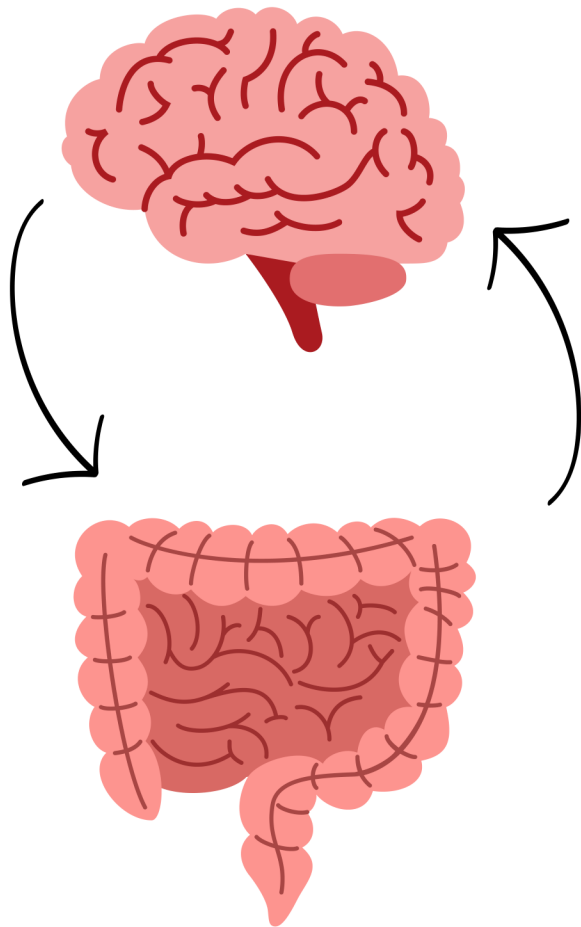


Gut Feelings

The Gut-Brain Connection

The connection between our gut and the brain runs deeper than we realize.



Our guts are made up of several trillions of bacteria, called the “microbiome,” that help us digest our food. Small changes to this ecosystem can have an impact that makes you feel a little queasy. Large, prolonged changes are linked to your mental health.

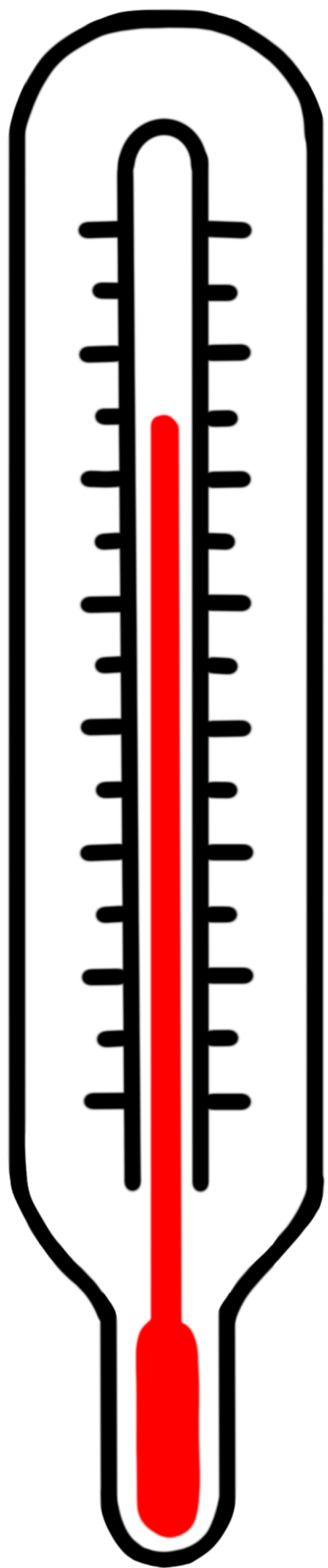
Eating a diet full of fruits and vegetables can help maintain your gut health, which in turn helps your mental health.

Other foods, called probiotics, may also benefit the gut-brain connection. These foods include Greek yogurt, kefir, and other fermented products.

Incorporate these brain-boosters into your winter meals!



Thaw Smart, Cook Safe



If done incorrectly, defrosting meat can introduce bacteria to your meal that cause foodborne illness. Take the proper steps to defrost your favorite proteins this winter.

Defrost the Myth

Never leave meat, fish, or poultry on the counter overnight!

Frozen meat can be safely defrosted in only one of three ways:

1) Defrost in the Refrigerator (Recommended!)

Place sealed frozen meat in a pan at the bottom of the refrigerator. Allow 24 hours for every 4-5lbs. Once thawed, the meat should be cooked within 48 hours.

2) Cold Water Bath

Place sealed frozen meat in a cold water bath. Change out the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately once thawed.

3) Microwave

Use the defrost setting on your microwave to thaw the meat. Enter the accurate weight to make sure it thoroughly thaws. Cook immediately.

Four hours in the temperature danger zone renders your food at high risk of contamination.

40°F



140°F

Snowy Seasons Sunny Reasons

to get enough Vitamin D in your day.

Vitamin D is essential for our bodies. It helps build and maintain strong bones, reduces inflammation, and boosts our immune system.

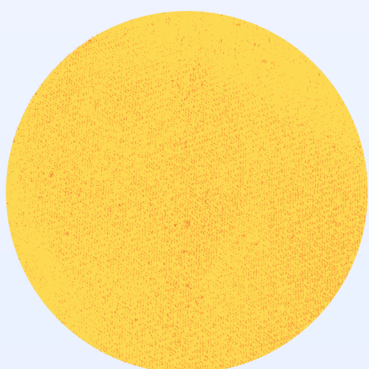
40.9% of Americans are deficient in Vitamin D and may not know it.

Cui, A., Xiao, P., Ma, Y., Fan, Z., Zhou, F., Zheng, J., & Zhang, L. (2022). Prevalence, trend, and predictor analyses of vitamin D deficiency in the US population, 2001–2018. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 9, 965376. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2022.965376>

**In the winter months, spending time outside
in the sun can help your Vitamin D levels.**



You can also absorb Vitamin D through select foods, like fatty fish, fortified milk, and to a lesser extent soy, mushrooms, and other vegetables.



Enjoy the sun's warmth for your health!

National Institute of Health. (2023). Vitamin D (Dietary Supplements) [Fact Sheet]. National Institute of Health. <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-HealthProfessional/#:~:text=Vitamin%20D%20promotes%20calcium%20absorption,leading%20to%20cramps%20and%20spasms>



DO WE EAT FOOD FOR THE TASTE, OR IS THERE MORE TO OUR FOOD EXPERIENCE



Imagine you're at the market picking up apples. You don't have any particular apple in mind, so when you reach the produce aisle you have several varieties to choose from. What do you notice first?

Do you notice the color of the apples? Size, shape, how many there are on the shelves? Perhaps you notice the lights glint off the waxy skins. Are they bruised, scuffed, or discolored?

If the apples are bruised, how does that change your choice? They still taste the same, and yet bruised apples are often discarded in favor of produce with fewer imperfections. Do you still take it off the shelf?



Grewal, L., Hmurovic, J., Lamberton, C., & Reczek, R. W. (2019). The Self-Perception Connection: Why Consumers Devalue Unattractive Produce. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(1), 89–107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242918816319>

EACH OF OUR SENSES, AS WELL AS OUR CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS, CONTRIBUTES TO FOOD CHOICE.

SIGHT SMELL SOUND TASTE TOUCH

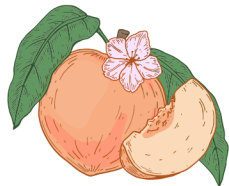
Our food preferences are influenced by our sensory experiences with foods as we grow up and grow old. Each sense gives us information about the food we're going to eat – whether it's fresh or rancid, potentially harmful or neutral, or even if it's something familiar or not quite. Even sound will tell us about our food – think of popcorn in the microwave before you smell it.

The senses work in tandem with one another, especially smell and taste, to give us a fuller experience. Without some senses, the food may no longer be as appealing. The next time you find your mouth watering over a plate of food, think about it: which sense caught it first?

German, J. B. (2018, January 12). Sensation [Lecture]. Food Science and Technology 100B: Food Properties, University of California, Davis.



Spiced Chicken and Peaches



Ingredients:

- 5 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 lb baby carrots
- 1 can of peaches in juice
- 1 yellow onion, sliced
- 6 cloves of garlic, crushed
- *optional: 1/4c chicken broth*

Spices

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1.5 tbsp cinnamon & chili powder
- 1 tsp black pepper, nutmeg, & allspice
- 2 tsp ginger powder
- salt to taste

Directions:

1. Season the chicken with black pepper, salt, and ginger powder.



Directions (cont):

2. Place a non-stick pot over medium-high heat and add olive oil. Sear chicken until browned on both sides, about six minutes. If it does not lift off the pot easily, leave for another minute. Remove and set aside.

3. Turn the heat to medium and cook the onions until translucent. Add garlic, carrots, the peaches with their juices, and spices. Deglaze with broth or water if any burned bits are stuck to the pot. Add the chicken and any juices that may have collected back in and stir. Cover the pot with a lid.

4. Cook on medium-low heat for 25 minutes, or until the chicken has reached an internal temperature of 165°F.

Serve immediately with your choice of leafy green vegetable!