** for more gut-friendly delicious recipes  
Recipes & Photography – created for Love Your Gut by Dr Joan Ransley



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time up: \_\_\_\_\_ Time to bed: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Details of Food & Drink Consumed	Amount	Symptoms Experienced (e.g. bloating, cramping, nausea) & Severity (0-10: 0=no pain/10=worst pain possible)	Time & Duration	Other notes (e.g. stress level)
<b>My Mood</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PLEASE TICK BOX
<b>My Exercise</b>	<b>Intensity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Duration</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

Any Medication or Supplement Use: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bowel Movements** (note the time & consistency of the stool): \*see page 20 for Bristol Stool Scale reference

Time	Type

**Tip of the Day!**

**FOOD:** Aim to eat at least 30 plant foods a week. Anything from a clove of garlic to a nut or seed counts. Challenge each member of the family to count the number of plant foods they have eaten. **You may be surprised by how well everyone does.**

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Time	Type

**Tip of the Day!**

**STRESS:** Time out - To help manage stress try taking 10 minutes time out for yourself! Go for a quick walk, dance to your favourite song, have a chat, practice breathing exercises, or meditate.

**See what works for you!**

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Time	Type

**Tip of the Day!**

**SLEEP:** Wake-up hormones are stimulated by light. When the sun comes up this can interrupt the end part of sleep.

**If you need to, invest in a sleep mask.**

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**Bowel Movements** (note the time & consistency of the stool): \*see page 20 for Bristol Stool Scale reference

Time	Type

**Tip of the Day!**

**EXERCISE:** Keep moving - Getting enough exercise can increase populations of some bacteria that can reduce inflammation.

**It also aids peristalsis – the movement of food through the gut – and may help to improve**

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**Tip of the Day!**

**EXERCISE:** Get into nature - Just encountering the outdoors when you go for a walk is enough to influence your gut bacteria.

**Microscopic airborne particles are colonised by a variety of bacteria that make their way into us via the air we breathe.**

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**Tip of the Day!**

**FOOD:** Take your time - Take time when you are eating so you can digest everything properly.

**Try chewing each mouthful of food 32 times per bite.**

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Any Medication or Supplement Use: \_\_\_\_\_

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Time	Type

**Tip of the Day!**

**SLEEP:** Disconnect From Devices: Mobile phones, tablets and laptops can keep your brain active, making it hard to truly wind down. The light from these devices can also suppress your natural production of melatonin.

**Try to disconnect for an hour before going to bed.**

## The Bristol Stool Scale

The Bristol Stool Scale identifies the most common types of stools. Type 1 has spent the longest time in the colon; type 7 the least. The ideal stools are types 3 and 4 - these indicate optimal functioning of the digestive system.

1		<b>Type 1</b> Separate hard lumps like nuts (difficult to pass)
2		<b>Type 2</b> Sausage shaped but lumpy
3		<b>Type 3</b> Like a sausage but with cracks on the surface
4		<b>Type 4</b> Like a sausage or snake smooth and soft
5		<b>Type 5</b> Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
6		<b>Type 6</b> Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
7		<b>Type 7</b> Watery, no solid pieces (entirely liquid)

Courtesy of The Bristol Stool Scale (ref: BMJ, 1990)

**For more Love Your Gut advice and information see our:**

[Online Health Assessment](#)

[Food & Symptoms Diary](#)

[Information Pack](#)

[Exclusive recipes](#)

[Facebook Discussion Group](#)

[Cookery School Tips](#)

[‘What is your Gut telling you?’ video](#)

[www.loveyourgut.com](http://www.loveyourgut.com)

**T: +44 (0)20 8838 3258**

**E: [info@loveyourgut.com](mailto:info@loveyourgut.com)**



**Guts UK** is the charity for the digestive system from top to tail; the gut, liver and pancreas. Our guts have been underfunded and misunderstood for decades. We exist to change that. It's time the UK got to grips with guts. [www.gutscharity.org.uk](http://www.gutscharity.org.uk)



**Bowel Research UK** is the UK's leading specialist bowel research charity. We are dedicated to funding the best science into bowel cancer and other bowel diseases. We invest in the next generation of experts with a dedicated PhD studentship programme. We involve the public in research through our People and Research Together Programme and we work to challenge taboos and break down stigma. To find out more visit [www.bowelresearchuk.org](http://www.bowelresearchuk.org)



**The Primary Care Society for Gastroenterology (PCSG)** is the voice of Primary Care Gastroenterology. We have a (mainly) GP membership and offer advice and guidance on gastrointestinal matters, as well as lobbying and influencing. We hold scientific meetings and have a bi-annual journal 'The Digest'. To find out more visit [www.pcsg.org.uk](http://www.pcsg.org.uk)



**St Mark's Hospital Foundation** supports the work of St Mark's, the UK's national bowel hospital. Founded 185 years ago, St Mark's is a leading centre of excellence in the diagnostics and treatment of complex bowel disease. The Foundation raises money to fund vital research, support education and innovation, as we fight for a future free from the fear of bowel disease. See [www.stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk](http://www.stmarkshospitalfoundation.org.uk)



**The IBS Network** is the national charity supporting people living with Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Our mission is to provide information, advice and support and to work alongside healthcare professionals to facilitate self-care. See [www.theibsnetwork.org](http://www.theibsnetwork.org)



**Crohn's and Colitis Ireland** is a patient support group for people who are living with Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease (collectively known as Inflammatory Bowel Disease or IBD), also their families and friends. [www.iscc.ie](http://www.iscc.ie)



**Irish General Practice Nurses Educational Association (IGPNEA)** is a professional membership association of General Practice Nurses. The main objective of the association is the advancement of education in general practice in Ireland. [www.irishpracticenurses.ie](http://www.irishpracticenurses.ie)

Love Your Gut and Love Your Gut Week is an initiative of Yakult UK and Ireland in association with our UK partners: Guts UK, St Mark's Hospital Foundation, The IBS Network, Bowel Research UK, and the Primary Care Society for Gastroenterology; and Irish partners Crohn's and Colitis Ireland and the Irish General Practice Nurses Educational Association.