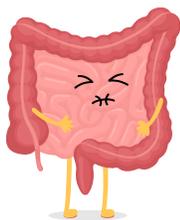


# GUT HEALTH will spark MENTAL HEALTH

Parents, did you know? Modern research findings link some mental health issues to digestive problems that start early in life. Teaching your child early in life about good nutrition could prevent several diet-related diseases later in life. Maintaining a healthy diet can help children feel a sense of control and build their confidence.



## Notice symptoms of an unhealthy gut

These symptoms may include bloating, diarrhea or constipation, gas, discomfort, pain, heartburn, and/or acid reflux. If these symptoms persist and are not treated, they may cause nutritional deficiencies, frequent mood swings, fatigue, skin conditions, brain fog, anxiety, depression, headaches, behavioral problems and seizures, among other issues.



## Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Healthy eating habits may diminish digestive problems and may lessen anxiety, depression, tantrums, and autistic and schizophrenic flare-ups.



## Reimagine rewards

Good behaviors and major life events are often celebrated with calorie-rich, sugary treats. Sugar influences the brain's reward and addiction systems. It also may lower the rate of satiety (feeling of fullness) hormone secretion, which can lead to overeating. Other effects of high sugar consumption include diabetes, inflammation, liver disease, obesity, dyslipidemia, poor mental performance, depression, and mood swings.



## Prevent food allergy

In certain individuals, the immune system detects food proteins as invaders, causing a wide variety of reactions: breakouts, eczema, gastrointestinal symptoms, depression, mood swings, epileptic reactions, and in very serious cases, death.

Breastfeeding for longer than 6 months has been found to provide some protection against the development of food allergies. However, due to genetics and unhealthy dietary habits which can weaken the gastrointestinal system, food allergy can form later in life. Once diagnosed with food allergy, the best way to prevent allergic reactions is avoidance diet (avoiding the offending food protein when making food choices).

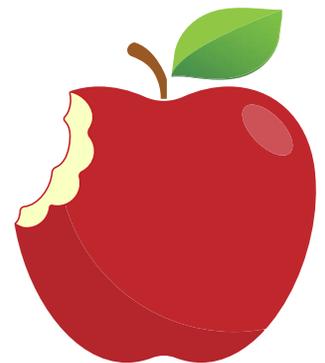
## Please note

It is important for anyone struggling with mental health issues to consult with their medical provider. This document is not intended as medical advice.

# Make Gut Healthy Choices and “Make Every Bite Count”

**Set your child up for success early, so that they are more likely to eat a healthy diet at every stage of life.**

- Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Limit intake of processed food high in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.
- Avoid sugary sodas and drinks, which can sustain and help growth of bad bacteria in the gut. This can cause inflammation and other physiological issues.
- Eat probiotic-rich foods such as yogurt and kefir without added sugars.
- Eat whole grains and legumes. Some prebiotic fibers, like inulin and pectin, are found in whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables. These fibers help the growth of healthy gut bacteria.
- Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations. Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and stay within calorie limits.
- Choose fresh treats and snacks: apple wedges with yogurt or peanut butter instead of processed fruit snacks that are high in sugar, frozen banana instead of ice cream, hummus with whole grain crackers or vegetables instead of processed salty chips.



Questions? Contact Brigitta Bly at [brigitta.bly@state.sd.us](mailto:brigitta.bly@state.sd.us) or (605) 367-5295.

#### SOURCES:

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