- Digestion / Holidays

Keeping your gut in good health this festive season

Grimsby Telegraph · 9 Dec 2025 · 19 · By EMMA JOHNSON

December can be a time of real overindulgence. From office Christmas drinks, to turkey and all the trimmings on December 25, to boozy New Year's celebrations, it can be a testing time for our bodies. Charlotte Winter, biochemist and consulting nutritionist for health supplements brand AxisBiotix says: "A healthy digestive system is key to feeling energised throughout the holiday and Christmas season.



"But festive celebrations often bring about erratic eating schedules and indulgent meals and drinks that are high in refined sugars and saturated fat – both of which can disrupt the gut microbiome." Here, Charlotte, who co-founded online recipe platform The Nutritional Biochemist, shares five expert-backed strategies to keep your gut health in optimal shape for the festive season.

1. Keep moving.

Physical activity has been shown to influence the composition and function of the gut microbiota (the mix of micro-organisms that live in a particular environment, such as the human gut or skin). Moderate aerobic exercise plays a key role in maintaining intestinal barrier integrity and regulating inflammation.

TIP: Aim for 30 minutes of movement most days – a brisk walk, yoga, pilates or swimming.

2. Be smart about hydration

Adequate hydration is essential for digestion. Warm beverages like green tea are rich in polyphenols – plant compounds that act as prebiotics, feeding beneficial gut bacteria and reducing oxidative stress. Herbal teas such as ginger, peppermint, and chamomile can also reduce bloating.

TIP: Aim for six to eight glasses of water daily, and limit drinks with added sugars and artificial sweeteners.

3. Prioritise fibre and create consistent eating patterns

Try to avoid foods that are high in refined sugars and saturated fat. Prioritise fibre at the buffet with dressed and seasoned veg and crudites with houmous. Fibre, especially from diverse plant sources, acts as fuel for beneficial bacteria.

TIP: Aim for 25–30g of fibre daily and strive for 30 different plantbased foods per week – including veg, fruit, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, herbs, and spices. Try to maintain regular mealtimes to support your digestion, circadian rhythm and modulation of the gut microbiota.

4. Sleep well

Research has highlighted the relationship between sleep and the gut microbiome. Disrupted sleep patterns have been linked to increased stress which leads to inflammation and reduced microbial diversity.

TIP: Establish a calming bedtime routine – limit screen time, avoid heavy meals late at night, and aim for seven to nine hours of uninterrupted sleep.

5. Add probiotics all year round

These live micro-organisms can maintain the balance of gut bacteria, preventing the overgrowth of harmful bugs and promoting a healthy digestive system. Probiotics can influence skin health, improving acne and psoriasis, when paired with a nutrient-rich diet.

TIP: Take a probiotic as part of a diet low in refined sugar and high in antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids. For targeted support, consider a clinically validated supplement such as AxisBiotix.