

# THE GUT HEALTH BLUEPRINT

EIGHT WEEKS TO A HEALTHY GUT



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KELSEY ALE, NTP

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DISCLAIMER: This book does not provide medical or health care advice. All recommendations should to be used and seen as suggestion and are strictly the opinion of Kelsey Ale, NTP. Consult your physician or other qualified health care provider for advice regarding any medical condition. Do not attempt to self-diagnose or treat any medical condition based on anything contained in this book.

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# INTRODUCTION

Hey there, and welcome to The Gut Health Blueprint: Eight Weeks to a Healthy Gut!

I'm Kelsey, and I'm going to be your personal nutritional therapist for the next eight weeks. I'm here to help you navigate improved gut health, as you start learning how to heal your body.

## **A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THIS PROGRAM**

This program is designed to help you understand why you might be experiencing gut health symptoms and uncomfortable digestive issues in your day-to-day life – e.g. bloating, heartburn, burping after meals, feeling uncomfortably full for a long time after eating, and gas. It can feel difficult and embarrassing, and you shouldn't have to experience these symptoms alone.

I'm here to give you real-life solutions you can start applying today, to help heal your gut, feel good in your body, and enjoy food again. Gut health is the foundation of health in our bodies. When gut health is in alignment, everything else falls into place.

## **A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOU**

You may already be on a health journey, and if so - I'm excited this guide can help you take your healing to the next level.

Or, you might just be getting started! In that case welcome - and I'm excited you've chosen my program as your first step. You're starting off with a strong platform, with proven methods and recommendations. This means you'll start feeling better, faster.

Regardless of where you're starting from, we're all here for the same reason. You're tired of feeling bloated and gassy, tired of alternating bathroom habits, and tired of feeling like something is off in your gut. I'm here to help.

## **ABOUT ME**

My goal with this program is to help you learn. I've learned first-hand how powerful healing your gut can be, and I want to share all of my proven and tested methods

with you. By the end of this program, you'll have developed a solid understanding of your digestion and gut health, to help empower you to make educated choices moving forward.

In this Gut Health Blueprint, I'll start by providing you a base-level understanding of how digestion works, to demystify what's going on inside your body.

I'll begin by breaking down some of the ways things can go wrong during the digestive process, so you can understand what has helped lead you to where you currently are.

Finally, I've outlined the professional solutions I use with clients, friends, family and myself, all structured into a plan which you can use to start rebalancing your gut health today. You can start making changes with your very next meal!

Inside The Gut Health Blueprint, you'll find all the tools you need to start feeling better, including:

- A "focus foods" list, consisting of gut-healing foods to fill your plate with,
- A sample one-week meal plan + thirty-five delicious, easy-to-make gut-healing recipes,
- My big picture "pro tips" for designing your own gut healing meals, so you'll never get bored, and you'll know exactly how to switch things up and stay on track,
- A professional-level supplement guide, so you can build a fully equipped gut-healing routine

(And don't worry- I've given you access to my supplement dispensary, where you can save 20% on all your supplements. After all, it's important to have the tools to start your journey the right way!)

Healing your gut can be simple, and with the right tools and guidance you'll start feeling better in weeks. Everything I've included in this program is designed to make this journey easy for you, and I've only included what's necessary to get down to the nitty-gritty and start seeing results.

And to make your new journey even sweeter, I've also added in three bonus reports to make your experience feel more complete:

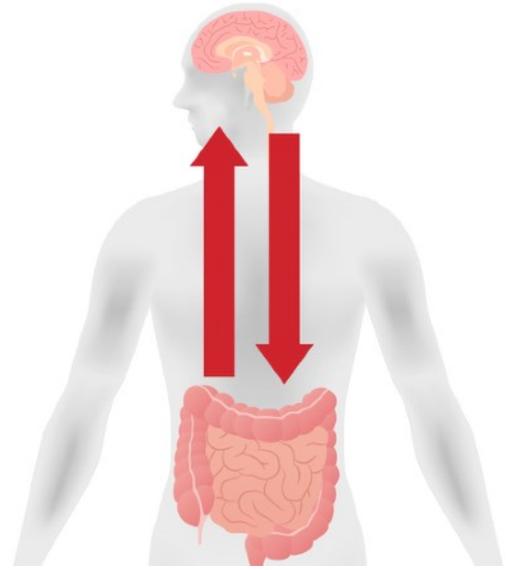
- 1 I've decoded the relationship between your gut health and your cravings.

2

I'm going to teach you about the connection between your gut and your mood. This is a personal passion of mine, because I have first-hand experience with how a messed-up gut can create a messed-up mood. I lived with anxiety and depression for years, before realizing underlying health factors like poor gut health, were directly contributing to my experiences

And the reason for this? Your gut communicates directly with your brain, and scientists have determined that 80% of those messages are actually being sent from your gut to your brain. So, it makes complete sense if your gut is out of whack and experiencing inflammation and imbalances, it's going to be sending out S.O.S. and distress signals to your brain, instead of calm and peaceful communications.

I've included all of this information, plus a few more handy tips, in the Gut Health & Your Mood guide.



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Last, but not least, I'm including the Understanding Probiotics guide. I always get questions about probiotics, including:

- What are the best kinds of probiotics to take?
- When is the best time to take those probiotics?
- What are prebiotics? Should I be taking those too?

Because these are such common questions, and probiotics are such an important part of balanced gut health, I decided to answer all of your questions in one place - the Understanding Probiotics guide.

I consider The Gut Health Blueprint to be one of the most important pieces of your healing puzzle. With the information contained in my program, you'll be able to make immediate adjustments to daily habits to begin the healing process, and start a ripple effect of good health through your body.

## YOUR COMMITMENT

What I'd love for you to do right now, is to take a few moments, and make sure you have all of the components ready for this program. Here's how to get started:

- ✓ Set aside 15-30 minutes, and scan through all the materials to make sure you understand each of the three parts of The Gut Health Blueprint.
- ✓ Next, check to see which adjustments you can start by making today to begin building your ideal gut health routine.
  - Do you need to clear some items out of your pantry, to make room for gut healing foods? Scan the focus foods list, to see which foods you might want to eliminate on this program.
  - Are you going grocery shopping? Print out the Focus Foods list to take with you to the store, so you know which gut-healing foods to stock up on.
  - Is your fridge in order? Why not review supplements recommendations and choose which ones you want to start with? Once you're done, place your order.

On this gut healing journey, it's my job to give you the resources, and it's your job to apply them.

I will guide you with my experience and expertise developed from years spent helping people just like you. All I need from you is a commitment towards helping yourself and your health: let's prioritize healing your gut over the next eight weeks.

With this signed commitment from you, the information in this program becomes truly effective. Will you say yes?

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# EVALUATING YOUR GUT

## IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH YOUR GUT HEALTH?

If you're reading this book right now, the answer is likely yes. Maybe you're feeling your gut health imbalance on a subconscious level, and you're looking for confirmation to make sure you're right. Or maybe you definitely know there's something off with your gut health, and you're looking for concrete solutions. Either way, you're in the right place.

There's a Gut Health Imbalance quiz on page 20, but to give you an idea of how gut health imbalances and poor digestion might be showing up in your body, here's a few things to consider:

## SYMPTOMS OF DIGESTIVE IMBALANCES

- I experience belching or gas within one hour after eating
- Heartburn or acid reflux is a problem for me
- Bloating within one hour after eating, is common
- I experience constipation and/or diarrhea
- I have seasonal allergies
- Feeling excessively full after meals is a problem for me
- I've lost my taste for meat
- I feel better if I don't eat

If you've answered yes to even one of these statements, it can be a sign of a digestive imbalance. But you've probably checked off at least two or three of these boxes - and guess what? You're not alone!

Gut health and digestive imbalances are super common. I've definitely experienced them myself - I could have checked off four to five of these boxes easily in the past, which is why I know it's important to follow a well-designed plan for healing your gut, so you can genuinely start feeling better.

In the following pages, you'll get a crash course on how your digestion is supposed to work, how it can get off track, and a step-by-step guide on ways to start fixing your health today.

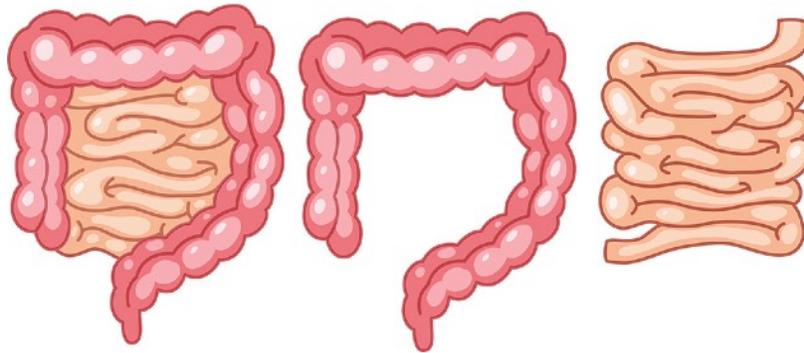
# START AT THE BEGINNING

To truly start talking about gut health and digestive support, we first need to understand what we mean when we use the words “gut” and “digestion”. While they might seem simple and straightforward, it’s important to make sure we’re all on the same page.

## WHAT IS THE GUT?

When you’re talking about your gut, you’re referring to both the large and small intestines. The small intestine comes first in the order of gut components, and measures around twenty-two feet on average, or about 3.5 times your height. Its primary function is to provide a safe space to allow nutrient breakdowns, and absorption to take place.

Your large intestine is the second part of the gut, and it’s only about five feet long on average. The large intestine mainly absorbs water and leftover nutrients, but it’s also home to your microbiome, or the collection of beneficial bacteria and microbes which live in your digestive tract.



### FUN FACT

You can also have microbiomes in other parts of your body, like your mouth, nose, and lungs! But for the sake of this program, we’re only going to discuss your gut microbiomes.

So, that sums up what the gut is. Digestion, on the other hand, is a slightly longer list of moving parts...

# YOUR DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

## WHAT IS DIGESTION?

Digestion is defined as “the process in the alimentary canal by which food is broken up physically, as by the action of the teeth, and chemically, as by the action of enzymes, and converted into a substance suitable for absorption and assimilation into the body”.

This is a fancy way of saying digestion is the process of taking food into your body, effectively breaking it down into nutrients, which are then absorbed and used by your body.

The first phase of digestion actually starts in your brain. You must be in a relaxed state for your digestive process to go smoothly.

The second phase of digestion occurs in your mouth, while chewing. Chewing is important for two reasons:

- 1 Chewing releases and mixes food with saliva, which contains an enzyme that starts to break down sugars and carbohydrates.
- 2 Chewing also initiates the secretion of digestive juices in the stomach, to prepare the stomach for incoming food. Have you ever been chewing gum, and not too long into it, realized your stomach was rumbling? This is why! Chewing basically turns your stomach on, so it's ready to do its job for the digestive process.

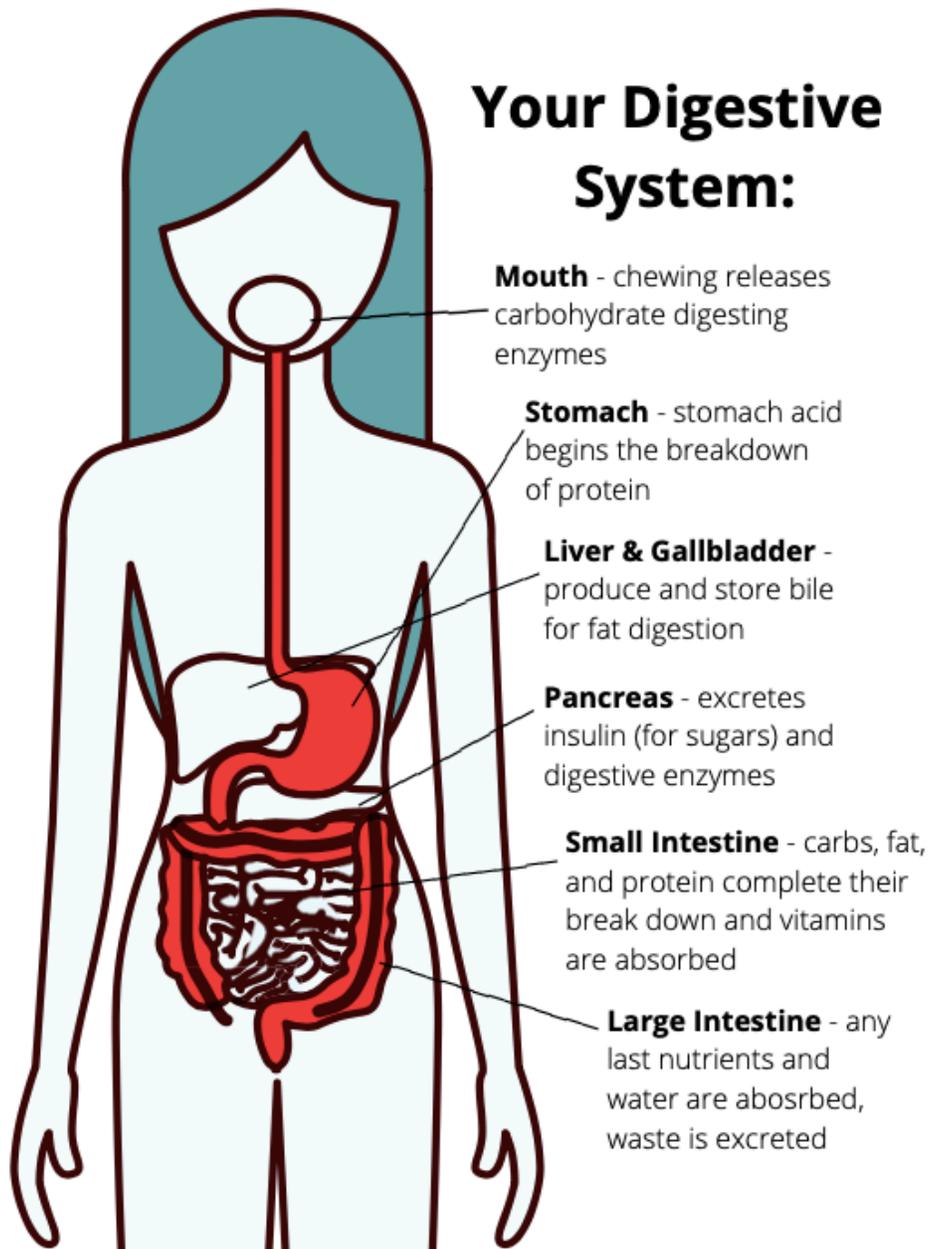
Once your food is chewed and swallowed, it moves into the stomach. Proper stomach acid levels are needed, in order for the stomach to break down proteins.

Your food then moves from the stomach into the small intestine, where a couple of things happen:

- 1 The pancreas secretes natural digestive enzymes, which continue the breakdown of protein and carbohydrate, and also helps with fat digestion.
- 2 The gallbladder releases bile into the small intestine, which is the heavy hitter in fat digestion.

Once nutrients are broken down and absorbed in the small intestine, your food moves into the large intestine. Your body absorbs any excess water from the digested food to dry out waste and make it easier to pass. Any final remaining nutrients are absorbed as well. Finally, the digested food becomes waste. This is the end of the line, so to speak.

It's a pretty straightforward process! Your digestive tract is an open-ended system, from mouth to exit. To make it even easier to understand, I've created a visual chart for you:



# WHY DO WE HAVE GUT PROBLEMS?

## HOW IS DIGESTION SUPPOSED TO WORK?

Before we dive into potential problems, let's look at how things might work when they're going well. Digestion is supposed to be a simple process of taking food in from one end, process it through a system, and process it out from the other end. Ideally, this is how it goes:

1. First, you're as cool as a cucumber while you're eating. No stress here.
2. You bite into your food. The enzymes in your saliva start to break down carbohydrates, as you chew.
3. You swallow your chewed food, and your stomach acids start kicking-in, breaking down the proteins of what you've just eaten.
4. The now broken-down food moves from the stomach, and into the small intestine.
5. The gallbladder releases bile into the small intestine, which begins fat digestion.
6. Your pancreas releases enzymes into the small intestine, to complete the digestion of protein, carbohydrates, and fats.
7. Nutrients are absorbed through the small intestine lining and distributed throughout the body.
8. The matter formerly known as food moves into the large intestine for any last nutrient collection, and then it becomes waste.

## HOW DO THINGS GO WRONG?

Even with a simple system like what we've described above, there's definitely room for error. You might have already noticed a few things can feel different when you're eating and maybe not feeling 100% - ahem *\*stress\** ahem.

As anyone who has ever worked on a group project might know, the whole group suffers when just one person (or one part of the system, in this case) can't manage their part.

Here are some common examples of things which can throw off your digestive group project:

- 1 **Stress.** Stress can cause parts of your body to switch off, in preparation for fight or flight. When it comes to saving yourself from the lion, digesting the sandwich you've had for lunch, is the last thing on your body's mind. Digestion is one of the processes which ends up shutting down when we're under stress, meaning you might keep eating, but your body isn't doing anything helpful with the food.
- 2 **Chewing.** Most of us don't chew enough, and it shows. It can cause indigestion and bloating later down the line. Chewing is important because it's the first way we break down our food. Your stomach doesn't have teeth in it, so the only chewing that can happen, happens in your mouth.
- 3 **Low Stomach Acid.** Having low acidity in your stomach can cause the entire digestive process to be thrown off. Proper acid levels are necessary for the breakdown of food when it's in the stomach, and acid levels also signal to the body it's time to begin moving the food from the stomach into the small intestine, to continue with the digestive process
- 4 **Water.** Drinking too much water or any other liquid while you're eating, hampers the digestive process by diluting your digestive juices and stomach acid - see number 3. This causes food to linger in your stomach longer than it should and can result in bloating and other symptoms down the line.
- 4 **Alcohol consumption.** Alcohol is a toxin, which is why it makes us feel funny, a.k.a. becoming drunk or intoxicated. While a small amount of alcohol now and then doesn't do us much harm, regular or excessive drinking can have negative effects on our digestive health. Alcohol can impact gastric secretions and cause inflammation in the stomach lining, and even impair your body's ability to move food through the digestive tract.



There are several other lifestyle factors that can lead to poor gut health, and we'll talk about those in a minute. group project:

## HOW TO START TO SUPPORT GOOD DIGESTION

The problems listed above are easy to solve. It just takes a few simple tweaks to your eating routine, to help things run more smoothly:

- 1 Relax before you start eating. You can do this by pausing, and taking five nice, deep breaths all the way into your belly, before you take your first bite of food. You can repeat this throughout your meal to stay chill.
- 2 Chew your food until it's liquid. This might seem like overkill, but remember again that your stomach doesn't have any teeth in it. Having food in your mouth is the only opportunity you're going to get to break it down mechanically.

Chewing each bite an average of thirty-two times is what's commonly recommended. Next time you're chewing, start to count - you may be surprised at how far off you usually are from that number.

- 3 Take a digestive supplement. See [The Gut Health Supplements Guide](#) for more information on what supplements to use, in order to optimally support digestion, and how to take them.
- 4 Avoid drinking large amounts of water or other liquids before your meal. Ideally, you'll stop drinking about ten minutes before you eat. After that, only sip a small amount of water or liquid - approximately 4oz - during your meal. Then, wait forty-five minutes after you're done eating, to start consuming large amounts of liquid again. This gives your stomach juices time to do their thing.

## **LEAKY GUT**

Gut healing and digestive support are necessary with every gut health imbalance.

Because so many of us have experienced different forms of lifestyle or environmental stress, almost all of us have some form of inflammation within our digestive tract. This can be due to environmental toxins, stress, excessive alcohol consumption, recreational drug use, eating a highly processed diet, a pathogenic infection, or some other reason.

Inflammation in our digestive tract prevents proper digestion, nutrient absorption, and bowel movements, in addition to just simply being painful. And inflammation in the gut lining can cause leaky gut.

Leaky gut, also known as intestinal permeability, occurs when the lining of the gut has been irritated for a prolonged period of time. Because of the chemical reactions driving the irritation and the swelling caused by the subsequent inflammation, the tight junctions between the cells of the gut wall can begin to separate. This can cause the gut lining to become permeable when it shouldn't be.

Leaky gut is connected to uncomfortable symptoms like rashes, bloating, gas, distended belly, constipation, diarrhea and even food sensitivities.

Therefore, concentrated gut healing, typically in the form of supplements, is an important part of any gut healing program. See [The Gut Health Supplements Guide](#) for information on which supplements are ideal for healing and repair, and how you should take them to begin healing.

# GUT INFECTIONS & “FORCE OF NATURE IMBALANCES

I call gut infections “force of nature” imbalances because while they’re often related to digestive issues like low stomach acid, they also happen because of outside pathogens being introduced into the body. They aren’t a direct symptom of poor digestion itself.

Dietary strategies and digestive support are important tools for resolving these infections, but they are also only part of the equation. Effective natural solutions for treating these imbalances are available, and the best way to identify infections is through lab testing.

## **FOOD POISONING**

Food poisoning seems to come out of nowhere and can wreak havoc on the body. It’s a reaction to a pathogen (usually a bacteria), which is transmitted through poorly prepared or poorly handled food. Many people report not feeling the same, even a year after experiencing a bout of food poisoning.

While there are good options for ways to treat food poisoning immediately – e.g. taking activated charcoal as soon as symptoms present, and continue taking it for two to three days after the immediate incident - you should consider ordering a gut health panel, if symptoms don’t completely resolve after two to three weeks.

## **H. PYLORI**

H. Pylori (short for Helicobacter Pylori, named because of its corkscrew-like shape) is a kind of bacteria that specifically affects your stomach. You can pick it up in a variety of ways, and it is very common. H. pylori bacteria can be passed from person to person through direct contact with saliva, vomit or fecal matter, or it may be spread through contaminated food or water.

H. Pylori acts by shutting down the production of stomach acid in order to make a cozier home for itself. This, however, makes things much more uncomfortable for you - low stomach acid can cause bloating, fatigue, indigestion, chronic heartburn, and can lead to malnutrition.

H. Pylori requires a stool test to identify.

## **SIBO**

If you experience bloating when you eat raw vegetables, fermented foods, or even when you take probiotics, you may have SIBO or Small Intestine Bacterial Overgrowth. SIBO occurs when bacteria which normally grow in other parts of the gut start growing in the small intestine. Chronic constipation and food poisoning are two common causes of SIBO.

Another indication of SIBO is that you have trouble pinpointing exactly which foods make you feel bad, and they seem to switch all the time. This condition may look like a condition called histamine intolerance or sensitivity to foods high in histamines, such as cheese, fermented vegetables, chocolate, pickles, and cured meat, and therefore, may be misdiagnosed.

SIBO requires a special diet and a breath test to confirm.

## **DIGESTIVE TRACT PATHOGENS**

Chronic gas and bloating which doesn't change even after you alter your diet and use digestive support supplements may indicate an underlying gut infection that has been caused by a pathogen.

Pathogen is a term used to refer to an infectious agent or germ. Infections can be caused by pathogens such as:

- Bacteria
- Viruses
- Yeast
- Fungus
- Parasites
- Any combination of these

Having more than one infection at a time is quite common, e.g. having both a bacterial infection and a parasite or fungal infection, or two different bacterial infections simultaneously.

Pathogenic infections are also common. In fact, I've never worked with a client who came to me with symptoms and *didn't* have some sort of overgrowth or infection show up on their gut health test.

Pathogens can be introduced into the body in a number of ways, including:

- Antibiotic use (the antibiotics clear a path for the pathogen to come in)
- Travel and exposure to uncommon pathogens
- Food poisoning
- Living with animals (animals are immune to many things we aren't, and can carry those pathogens into the house and into your body, if you are in close contact with them on a regular basis)
- Eating unwashed fruit and veggies
- Eating a chronically high-sugar diet (a high-sugar diet throws off your body chemistry and can feed unwelcome pathogens or allow otherwise harmless species to overgrow and take over the system)
- Going outside (this is a bit of an exaggeration, but I want to emphasize how easy it is to pick up a pathogen without having to do anything exotic or even travel far from home)

Symptoms of digestive tract pathogens can include: diarrhea, constipation, bloating, gas (particularly smelly gas), cramping, itching anus, skin breakouts and acne, low energy and fatigue, and even mood imbalances. You may also have an infection, even if your symptoms are light.

Properly identifying a pathogenic infection requires a stool test to confirm.

## WHEN SHOULD I THINK ABOUT GUT HEALTH TESTING?

Many people find gut health testing to be a breakthrough, when it comes to figuring out what's causing their symptoms. But it doesn't always have to be the first step you take towards rebuilding your gut health.

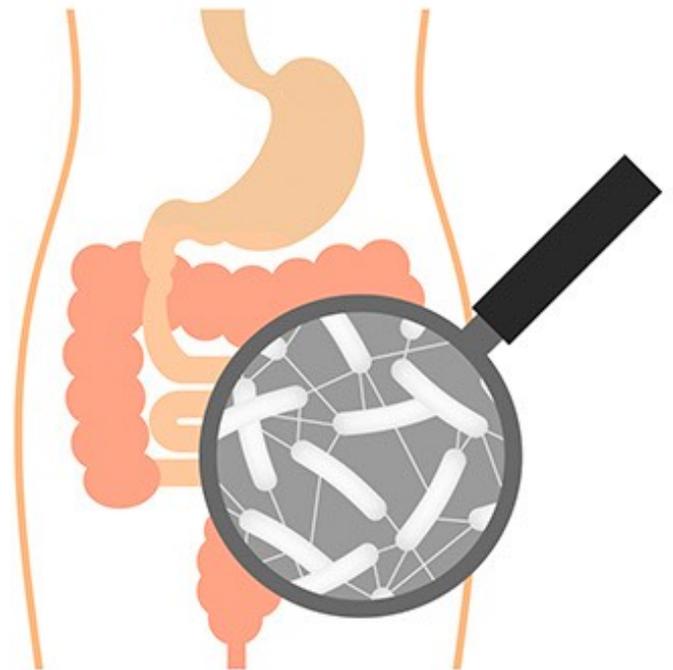
Before deciding on a gut health test, you should first complete this gut health program, following it as closely as possible. If you adjust your diet and take the recommended digestive support and gut-healing supplements for eight weeks and your symptoms still aren't gone, then it may be time to order a test.

A gut health test is an at-home stool test, which gives detailed information about any pathogens which may be present in your digestive tract.

You'll be able to see how well your body digests protein, carbohydrates and fiber, and fats. You'll also be able to identify internal inflammation and see if the small intestine or large intestine (or both!) are being affected. You'll also see if there is any yeast, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic presence that needs to be addressed, as well as several other markers that can be indicative of gut health.

Once you have the results from your test, we'll know specifically what's going on, and build a custom protocol to help eradicate infections and restore balance into your gut and your life.

Email me at [kelsey@kelseyale.com](mailto:kelsey@kelseyale.com) for more information on gut health testing.



# PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: HOW TO BUILD YOUR GUT HEALING PLAN

Putting the key pieces of The Gut Health Blueprint into place is simple and easy. I'm a huge fan of the concept of "minimum effective dose", meaning you only need to do as much as is effective, and not more. No need for extra bells and whistles - what I've given you here, is the best possible foundation for gut health.

By implementing the following dietary changes and supporting your digestion, you're applying the most effective strategies for healing your gut week by week!

I'm so excited to get started on this gut healing journey with you! The first thing we're going to do is get everything in order to set you up for success for the next eight weeks. Healing your gut can be simple when you have the right guidance, and you're on the right track with The Gut Health Blueprint!

## **STEP 1: TAKE THE GUT HEALTH IMBALANCE SYMPTOMS QUIZ**

Rank each question on a scale from 0-3 (0- never, 1 - rarely, 2 - sometimes, 3 - often). Then add up each number to get your Gut Health Imbalance score.

1. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Belching or gas within one hour after eating
2. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Heartburn or acid reflux
3. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Bloating within one hour after eating
4. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Loss of taste for meat
5. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Sense of excess fullness after meals
6. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Feel like skipping breakfast
7. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Feel better if you don't eat
8. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Sleepy after meals
9. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Stomach pains or cramps
10. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Diarrhea, chronic
11. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Diarrhea shortly after meals
12. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Undigested food in stool

- 13. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Stomach upset by greasy foods
- 14. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Greasy or shiny stools
- 15. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Nausea
- 16. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Alternating constipation and diarrhea
- 17. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Excessive foul smelling lower bowel gas
- 18. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Bad breath or strong body odors
- 19. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Cramping in lower abdominal region
- 20. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Stools hard or difficult to pass
- 21. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Less than one bowel movement per day

**Gut Health Imbalance score:** \_\_\_\_\_

# WEEK 1

## **ORDER YOUR SUPPLEMENTS, CLEAN OUT YOUR PANTRY AND GO GROCERY SHOPPING**

Start by ordering your digestive support and gut healing supplements. [Click here to start your order now](#), and follow these instructions to find all the recommended supplements: Once you are in your account, click the “Catalogue” menu in the left hand sidebar.

1. Click “Kelsey Ale’s Dispensary Favorites”.
2. Click “Gut Healing Protocol” on the list that appears underneath. (You will also find “Constipation Relief” in this same list if you would like to choose some of those products as well).
3. When you click the category link, all available recommended supplements will appear on your screen. You can select the items you’d like to add to your cart and proceed to checkout. The prices listed below each item reflect your discounted price. Your 20% discount will automatically be applied at checkout.

Your supplements might take a few days to arrive. In the meantime, get your pantry and refrigerator ready for your healing journey.

The next step will be to clean out your fridge. This may be a process you start 3-4 days prior to beginning your gut healing journey. Cook or give away any food that isn’t included in your gut healing nutrition recommendations for the next eight weeks.

If you’re not able to completely remove all non-gut healing foods from your kitchen and pantry, the next best option is to store them separately from your gut healing foods. You can use a designated shelf in the cabinet or in the pantry to store all your gut-healing pantry staples, and designate a shelf or a section in the fridge for your fresh or perishable gut healing foods.

Go grocery shopping and stock up on foods that you’ll be eating regularly over the next eight weeks, like protein, vegetables, and healthy fats. You’ll want to buy fresh foods for the week, and some frozen foods to have on hand (like meat, and some frozen fruits and veggies). You can also stock up on non-perishable pantry staples.

## SIDE NOTE

It's ideal to begin taking your supplements at the same time as implementing the nutrition recommendations. However, you may also choose to get a headstart on your gut healing journey by beginning to follow the nutrition recommendations before your supplements arrive.

Once you have your supplements, follow the nutrition recommendations and supplements protocol together for the full eight weeks.

You'll save time, money, and frustration by preparing your fridge and pantry and having your supplements on hand. Being prepared in the kitchen will make your gut health journey much easier over the next eight weeks!

## WEEK 2

### FOCUS ON HYDRATION

Did you know that dehydration is a big cause of bloating and uncomfortable digestion? symptoms? It's true! Drinking enough water and staying hydrated is a huge piece of the gut healing puzzle.

When you drink the right amount of water for your body size and activity level everything runs smoother. Here are just a few examples of the benefits of hydration:

- Better bathroom habits
- Reduced bloating
- Reduced cramping
- Increased energy and an optimal metabolism
- Better performance during workouts
- Supple skin
- More mental clarity

When you're dehydrated, many systems slow down or malfunction. You may notice more frequent constipation and feeling tired, dizzy or lightheaded. Dehydration can also cause you to overeat, if you misinterpret your lightheadedness for low blood sugar or if your body craves water or salt from food. By the time your mouth is dry, you're already experiencing dehydration! So it's a good idea to stay on top of drinking the right amount of water from the start.

To find the right amount of water to drink, use this equation:

1. Find out your current body weight in pounds.
2. Divide that number by two.
3. The number you get is the number of ounces of water you should drink every day to stay hydrated.

For example: a 150 pound person would need 75 ounces of water daily, because  $150 \div 2 = 75$ .

Now plug in your current weight and divide it by two. Then compare that to the number of ounces of water you currently drink. Is the result you got a higher amount that you're used to drinking each day? You're not alone! Research suggests that up to 75% of adults may be chronically dehydrated.

The easiest way to make sure you take in your recommended daily amount of water is to keep a large water bottle with you. Small water bottles (like 12-16 ounce bottles) will have you running dry and in need of a refill far too often.

Instead, choose a 24-32 ounce bottle to keep with you when you're on the go - and even around the house. Having your water bottle with you at all times will remind you to drink regularly. Plus it will help you keep track of the amount of water you've consumed based on how many times you've had to refill it, so you can be sure to hit your daily goal.

Another tip is to sip water continuously throughout the day (except for meal time). It won't hydrate you if you wait til the end of the day and chug all your recommended water at once.

If you feel intimidated when you think about drinking the amount of water that's recommended, don't worry - you can take it slow and work your way up!

**This week, find your water bottle.** [I recommend this stainless steel HydroFlask](#) — It comes with an optional screw top or flip-up top with a straw. You can choose 24, 32, or 40 ounce (I personally use the 32 ounce bottle, it's equal to one liter). Or you may already have a water bottle that you love (I recommend against using glass water bottles - from personal experience I can tell you they break much more easily than stainless steel!).

Start by committing to drinking one full bottle of water every day this week. Most likely, that won't meet your recommended amount, but it's a good starting point and a way to start to build your water drinking habit.

Next week increase to two bottles daily, and then finally increase to your full recommended water intake each day.

It's important to note that your daily recommended water intake is in addition to any other beverages you drink - coffee, tea, and juices don't count.

## WEEK 3

### **EAT PLENTY OF VEGETABLES**

How's it going so far?

Hopefully you're finding the program simple and straightforward. Focus on eating gut healing foods, avoid gut damaging foods, and take digestive supporting and gut healing supplements.

But I know that even "simple" things aren't always easy.

Though the first few weeks of The Gut Health Blueprint program may feel challenging in some ways, like cutting out some foods you were used to eating regularly, soon you'll find yourself falling into the habit of gut-healthy eating and hydration like it's second nature. You're doing a great job!

One important note is to make sure you're eating enough throughout the eight weeks - there's no need to measure, weigh, or restrict food when you're healing your gut. You can eat as much food as you want. Just make sure you're following the nutrition recommendations and getting in 4-6 cups of vegetables each day (or as close to that as possible).

Feeling stuck on how to get that many vegetables into your meals? My favorite way to prepare vegetables is to roast them!

Here's how:

### **OVEN ROASTED VEGETABLES**

Preheat the oven to 375°.

1. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Rinse, clean, and chop your veggies if necessary.
3. Toss your veggies in a few tablespoons of avocado oil (no need to measure, just make sure they get coated).
4. Then arrange your veggies in a single layer on your prepared baking sheet and sprinkle them with salt.
5. Place the tray on the middle rack in your preheated oven and cook until your veggies are tender and browned on the edges.

Different veggies will need to cook for different times, but here are some general guidelines:

- Summer squash like zucchini: 20-25 minutes
- Pumpkin or heavier squash like butternut: 30-45 minutes
- Root vegetables like carrots, beets, radishes, or potatoes: 45-60 minutes

The best part of this recipe is how flexible it is - you really just cook the veggies until they're done to your liking and voila! Dinner is served.

Great options for veggies to roast include:

- Zucchini
- Yellow squash
- Tomatoes
- Pumpkin (with the skin peeled off)
- Acorn squash (you can eat the skin)
- Butternut squash (with the skin peeled off)
- Carrots
- Beets
- Potatoes
- Parsnips
- Radishes
- Asparagus
- Green beans
- Onion (with the skin peeled off)

This simple roasting technique is also a great way to try new vegetables that might otherwise be intimidating, and it's an easy way to get veggies on your plate every day.

The Simple Roasted Artichoke recipe on page 75 of the Gut Healing Recipes book is a great place to start if you're still feeling stuck! Or you could try the Easy Roasted Chicken Thighs with Carrots on page 57 if you want to start with a complete meal with more familiar vegetables.

## WEEK 4

### WHY DO WE AVOID CERTAIN FOODS ?

During this gut healing process I've given you a pretty big list of foods to choose from and enjoy during your gut healing process. But I also gave you a list of foods to avoid. Now that you're adjusting to the gut-healing nutrition plan, I'd like to take some time to explain why we're avoiding certain foods for this eight-week program.

The Foods To Avoid lists is found on page 13-16 in the 101 Gut Healing Foods guide. The foods you'll see on this list often cause gut irritation or have been shown to negatively impact your microbiome (meaning they kill off or create an inhospitable environment for beneficial gut bacteria).

**Sugar is one of the main culprits.** You may know by now that refined sugar and added sweeteners are correlated to many illnesses like obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) as well as cognitive decline and even some cancers. Sugar can also feed pathogens and unhealthy bacteria in the gut, allowing them to overgrow and cause uncomfortable symptoms.

**Food additives like emulsifiers and thickeners are another common culprit** and are found in lots of foods. Evidence suggests that food additives can disturb gut homeostasis and contribute to tissue-damaging inflammatory responses. In one example, mice given the emulsifiers carboxymethylcellulose and polysorbate 80 developed dysbiosis and overgrowth of mucus-degrading bacteria.

**Then we have toxins like alcohol.** We may think of alcohol as a little harmless fun but it can have far-reaching effects on your gut health after a while, and because of its toxins it doesn't have a place in our healing process. In large amounts, alcohol and its metabolites can overwhelm the gut and liver and lead to damage both within the digestive tract and in other organs. Specifically, alcohol and its metabolites promote intestinal inflammation.

CBD, on the other hand, is anti-inflammatory and does not have the same negative side effects as alcohol so you can use it in small doses as a way to unwind and calm anxiety in the evenings.

Lastly, we're avoiding **common food allergens like dairy, gluten, and grains**. These aren't always a problem for everyone but unless you've done testing and know you're totally fine with these foods (and you have a high-quality source for them) it's a great idea to cut them out for these few weeks and give your body a break. Leaving these foods out also creates more space on your plate to load up on gut-health promoting vegetables!

## WEEK 5

### YOUR GUIDE TO PROBIOTICS

The word probiotic comes from Greek, meaning “for life.” A probiotic supplement contains viable microorganisms that will survive your digestion process, arrive in your intestines, and exert a beneficial effect. They can either stimulate growth or enhance activity of certain bacteria.

Most of the microorganisms living in your GI tract are either benign or helpful; common examples are *Bifidobacteria* and *Lactobacilli*. Some are not, and can cause disease, like *Clostridia*.

Usually, a delicate balance keeps the harmful ones in check. When the balance is disturbed, the opportunistic bad guys can multiply and spread, causing disease related to infection or inflammation. Using probiotics helps maintain or restore an optimal balance.

There are multiple probiotic products, with varying strains and doses, depending on your need.

Soil-based or spore-based probiotics are an excellent category to focus on. These kinds of probiotics are “packaged” in such a way that allows them to survive the journey from your mouth, through your acidic stomach, to your gut, where they can populate. Good options for spore-based probiotics are:

#### MegaSporeBiotic



#### TherBiotic Complete



#### Proflora4R



[Click here to order your spore-based probiotics now!](#)

Some little-known benefits of probiotics are:

- Those who are lactose intolerant are deficient in the enzyme that hydrolyzes this large sugar into simpler ones. The right microbiota, however, can break them down.
- A healthy microbiome can wipe out *Helicobacter pylori*, the bacteria commonly associated with stomach ulcers.
- Perhaps most exciting is a link between gut health and cancer prevention. There is less colorectal cancer in people who regularly eat fruits and vegetables, which are full of natural prebiotic carbohydrates. And some strains of bacteria have been shown to prevent the establishment, growth, and spread of tumors in animal testing.

You can read all about probiotics in your “Understanding Probiotics: Making Good Bacteria Work For You” bonus guide.

## WEEK 6

### HEALING LEAKY GUT

Do you have a leaky gut?

Before you get worried, I want to let you know that's sort of a trick question - because the answer for all of us is yes. It turns out, even a healthy gut should be somewhat "leaky" or permeable to allow nutrients to move through. So what's all this talk about a leaky gut being bad?

Another term for "leaky gut" is "increased intestinal permeability". It's a newly acknowledged condition where the junctions in the gut epithelial wall lose their integrity, allowing material from the digestive tract to move into the bloodstream more excessively than is healthy or normal.

This can lead to inflammation and sensitivities throughout the body. You may already be experiencing some of the symptoms of having a leaky gut - bloating, skin irritation, fatigue, food sensitivities, and irregular bathroom habits.

The thing that isn't always clear is what's causing your gut to be leaky. Oftentimes this condition can be caused by a gut infection like candida, or a parasite. It can also be caused by regularly consuming foods you're sensitive to, use of prescription medications, consumption of alcohol or drugs, or exposure to environmental toxins. Anything that causes inflammation in the system can create a leaky gut.

So, what do you have to do to fix your leaky gut? By following the program outlined in The Gut Health Blueprint you're already doing it!

We started by removing inflammatory food and replacing them with nourishing foods. Next, we added digestion support so you can get all the nutrients out of them and make the process easier on your body. Finally, you added in a concentrated gut-healing nutrient as recommended in the Gut Healing Supplements Guide to support the repair process in your cells. It can really be that simple.

Your gut cells are replaced every 5-7 days. Beneficial bacteria also helps in the healing of these cells, and cultivating a healthy microbiome may take up to a few months. By following the outlined recommendations in The Gut Health Blueprint for the full eight weeks you're resetting your system and laying down a healthy, strong foundation for a healthy "leak-free" gut.

## WEEK 7

### GUT HEALTH, CRAVINGS, AND EMOTIONAL EATING

Everyone gets food cravings.

Quite often, when we reach for sugary or fatty snacks, we blame a lack of self-control. But your cravings are also influenced by a source you may never have considered. Living in the intestinal tract of every healthy human are about 100 trillion microorganisms, known collectively as the gut microbiome.

Your microbiome has a significant effect on your health. Different species and strains serve different purposes, most of them beneficial to us. But they are organisms, and they need to live, too. If your interests are not aligned with their interests, they must look out for their own survival.

Gut bacteria might induce cravings for foods that help them or harm their competitors. They may even release chemical signals that induce dysphoria – i.e., make us feel bad – until we eat a food that enhances their health.

Many gut microorganisms like sugar. Specifically, glucose. They have been shown to influence our tastes to ensure a steady supply:

- In one study, protein-deprived fruit flies were given a choice of two foods: one rich in protein, one sugary. Initially, they went for the protein drink. After specific bacteria (*Acetobacter* and *Lactobacillus*) were introduced to their GI tracts, they choose the sugar that the bacteria wanted over the protein that they, the hosts, needed.
- Research shows that mice who have all microbiota removed, known as germ free mice, have different taste receptors for sugar on their tongues than typical mice.
- We've seen it in humans, too. One study found different bacterial populations in the microbiome of people who crave chocolate and people who do not.

The good news is, by healing your gut you're shifting your microbiome back into balance and restoring the populations of good bacteria that will help reset your cravings.

So what's the difference between simple cravings and emotional eating? It's the difference between physical hunger and emotional hunger.

One way to describe the difference between physical hunger and emotional hunger is that physical hunger comes on slowly, and once you start eating you reach a point of feeling satisfied. Emotional hunger may come on suddenly and you can eat and eat and still not feel full.

While we won't dive too deeply into the intricacies of emotional eating, it's such a common experience that I wanted to acknowledge it here and let you know you're not alone.

One way to start to change your habits around emotional eating is to get support - which is one reason I started my Guided Wellness Group! If you're not already a member, I encourage you to join today if you're looking for a safe space to get the health and wellness support you need. Another good option is to reach out to friends or family members when you're feeling upset and share your feelings with them to get support.

Whatever you choose, getting support will help you shift your emotional eating habits so you can focus on feeling great in your body.

## WEEK 8

### NEXT STEPS & TAKE FOLLOW UP SYMPTOMS QUIZ

Welcome to your final week of The Gut Health Blueprint!

Let's start off by charting the progress you've made. Retake the symptoms quiz you took the first week. Rank each question on a scale from 0-3 (0- never, 1 - rarely, 2 - sometimes, 3 - often). Then add up each number to get your follow-up Gut Health Imbalance score.

1. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Belching or gas within one hour after eating
2. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Heartburn or acid reflux
3. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Bloating within one hour after eating
4. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Loss of taste for meat
5. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Sense of excess fullness after meals
6. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Feel like skipping breakfast
7. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Feel better if you don't eat
8. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Sleepy after meals
9. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Stomach pains or cramps
10. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Diarrhea, chronic
11. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Diarrhea shortly after meals
12. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Undigested food in stool
13. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Stomach upset by greasy foods
14. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Greasy or shiny stools
15. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Nausea
16. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Alternating constipation and diarrhea
17. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Excessive foul smelling lower bowel gas
18. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Bad breath or strong body odors
19. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Cramping in lower abdominal region
20. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Stools hard or difficult to pass
21. 0 - 1 - 2 - 3 Less than one bowel movement per day

**Gut Health Imbalance score:** \_\_\_\_\_

Did your Gut Health Imbalance score go down? That's amazing! Even if you're not at complete zero, if your numbers have gone down then you're doing something right and it's working for you!

So what should you do now?

Here are the three steps for transitioning back to your normal routine:

- 1 Starting next week, slowly begin to reintroduce some of the food you eliminated back into your diet. You'll want to move slowly, adding in one new food every 3 days or so, to give your body a chance to tell you if any of these foods are causing a gut imbalance for you.

So pick one food group to start with, like dairy, and have a meal that contains cheese, milk, you name it. Then wait 48-72 to see how you feel.

Pay attention to how your body reacts when you add foods back in - do these foods increase your bloating? Do they cause your digestive symptoms to come back? If so, then you may want to reconsider having them be a regular part of your diet and instead save them for special occasions. If you add a food back in and have no reaction at all, then that's a safe food for you to eat on a regular basis.

Even as you move back into a more normal eating routine, it's a great idea to avoid over-eating processed foods and instead fill a majority of your plate with whole, unprocessed foods like protein, vegetables, fruits, and gluten-free grains. These foods will help keep your gut health in balance so you can feel great in your own skin!

- 2 Continue to take your digestive support and probiotics, and keep drinking your recommended amount of water! Your digestive support supplements will continue to allow you to eat without bloating, fully digest your food, and get all the nutrients out of every meal so your body can thrive.

Staying hydrated will continue to support your healthy metabolism, supple skin, and good energy levels.

- 3 Rotate probiotics every bottle or so, so you get a variety of microorganisms. While it's not a deal breaker if you don't rotate probiotics, it is beneficial to get as many varieties of beneficial gut bacteria as possible, and different brands contain different combinations of beneficial bacteria.

It's that simple! I'm so proud of you for completing the eight week program and working toward healing your gut. Investing in this program and following it through is investing in better health for yourself!

I'm available for ongoing support in my Guided Wellness Group, where you can ask your health and wellness questions and get personalized answers and real-time support! I look forward to seeing you there, so I can continue to support you on your healing journey.

PS: If you followed the steps outlined in The Gut Health Blueprint and you didn't notice an improvement in your symptoms, it's possible you have an underlying infection or imbalance that's causing the problem. Review pages 16-19 in the Main Guide to learn more about infections and imbalances, and to get information on when and how to do a gut health test.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **WHY SHOULD I DO THIS FOR EIGHT WEEKS?**

According to studies, eight to twelve weeks is an optimal amount of time for your body to heal, repair, and rebuild any tissues or systems which have been out of balance.

You may start to feel better after only four to six weeks. Do not stop the program just because you start feeling better. Make sure you complete all eight weeks of the recommended gut-healing diet and supplements, to ensure your underlying gut health imbalances are fully rebalanced.

However, it's also important to note that not all imbalances will be fixed within the initial eight-week period. Some people might start to feel better, but still not be at 100%, which is where they want to be. In this case, you might need to move on to further gut health testing, to be able to fully heal your imbalances - see page 19 for information on gut health testing and when you should consider it.

## **HOW MUCH SHOULD I EAT DURING THE PROTOCOL?**

How much you eat is up to you - I recommend that you take this as an opportunity to get in touch with your needs. Translation: eat when you're hungry! There are no calorie restrictions or specific macronutrient goals for this protocol. Instead we want to focus on the kinds of foods you eat and make sure you're supporting good gut health with the food choices you make.

## **SHOULD I TRY A COLONIC OR COFFEE ENEMA?**

The simple answer is no.

You're welcome to experiment with enemas and colonics if you're curious about them, but you don't need to do designer saltwater flushes or colon cleanses for this program to be effective. In fact, doing enemas or colonics too often might have negative effects on your gut flora and microbiome.

All you need to jump-start healing your gut is follow the four easy steps outlined in The Gut Health Blueprint and be consistent with diet and supplements for the next eight weeks. Anything else you want to try is potentially an added bonus!

## SUMMARY

Gut health acts as the foundational of our bodies, and when your gut health isn't aligned, you start noticing issues like bloating, gas, nausea, or heartburn, all of which impact your ability to live a full and complete life. When your gut health is aligned – everything falls into place.

And now you have the solution to healing your gut naturally.

The recommendations I've given you in this guide are all tried and true methods I use with my clients, and now I'm passing them on to you. I want to help you live a healthy and full life, and this is where we begin.

With the four simple steps I've outlined for you, you can begin your gut healing journey right now. When you implement the steps as described you'll begin to notice a difference in your body in just a few days.

Over the next eight weeks, focus on cleaning and supporting your body - and you'll be surprised at how great you can feel in a short amount of time. You'll notice better energy and easier focus, clearer skin, reduced bloating and gas, and more regular bathroom habits.

Food is the foundation of healing, and eating to heal your gut can be simple with the foundational tools I'm giving you in the 101 Gut Healing Foods list. Adding in the recommended gut healing supplements from The Gut Health Supplements Guide will further deepen your healing, giving you the best possible results so you can feel amazing in your body and love being in your own skin.

Remember to be consistent, but to also be kind to yourself. Healing is not a destination, it's a journey. I'm so happy I can help support you along the way.