

Gut-Immune Connection Food Guide

Foods that build vs. damage the gut-immune axis

The gut houses 70–80% of your child's immune cells. What they eat directly programs immune function.

Gut-Building Foods

- ✓ Yogurt (full-fat, plain, live cultures)
- ✓ Kefir (more strains than yogurt)
- ✓ Sauerkraut (raw, refrigerated)
- ✓ Miso soup
- ✓ Bone broth (collagen repairs gut lining)
- ✓ Bananas (prebiotic fiber feeds good bacteria)
- ✓ Oats (beta-glucan fuels beneficial microbes)
- ✓ Garlic and onions (prebiotic FOS/inulin)
- ✓ Berries (polyphenols boost Bifidobacteria)
- ✓ Sweet potatoes (fiber + vitamin A for gut lining)

Gut-Damaging Foods

- ✗ Refined sugar (feeds pathogenic bacteria/yeast)
- ✗ Artificial sweeteners (alter microbiome composition)
- ✗ Processed seed oils (promote gut inflammation)
- ✗ Emulsifiers (carrageenan, polysorbate 80)
- ✗ Artificial food dyes (Red 40, Yellow 5, etc.)
- ✗ Highly processed snacks (chips, crackers, cookies)
- ✗ Conventional fruit juice (sugar without fiber)
- ✗ Antibiotics (only when truly necessary)
- ✗ Pesticide-laden produce (disrupts gut microbes)
- ✗ Fast food (combination of all the above)

Probiotic Foods by Strain Benefit

FOOD	KEY STRAINS	IMMUNE BENEFIT	SERVING IDEA
Plain yogurt	L. bulgaricus, S. thermophilus	Increases IgA antibody production	With berries and honey (age 1+)
Kefir	L. kefiri, L. rhamnosus + 30 others	Broad-spectrum immune training	Smoothie base or drinkable
Sauerkraut	L. plantarum, L. brevis	Anti-inflammatory, gut barrier repair	1–2 tbsp as side dish (start small)
Miso	A. oryzae, L. acidophilus	Supports gut lining integrity	Warm miso soup as snack

FOOD	KEY STRAINS	IMMUNE BENEFIT	SERVING IDEA
Kimchi (mild)	L. plantarum, L. brevis, Leuconostoc	Potent anti-pathogenic activity	Small amounts mixed into rice (age 2+)

Introduce fermented foods gradually. Start with 1 teaspoon and increase over 1-2 weeks. Too much too fast can cause gas and bloating as the microbiome adjusts.