Change can come in less than a day

It's true: we really are what we eat.

Your gut loves to digest healthy food. The amazing thing is that you can cultivate a new microbiota in just 24 hours by changing your diet.[1] Sticking to a gut-friendly bacteria diet over time — especially one that includes the Super Foods described below — can promote diverse bacteria colonies that may help combat obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, autoimmune disease, and even certain forms of cancer.[2,3,4]

First, what is the difference between probiotic and prebiotic foods?[5]

- Probiotic foods contain healthy live bacteria
- Prebiotic foods and spices nourish the healthy bacteria already living in your body

Super-food[6]	Benefits for your gut
Asparagus, jerusalem artichokes, leeks, and onions	These are high in inulin, which has strong prebiotic potential, and once they find their way to the colon, they ferment into healthy microbiota. Ease into Jerusalem artichokes: people with sensitive digestive tracts may notice increased gas.
Bananas	These popular fruit may reduce gut inflammation, due to high levels of potassium and magnesium. Bananas work to maintain harmony among microbes in the bacterial community known as phyla. This is one reason bananas are a standard prescription for an upset stomach.
Beans	Packed with fibre protein, folate, and B vitamins, beans play a role in regulating a healthy gut and a healthy brain. Researchers have recently shown that legumes may also improve weight loss by enhancing the feeling of being full.

Super-food[6]	Benefits for your gut
Blueberries	We're not sure if it's the antioxidants, vitamin K compounds or fibre that gives blueberries clout as a superfood, but studies show they may boost memory, improve your immune system and diversify gut bacteria.
Broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables	Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, kale, cabbage and cauliflower feature sulphur-containing metabolites. These are broken down by microbes to release substances that reduce inflammation and can reduce the risk of bladder, breast, colon, liver, lung and stomach cancer. People who eat the most cruciferous vegetables can reduce their risk of colorectal cancer by 18%.
Fermented plant foods	Fermented foods — such as kimchi, sauerkraut, tempeh and soy sauce — directly inoculate our gut with healthy live microorganisms that crowd out the unhealthy bacteria while increasing the absorption of minerals and can improve overall health. They may improve the health of the intestinal cells and immune function, decrease allergies, reduce the risk of colon cancer, and treat diarrhea.
Polenta	Polenta is rich in high-fibre complex carbohydrates, which ferment in the colon into many strands of gut bacteria. Corn, the base of polenta, earns credit for fostering a healthy gut. Polenta's insoluble fibre travels directly to the colon, where it ferments into multiple strands of gut flora. It's good to note that polenta varies in fermentable components.
Probiotics[7]	Every supermarket now stocks active yogurts and probiotic drinks, and studies have shown that they really can impact your wellbeing. In one study, healthy women consumed a fermented milk product that contained four probiotics.[8] Later, MRI tests revealed differences in the activity of the women's brain regions that control emotion and sensation.[8] Another study found that healthy volunteers who consumed a mix of probiotic foods decreased their scores on measures of psychological distress.[9]

There is great variety in foods good for your gut health. Experiment! Think of this as an adventure in eating, and discover some wonderful foods you may never have eaten and cooked with before. It can be fun and healthy.

1. Raphael Kellman MD, 'The Microbiome Diet: The Scientifically Proven Way to Restore Your Gut Health and Achieve Permanent Weight Loss', June 2015
2. Genome Medicine, 'Sub-clinical detection of gut microbial biomarkers of obesity and type 2 diabetes," February 2016
3. Clinical Reviews in Allergy & Immunology, 'Leaky gut and autoimmune diseases," February 2012
4. Science, 'Anticancer immunotherapy by CTLA-4 blockade relies on the gut microbiota," November 2015
5. Nutrients, 'The Impact of Diet and Lifestyle on Gut Microbiota and Human Health," January 2015
6. Unless otherwise noted, the information in this chart is derived from: The Physicians Committee, 'Seven Foods to Supercharge Your Gut Bacteria," September 2014
7. Therapeutic Advances in Gastroenterology, 'Effects of probiotics on gut microbiota: mechanisms of intestinal immunomodulation and neuromodulation," January 2013
8. Gastroenterology, 'Consumption of Fermented Milk Product With Probiotic Modulates Brain Activity'. June 2013
9. British Journal of Nutrition, 'Assessment of psychotropic-like properties of a probiotic formulation (Lactobacillus helveticus R0052 and Bifidobacterium longum R0175) in rats and human subjects," March 2011

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