

## Feed your inner 'zoo' for a healthier gut

**Y**our body is home to more than 30 trillion organisms, and most are in your gut. These bacteria, fungi and other tiny life forms convert the foods you eat into the nutrients you need. Your overall health, mental health and energy level can be driven by the living "zoo" in your gut. If you eat right, your gut zoo will be happier and you can feel better overall.



Photo above by Dolgachov, below by Pavle Bugarski, courtesy iStockphoto

### Quick facts on a healthy gut:

**1** Eating a lot of fruits and vegetables can be good for your gut zoo. Your inner critters like variety. If you don't normally eat mangoes or spinach, for example, try adding them to a meal to change it up. Next week, try something else new.



**2** The critters in your gut really like pickled food. Some of the foods that make your gut zoo happy include yogurt, sauerkraut and kimchi. And of course, pickles!

**3** Sometimes people take vitamins or supplements to replace things that are missing in their diet. But the best way to give your gut zoo what it needs is through actual food.



**4** Foods high in fiber are also a good choice. Your inner zoo loves eating fiber, as it helps them grow and thrive. Which is good for you too!

**5** There are a lot of tests out there that promise to tell you about your gut zoo. While it can be fun to learn about what's inside you, such tests aren't usually helpful for your health. If you have concerns about your gut health, talk to your health care team.



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