

## - Digestion

**Guard your gut health**

Fight digestive woes, poor bowel movement and low immunity issues with tips from Mr Yu Ipponmatsu, a product researcher at Suntory Wellness Research Centre

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When your gut health is compromised, it can lead to more than just a bloated feeling or poor bowel movements. Your immune system can be affected too.



So don't let common digestive issues – no matter how light – become the norm for you. Instead of bearing discomfort from indigestion and poor bowel movement till it goes away yet again, take preventive steps to keep your gut health in check.

Product researcher at Suntory Wellness Research Centre, Mr Yu Ipponmatsu, shares some tips on how to boost your immunity and promote better digestion.

Q Why is it important to take care of our gut health?

Actively caring for your gut health can alleviate the woes that come with ageing and unchecked lifestyle habits.

Here are five reasons to bear in mind:

An imbalance of gut bacteria can manifest as poor digestion, poor bowel movement, poor immunity and poor skin complexion.

Food is broken down in your gut to simple forms that can enter the bloodstream and be delivered as nutrients to other parts of your body. A healthy digestive system supports this process.

70 per cent of your immune system's cells are found in the gut. They protect you from infectious agents like viruses.

Your gut communicates with the brain through nerves and hormones. A healthy gut can influence your mood.

Gut health can decline with age.

Bifidobacterium is a genus of good bacteria in the gut. It occupies around 60 to 70 per cent of the gut in healthy infants. But its composition could fall to 10 per cent by middle age. Age is the predominant cause for decline, and lifestyle factors such as an unbalanced diet and high stress levels accelerate it.

Q Will a change in diet be enough to calm the gut and improve its health?

Making wise food choices is the first step to improving gut health because what you eat can influence gut bacteria. Examples include foods that are fermented and rich in fibre and contain less sugar.

However, as gut issues are complex, other non-dietary factors such as maintaining an active lifestyle can help improve gut bacteria too.

Q What else should we do to improve gut health?

Start by managing your stress levels as they can wreak havoc in your gut.

Exercise regularly and do not smoke as the ill effects of obesity and smoking can decrease beneficial bacteria and diversity of the intestinal microbiome.

You can also consider taking probiotic supplements to improve gut health.

Q How should we choose probiotics to help support gut health?

Look out for probiotic strains that can withstand the test of gastric acid and readily reach your intestines. They should be highly stable during storage and have high survivability in finished products until consumed. Pay attention to the sugar, fat, and calorie content of probiotic products, and whether they contain other ingredients like prebiotics to enhance the efficacy of the product.

A health supplement like Suntory TADAS, which is made in Japan, has a mildly sweet and zero-fat “4-in-1 formula” comprising probiotic bifidobacterium longum, prebiotic lactulose, dietary fibre and lactoferrin. Bifidobacterium longum, a Bifidobacterium species, has been extensively studied and is known to be able to withstand gastric acid.

Lactulose, which is also resistant to gastric acid, and dietary fibre are supporting nutrients – or food – for bifidobacterium longum to grow.

In fact, the combined intake of lactulose and bifidobacterium longum has been found to be superior in helping to improve bowel movement in healthy adults, compared to taking bifidobacterium longum alone.

Lastly, lactoferrin is a nutrient found in breast milk (especially colostrum) and present in saliva and tears. Lactoferrin can support immunity and resistance to common maladies such as allergies and colds.

Q How should Suntory TADAS be consumed?

The powder supplement is packed into 30 individual sachets, making it convenient to add to salads, liquid foods, as well as warm and cold beverages.

It would be ideal for people above 20 to take one sachet every day at any time of the day to support your efforts for stronger gut health.