

3 Ways to Boost Your Gut Health with Soy

The gut plays a pivotal role in your overall health. Not only can a healthy gut support digestive health, but it has also been shown to bolster your immune system¹, brain health² and more. Bacteria found in soy foods, especially fermented soy products, may help promote a healthier gut.^{3,4} Check out three easy ways to incorporate more soy foods into your daily routines.



Eat Enough Fiber

1

Most people don't get enough fiber in their diet. Daily recommendations include 25 grams for adult females and 38 grams for adult males.⁵ Dietary fiber has been shown to improve digestive function and increase the "good" bacteria in our gut.⁶ Fiber can also help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity.⁷

To increase your fiber intake, add these common soy foods to your diet:⁸



Edamame

Serving Size: 80g Fiber: 4g



Soy-Based Burgers

Serving Size: 4oz Fiber: 3.5g



Soy Nuts

Serving Size: 30g Fiber: 2.4g

Add Probiotics

2

Probiotics are live microorganisms that promote the growth of bacteria in your gut. They are commonly found in fermented foods. Probiotics may help restore the composition of the gut microbiome⁹, improve digestion¹⁰ and have been shown to benefit brain and mental health.¹¹

For soy foods with probiotics, consider:⁸



Miso

Serving Size: 17g



Soy Yogurt

Serving Size: 170g



Natto

Serving Size: 1 cup or 176g

Don't Forget Prebiotics

3

Prebiotics serve as food for bacteria and other beneficial organisms in the gut.¹² They may also support overall digestive health,¹³ regulate gut inflammation¹⁴ and support immune health.¹⁵ Soy has several components, such as oligosaccharides and phytoestrogens, that may act as prebiotics.¹⁶

For a prebiotic boost, consider these soy foods:⁸



Soy Milk

Serving Size: 1 cup



Tempeh

Serving Size: 85g

References

1. Wu HJ, Wu E. The role of gut microbiota in immune homeostasis and autoimmunity. *Gut Microbes*. 2012 Jan-Feb;3(1):4-14. doi: 10.4161/gmic.19320. Epub 2012 Jan 1. PMID: 22356853; PMCID: PMC3337124.
2. The gut-brain connection. Harvard Health Publishing. Harvard Medical School. April 2019. [https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/the-gut-brain-connection#:~:text=A%20troubled%20intestine%20can%20send,GI\)%20system%20are%20intimately%20connected](https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/the-gut-brain-connection#:~:text=A%20troubled%20intestine%20can%20send,GI)%20system%20are%20intimately%20connected)
3. Terada A, Yamamoto M, Yoshimura E. Effect of the fermented soybean product "natto" on the composition and metabolic activity of the human fecal flora. *Jpn J Food Microbiol*. 1999;16(221-30).
4. Watanabe T, Tsuchihashi N, Kanno A, Takai Y. Effects of natto and steamed soybeans on growth and cecal bacterial flora of rats. *J Jpn Soc Nutr Food Sci* 1995;48(283-9).
5. Should I be eating more fiber? Harvard Health Publishing. Harvard Medical School. Feb. 2019. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/should-i-be-eating-more-fiber-2019022115927#:~:text=Fiber%3A%20how%20much%20is%20enough,and%2030%20daily%20grams%2C%20respectively>
6. Cronin P, Joyce SA, O'Toole PW, O'Connor EM. Dietary Fibre Modulates the Gut Microbiota. *Nutrients*. 2021 May 13;13(5):1655. doi: 10.3390/nu13051655. PMID: 34068353; PMCID: PMC8153313.
7. Waddell IS, Orfila C. Dietary fiber in the prevention of obesity and obesity-related chronic diseases: From epidemiological evidence to potential molecular mechanisms. *Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr*. 2022 Apr 26;1-16. doi: 10.1080/10408398.2022.2061909. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 35471164.
8. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. FoodData Central (2023). Available at: fdc.nal.usda.gov
9. Hemarajata P, Versalovic J. Effects of probiotics on gut microbiota: mechanisms of intestinal immunomodulation and neuromodulation. *Therap Adv Gastroenterol*. 2013 Jan;6(1):39-51. doi: 10.1177/1756283X12459294. PMID: 23320049; PMCID: PMC3539293.
10. Probiotics. Cleveland Clinic. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/14598-probiotics>
11. Ong JS, Lew LC, Hor YY, Liong MT. Probiotics: The Next Dietary Strategy against Brain Aging. *Prev Nutr Food Sci*. 2022 Mar 31;27(1):1-13. doi: 10.3746/pnf.2022.27.1.1. PMID: 35465109; PMCID: PMC9007707.
12. Slavin J. Fiber and prebiotics: mechanisms and health benefits. *Nutrients*. 2013 Apr 22;5(4):1417-35. doi: 10.3390/nu5041417. PMID: 23609775; PMCID: PMC3705355.
13. Carlson JL, Erickson JM, Lloyd BB, Slavin JL. Health Effects and Sources of Prebiotic Dietary Fiber. *Curr Dev Nutr*. 2018 Jan 29;2(3):nzy005. doi: 10.1093/cdn/nzy005. PMID: 30019028; PMCID: PMC6041804.
14. Looijer-van Langen MA, Dieleman LA. Prebiotics in chronic intestinal inflammation. *Inflamm Bowel Dis*. 2009 Mar;15(3):454-62. doi: 10.1002/ibd.20737. PMID: 18831524; PMCID: PMC5148622.
15. Shokryazdan P, Faseleh Jahromi M, Navidshad B, Liang JB. Effects of prebiotics on immune system and cytokine expression. *Med Microbiol Immunol*. 2017 Feb;206(1):1-9. doi: 10.1007/s00430-016-0481-y. Epub 2016 Oct 4. PMID: 27704207.
16. Ma Y, Wu X, Giovanni V, Meng X. Effects of soybean oligosaccharides on intestinal microbial communities and immune modulation in mice. *Saudi J Biol Sci*. 2017 Jan;24(1):114-121. doi: 10.1016/j.sjbs.2016.09.004. Epub 2016 Sep 9. PMID: 28053580; PMCID: PMC5198993.