



THE
GUT
HEALTH
DOCTOR



10 step starter guide to good gut health

By Dr Megan Rossi (PhD, RD)

Supporting your gut health, step by step

Congratulations – you’re now officially part of The Gut Health Doctor community.

I founded The Gut Health Doctor in 2017 with one clear goal: to translate the latest gut health science from our research team at *King’s College London* into advice that’s practical and easy to apply in everyday life. Since then, this community has grown far beyond anything I could have imagined – and I’m so glad you’re here, choosing to prioritise your own gut health journey.

My mission has always been to empower and support better gut health using evidence-backed approaches that genuinely work. Whatever your health or wellbeing goal, the gut is a powerful place to start. You may be looking to reduce inflammation or manage a chronic condition, support your immunity, energy, mood or hormones, or work towards your happy weight. I’ve seen first-hand how focusing on gut health can transform all of these areas – often more than people expect.

I also know how overwhelming gut health can feel. Trying to do everything at once, navigating conflicting advice from influencers, or being bombarded by fear-based messages from Dr Google can leave you feeling unsure where to begin. That’s exactly why I created this community: to help you kick-start your transformation with trusted, realistic advice that’s grounded in solid science.

Starting with this guide, we’ll walk through the four key principles of good gut health to help you build strong foundations, or if you’ve been following the research for a while, to reaffirm what you’re already doing. From there, you’ll move on to 10 practical steps you can implement in day-to-day life, at a pace that works for you. I’ve also included a worksheet to help you prioritise your gut-centred goals over the coming months.

Everything you’ll find here has been tried and tested by tens of thousands of people in our community, with some truly awe-inspiring results which you can read about in our community [transformation stories](#). You can feel confident knowing you’re in safe hands.

Along the way, through our bi-weekly newsletters, I’ll also share science-backed, results-driven guidance, exclusive gut-nourishing recipes, and extra resources for when you want to dive a little deeper.

I’d love to hear how you’re getting on. You can keep me updated over at [@theguthealthdoctor](#) – and if you prefer [TikTok](#), [Facebook](#) or [X](#), you’ll find me there too.

Megan and Team x



4 key principles of good gut health

1 The gut: everything connection



- Approximately 40 trillion microbes live in your nine-metre-long digestive tract, known as your gut microbiota. Together, they carry out thousands of vital roles that influence almost every organ and core function in the body, including immunity, brain health, metabolism, hormones and skin health.
- Each type of gut microbe – most commonly bacteria, but also other microorganisms such as fungi – that makes up your gut microbiota has its own unique set of skills. This is why greater microbial diversity has been linked with a lower risk of over 70 chronic conditions. Quite simply, the more different microbes you have, the broader the collective skill set working to support you.
- It's also worth remembering that when you look after your gut, it tends to look after you in return, much like a trusted friend that quietly supports you behind the scenes. It may sound a little cliché, but the science consistently backs this up.
- If you'd like to explore these gut-body connections in more depth, you can read more in this [article](#).



The Super Six

2

- When it comes to plants, aim for variety across all six plant groups: vegetables, fruits, wholegrains, legumes, nuts and seeds, plus herbs and spices. Together, we call these the Super Six.
- Each group – and the plants within them – provides a distinct mix of nutrients, gut-nourishing fibres and plant chemicals (known as phytochemicals), many of which cannot be replicated through supplements. This helps explain why research consistently shows that cutting out entire plant groups can leave the gut microbiome worse off.
- Researchers from *the University of Bergen* found that eating a diverse range of plants across the Super Six could add up to ten additional healthy years to life expectancy. Importantly, it's never too late to benefit; even an 80-year-old could gain an estimated 3.4 extra years by making this shift.

4 key principles when it comes to good gut health

3 Clock up your plant points



- A landmark study from *The American Gut Project* (2018), involving participants from around the world, found that people who ate more than 30 different plant-based foods per week tended to have a more diverse gut microbiota than those eating ten or fewer. Notably, plant diversity mattered more for gut health than whether someone followed a vegan or omnivorous (animal-containing) diet.
- Think of it this way: the greater the variety of plants you eat, the wider the range of fertilisers you provide for your gut microbes. This supports a broader, more resilient microbial community – effectively a more capable army working on your behalf.
- Based on research from Megan’s team at *King’s College London*, we’re not convinced that 30 plants should be the upper limit. As you get started, you’ll discover just how achievable, cost-effective and enjoyable increasing plant diversity can be. To support this, we created our plant points system, which was trialled at *The Gut Health Clinic* and published in Megan’s second book, *Eat More, Live Well* back in 2021. It’s designed to translate the science into something practical, and even a little fun.
- You earn one point for each different plant you eat, with herbs and spices counting as $\frac{1}{4}$ of a point. Eating the same plant multiple times in a week – red apples, for example – still counts as one point unless you choose a different variety, such as green apples.
- You can explore the science behind our plant points system, along with practical guidance for reaching 30+ plants points per week, in our [Learn Hub](#).

With so much still to learn in this rapidly evolving area of research, Megan’s research team is currently running a randomised controlled trial to explore the findings of *The American Gut Project* study in more detail and understand what they mean in real life. We’ll continue to share updates with you through our newsletter.



INclusion not EXclusion

4

- Cutting out foods such as gluten (unless medically indicated, as in coeliac disease or diagnosed non-coeliac gluten sensitivity) has been shown in published studies to reduce gut microbiome diversity. This isn’t because gluten itself is essential, but because restriction often leads to reduced intake of high-fibre grains like barley and rye, and people tend to increase reliance on ultra-processed gluten-free products.
- Research consistently shows that adding in the “good stuff” has a far greater impact on gut health than simply removing the “bad”. This principle of inclusion rather than restriction sits at the heart of our food philosophy, and offers a more sustainable, enjoyable way of eating. Crucially, it’s an approach supported by a large body of research.

10 steps to achieve good gut health

If, like us, you're feeling inspired by the science and motivated to make changes, it can be tempting to want to overhaul everything at once. But before diving into these 10 steps, it's worth knowing that you don't need to prioritise them all at the same time. Think of this as a journey rather than a checklist.

The best results tend to come when you start with just one or two priority areas to focus on each month. From there, you can check in on your progress, notice what's starting to stick, and identify where you might want to pay a little more attention next. Listen to your gut – when you're ready to embrace another step, simply return to this guide. The worksheet on page 19 can help you set out your intentions and keep things realistic, while still keeping you accountable.

Of course, if you're someone who prefers to go all in, there's no harm in diving straight in, as long as you can maintain the motivation. Research suggests a gradual approach is often easier to sustain long term, but at The Gut Health Doctor, our role is to empower you with the science, alongside practical tips and helpful hacks. What you choose to do with that information is always your call. And just to be clear, there's never any judgement here.

1. Fill up on fibre



In a world that's often focused on protein, we're proudly flying the fibre flag. Here's why: fibre is indigestible to human cells. Instead, it acts as fuel for your gut bacteria, which have specialised enzymes to break it down. This makes fibre essential for keeping your microbes fuelled and functioning properly.

So where do you get it? Fibre comes from plants, specifically from the Super Six highlighted on page 2.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most guidelines recommend aiming for around 30g of fibre per day, yet many of us struggle to reach even 20g. If you can, we encourage you to aim higher. While fibre supplements can be tempting, it's worth remembering that there are over 100 different types of fibre, which helps explain why supplements don't offer the same benefits as fibre naturally found in whole foods.

If you're increasing your fibre intake, go slow and steady, and make sure you're staying well hydrated. This helps fibre work its microbial magic more comfortably.

HIGH-FIBRE FOOD EXAMPLES (grams of fibre)

- Medium baked sweet potato (skin on) – 6g
- 1 cup cooked oats – 4g
- Medium pear – 5g
- ½ cup tinned chickpeas – 5g
- Small handful (30g) almonds – 3g
- 1 tbsp linseeds / flaxseeds – 3g
- ½ avocado – 5g
- 1 tbsp chia seeds – 5g
- ½ cup cooked peas – 4g
- Bio&Me fibre + protein bar – 8g
- 1 thick slice multigrain bread – 3g
- 1 cup firm tofu – 3g

10 steps to achieve good gut health

✓ PRACTICAL TIP

Increasing fibre too quickly can lead to a microbe feeding frenzy, with fizzing, popping and uncomfortable symptoms like bloating and distension. Think of fibre like training your muscles at the gym; you need to build up gradually before hitting your personal best.

If you're struggling with bloating and you think fibre could be the culprit, check our [Bloating Masterclass](#) for the latest science-backed strategies on training your gut (and don't forget your exclusive 20% community discount on page 15).

2. Switch it up



Making simple swaps and focusing on delicious diversity can really help you reach your 30+ plant points. Add mixed seeds and frozen berries to your morning porridge; choose mixed frozen vegetables instead of just peas in your stir-fry; add mixed beans or lentils into chilli or spaghetti Bolognese; or experiment with new wholegrains (ever tried freekeh?).

Here's a little challenge for you. Try adding one new plant each week. You could even get family and friends involved for a bit of friendly competition. For extra gut-loving inspiration, head to our [Recipe Hub](#).

✓ PRACTICAL TIP

Frozen and tinned plants count too. They often maintain a similar, and sometimes even greater, nutrient quality than fresh options. Proof that variety can be convenient and doesn't need to be expensive.

3. Chew more

It's something many of us were told growing up, but it really does matter – chewing properly supports digestion. Research shows that thorough chewing helps your body absorb more nutrients from food. One study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that people absorbed around 20% less nutrition when they chewed almonds just ten times per mouthful compared to chewing them 40 times.

Chewing more also reduces how much food passes through undigested, which can help ease common symptoms like bloating. Try slowing down your meals and aim to chew each mouthful 20–30 times (and even more for harder foods). If that feels like too much to start with, begin by focusing on thoroughly chewing the first two mouthfuls – habits build over time.



10 steps to achieve good gut health

🔍 DID YOU KNOW?

Digestion begins in your mouth. Alongside physical breakdown, enzymes in saliva (such as amylase) start digesting food straight away. If you rush meals, you may miss this important stage. You can see amylase in action by chewing a piece of white bread until it becomes liquid (around 60 seconds). It becomes sweeter as starch is broken down into sugar.

4. Bring the Med to you



The Mediterranean diet is one of the most well-researched dietary patterns worldwide and is linked with benefits ranging from improved cognitive and mental health to reduced heart disease risk. It's also rich in gut-loving foods and associated with increased microbial diversity.

A simple place to start is extra virgin olive oil (EVOO). Use it for cooking (good-quality EVOO is stable up to around 190°C / 375°F), drizzle it over salads or dip bread into it. Alongside benefits for heart and brain health, EVOO supports the gut microbiome and can help lower the glycaemic impact of foods like bread – particularly helpful if you're keeping an eye on blood sugar levels.

Other key principles include daily intake of fruits, vegetables, wholegrains and healthy fats; some fermented dairy such as yoghurt and aged cheese; and two portions of omega-3-rich oily fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines) each week. If you don't eat fish, be sure to read Step 5.

✅ PRACTICAL TIP

To choose a high-quality EVOO, avoid clear bottles (light degrades oil), look for a single variety rather than a blend, and check for a harvest year and lot number. You can find more advice from Megan [here](#).

5. Get smart with supplements

As gut health has entered the mainstream, supplements promising to optimise digestion are everywhere, including daily probiotics. This is an area Megan feels particularly passionate about, having completed her PhD in this field. Despite bold claims such as “billions of live bacteria”, “proven to survive”, or “unique capsule technology”, the reality is that many probiotics on the market are ineffective and may even worsen symptoms such as bloating.

That said, when used correctly, the right probiotic can be genuinely helpful. The key is choosing the right strain (strain = type of bacteria) for the issue you want to support, using it at the right time (for example, during a course of antibiotics or to help prevent recurrent [thrush](#)), and in the right format and dose – Megan's probiotic mantra: right *strain*, right *time*, right *way*. You can learn more about choosing clinically proven live bacteria formulations [here](#).



10 steps to achieve good gut health

The same principles apply when considering other supplements. Focus on those with evidence to support a specific concern. For example, psyllium husk can help manage both constipation and diarrhoea, while peppermint oil has been shown to ease IBS-related symptoms such as cramps, bloating and gas. For those who don't eat oily fish at least once per week, it may also be worth considering an omega-3 supplement. Just make sure it contains comparable amounts of EPA and DHA, the two most biologically active forms of omega-3 fatty acids.

If you're unsure where to begin, [this article](#) is a helpful place to start, or you can [head to Instagram](#) to read more from Megan.

6. De-stress to digest



The gut and the brain are closely connected through hundreds of millions of nerves, known as the enteric nervous system, or the gut-brain axis. This means that what's happening in your brain can influence what's happening in your gut, and vice versa.

A little stress from time to time isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it can be helpful in certain situations, such as preparing for exams or meeting deadlines. And let's be realistic. Modern life comes with stressors – commuting, work pressures, family responsibilities – so it's not something we can (or should) aim to eliminate completely.

However, chronic stress – a persistent feeling of stress over a long period – can have a significant impact on gut health. Research from the *Ohio State University College of Medicine* has shown that ongoing stress can alter the composition of gut bacteria, disrupting balance and contributing to digestive symptoms.

With this in mind, try not to get caught in the very common vicious cycle of feeling stressed about stress. Even when stress feels outside your control, there are a number of non-diet approaches that have been shown to positively influence the gut-brain axis and improve stress-related digestive issues. These include breathing exercises, hypnotherapy and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

In fact, several studies have shown that these approaches can improve digestive symptoms – such as bloating, altered bowel habits and abdominal pain – to a similar degree as specialist, often restrictive, diets.

✓ PRACTICAL TIP

Start small. Try this simple [breathing exercise](#) whenever stress begins to feel overwhelming. Place one hand on your chest and one on your belly so you can feel your breathing. Inhale through your nose for around four seconds, allowing your abdomen to expand while your chest stays relatively still. Hold for two seconds, then slowly exhale through your mouth for six seconds.

Repeat for 5–15 minutes (or whatever time you have available). This helps activate your rest and digest (parasympathetic) nervous system, easing tension in the gut. You can repeat this throughout the day, and if digestive symptoms are your main concern, practising for five minutes before each main meal can be particularly helpful.

10 steps to achieve good gut health

7. Go with your rhythm

Just like you, your gut microbiome follows a circadian rhythm. This means that disrupted sleep can throw off its natural cycle, just as it does yours. It doesn't take much – research suggests that even two days of sleep disruption can negatively affect gut health.

Research from Megan's colleagues at *King's College London* has also shown that a lack of sleep can influence both how much and what we eat – on average around 385 extra calories per day – and, as you may have experienced yourself, these extra calories are rarely coming from high-fibre, nutrient-rich foods.

The reality is that around one in three adults don't get enough good-quality sleep. Of course, there are phases of life where sleeping through the night is largely out of our control, something many new parents or women going through menopause will recognise. During these times, it's reassuring to know that you can still support your gut health by focusing on the other nine gut-nourishing steps. Studies suggest that improvements in these areas may also help support better sleep over time, so hang in there.



✓ PRACTICAL TIP

Where possible, aim for 7–9 hours of sleep per night, with a consistent bedtime and wake time (within around 30 minutes). This isn't always easy, so here are a few evidence-based strategies that can help:

- Get natural light early in the day to help regulate your circadian rhythm. Even a 10-minute walk, a morning coffee in the garden, or, at worst, keeping your kitchen windows wide open as you juggle the family morning rush hour will do the trick.
- Prioritise sleep hygiene. Keep your bedroom dark, quiet and cool; avoid bright screens for two hours before bed; and limit caffeine after 3pm (or earlier if you're sensitive).
- For a full, clinical trial-backed sleep hygiene protocol developed by colleagues at *King's College London*, you can read more in [this article](#).

8. Move your body



You'll probably already know that exercise is good for general health, but research also shows that regular physical activity (around three times per week) can significantly improve gut microbial diversity, regardless of what you eat. Our microbes, much like us, get a positive boost from movement. Exercise also helps keep bowel movements regular, which is an added bonus for the one in seven people who struggle with constipation.

Aim to raise your heart rate for at least 30 minutes on most days, whether that's through walking, running, HIIT, yoga, dancing, or simply playing with children or pets. The most effective type of exercise is the one you genuinely enjoy, because that's what makes it far easier to build long-lasting, gut-loving habits.

If you experience digestive symptoms during or after exercise, you can read Megan's guidance [here](#).

10 steps to achieve good gut health

9. Cut down on unnecessary medication

Antibiotics are lifesaving, and they should never be discouraged when they are genuinely needed. However, if your GP explains that an infection is viral and that antibiotics won't be an effective treatment, it's worth listening to that advice.

This may not be news to you, but Megan's husband (an NHS GP) often highlights that many people still attend appointments to request a prescription. This may help explain why around 36 million courses of antibiotics are issued each year in the UK alone.



Research consistently shows that antibiotics don't just target harmful bacteria. Beneficial gut bacteria can get caught in the crossfire too. This can disrupt the balance of the gut microbiome and, in some cases – particularly with repeated courses – the changes may be long-lasting, as not all bacteria return after treatment. This also helps explain the increased risk of IBS seen with repeated antibiotic use.

If you do need antibiotics, you can learn how to protect your gut with Megan's three tips [here](#).

It's also important to know that antibiotics aren't the only medications that can affect gut health. One large study examining over 900 different medications found that around a quarter could impact or inhibit the growth of at least one type of gut bacteria. Given that microbial diversity is a key marker of gut health, this is something worth being aware of.

Where advised, it can be helpful to focus on lifestyle approaches before pills. For example, implementing the sleep hygiene strategies discussed earlier instead of relying on sleeping tablets, or reducing alcohol intake rather than reaching for reflux medication, can be a real win for your gut health.

That said, you should always speak to your GP or healthcare team before changing any medication. And if medication is essential, don't stress, there are still plenty of other steps you can take to support your gut. Don't let essential medications deter your quest for good gut health.

10. Go easy on additives and alcohol

New research from Megan's team at *King's College London* has explored the impact of food additives and emulsifiers (found in over 50% of ultra-processed foods) on the gut microbiome in people with Crohn's disease, a form of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

In this world-first clinical trial, participants who were genetically susceptible to gut inflammation were blinded to their diet (low-emulsifier versus emulsifier-containing). The findings were striking. Those following the low-emulsifier diet were more than twice as likely to experience clinical remission, alongside a greater than 50% reduction in inflammatory markers, compared to the emulsifier-containing group.



If you have Crohn's disease, you can [read more](#) about this approach from Amy Buckley, one of the gut specialist dietitians at The Gut Health Clinic who delivered the low-emulsifier diet during the trial.

10 steps to achieving good gut health

✓ PRACTICAL TIP

If you don't have Crohn's disease, there's no need to cut emulsifiers out entirely. While we wait for further research, it can be helpful to be emulsifier-aware. There are more than 60 different emulsifiers, most commonly within the E-number 400 range. Where possible, try making simple whole-food swaps for ultra-processed foods. Snacks are often the easiest place to start, and you can find inspiration [here](#).

When it comes to alcohol, it's true that more than one or two standard drinks can make the gut a little more "leaky" – or permeable, in science-speak – although this effect is usually temporary. In most cases, it really is the quantity that matters most (you can read more about alcohol-related intolerance [here](#)).

That said, enjoying the occasional drink won't derail your gut health. And if you enjoy red wine or a dark beer, there's some good news. Research published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* suggests that gut microbes may benefit from the plant compounds found in red wine and dark beers when consumed in moderation.

Of course, there are times when moderation goes out the window – a night out with friends, a celebration, or a long-overdue catch-up. If you know an alcohol-fuelled evening is on the cards, could you alternate with a non-alcoholic option between rounds? Small swaps like this can make a meaningful difference, because when it comes to alcohol, quantity really is the key factor.

And because we're all about being realistic, if you know you are likely to have one too many, try to prep some gut food for the morning after to help your microbes manage their hangover. Take some inspiration from our [prebiotic smoky baked beans](#) recipe.

Gut-loving recipes

Super Six coffee smoothie

BREAKFAST

 **SERVES 2**  **5 MINS**

If you're looking for a nourishing morning pick-me-up, this smoothie is for you. With all your plant groups covered, it's packed with fibre to support digestion, plus gut-loving polyphenols to help your microbiome thrive.



Ingredients

- 150g vanilla kefir yoghurt (we use Bio&Me)
- 1 tbsp peanut butter
- 1/3 of 400g canned black beans, drained and rinsed (approx. 70g drained)
- 2 Medjool dates, pitted
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup frozen cauliflower
- ½ cup oats
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- 1 cup cold-brewed coffee



Method

1. Add all ingredients to a blender before blitzing for 60 seconds or until completely smooth.
2. Pour into a chilled glass and enjoy!



DID YOU KNOW?

Coffee can be either a gut helper or a gut agitator – it really depends on your gut and how your body responds to the caffeine component. If you don't experience digestive symptoms, up to two cups per day may actually support gut health thanks to coffee's polyphenols, which act like fertiliser for gut microbes.

However, if you're dealing with bloating, anxiety or stress-related gut symptoms, caffeine may not work in your favour. It can overstimulate the gut-brain axis, speed digestion up a little too much, and amplify your stress response (think cortisol spikes), which may worsen symptoms rather than improve them.



PRACTICAL TIP

On high-stress days, or when your gut feels unsettled, try switching to decaf. You'll still get most of the beneficial polyphenols, without the extra gut stress from caffeine.

Gut-loving recipes

Gut-loving one-pan wonder

LUNCH

 SERVES 4  50 MINS

Protein-packed, fibre-rich and omega-3 loaded, this is a one-pan, flavour-first traybake that supports your gut and keeps dinner simple.



Ingredients

- 1 tbsp dried basil or oregano
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 salmon fillets (approx 120g each), skin on
- 1 large sweet potato, cut into chunks
- 200g broccoli, cut into florets
- 500g mixed pack of Mediterranean vegetables
- 1 pack of cherry tomatoes, approx. 16
- 400g tin/ jarred butter beans, drained and rinsed (approx 220g drained)
- Handful of Kalamata olives
- 1 cup of grains of choice, cooked
- 1 tbsp of mixed seeds

TO SERVE

- ¼ cup plain yoghurt (we used Bio&Me Kefir Yoghurt)
- 1 tbsp harissa
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges
- Fresh basil (optional)



Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C Fan / gas mark 5.
2. In a small bowl, mix the dried herbs, paprika, crushed garlic and olive oil.
3. Brush around one-third of this mixture over the salmon fillets, then place them in the fridge while you prepare the vegetables.
4. Spread the sweet potato chunks onto a large roasting tray, drizzle with another third of the seasoning, and roast for 15 minutes.
5. Next, add the mixed Mediterranean vegetables to the tray, coat with the remaining seasoning, and return to the oven for another 15 minutes.
6. Finally, add the salmon, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, butter beans, olives and cooked grains to the tray. Sprinkle over the mixed seeds.
7. Roast for a final 15 minutes, or until the salmon is cooked to your liking.
8. Stir the yoghurt and harissa together, dollop over the salmon, and serve with lemon wedges and fresh basil if using.



PRACTICAL TIP

This dish is very forgiving. If you don't have one of the vegetables listed, swap it for whatever you have in the fridge or freezer. Variety matters more than perfection.

Gut-loving recipes

Fibre-rich sunshine pasta

DINNER

 SERVES 4  30 MINS

This vibrant pasta dish is an easy midweek win. Rich in carotenoids (gut-loving, anti-inflammatory plant compounds) and packed with hidden veg, it's a hit even with the fussiest family members.



Ingredients

- 1 medium squash or pumpkin (approx. 4 cups), peeled* and diced
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 medium white onion, roughly diced
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 200g plain yoghurt (we use Bio&Me kefir yoghurt)
- 400g wholemeal pasta of choice
- 400g canned cannellini beans, drained and rinsed (approx. 220g drained)
- ¼ tsp black pepper

TOPPINGS (OPTIONAL)

- Fresh herbs (we used basil)
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- Squeeze of lemon
- Grated parmesan
- 1 tbsp mixed seeds



Method

1. Start by cooking the squash. Microwave for around 15 minutes, or until soft.
2. While the squash cooks, heat 1 tbsp olive oil and a pinch of salt in a frying pan. Add the onion and garlic and cook gently until soft and lightly golden.
3. Next, cook the pasta according to the packet instructions. Drain and return it to the pot.
4. Add the cooked squash, onion, garlic and yoghurt to a blender or food processor. Blend until completely smooth, then taste and adjust seasoning if needed.
5. Pour the sauce over the pasta, add the cannellini beans, and stir over a low heat for 2–3 minutes until everything is warmed through.
6. Serve with optional fresh herbs, chilli, a squeeze of lemon and parmesan. For extra plant diversity, sprinkle with mixed seeds.



DID YOU KNOW?

Squash peels are edible and high in fibre. You can turn them into crispy snacks by tossing with extra virgin olive oil and herbs (we love rosemary), laying out on a tray and baking at 190°C for 25–30 minutes (or air frying for around 15 minutes) until golden and crisp.

Gut-loving recipes

No-bake gut:skin-loving brownies

DESSERT

 MAKES 15  15 MINS + CHILL TIME

Rich, fudgy and a winner for your gut-skin connection, this no-bake brownie delivers indulgence with added microbiome benefits. You can also follow along with Megan – see her recipe video [here](#).



Ingredients

BASE

- 18–20 Medjool dates, pitted
- 50g rolled oats
- 40g cocoa powder
- 130g pecans or nuts of choice
- 250g peanut butter or nut/seed butter of choice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon (optional)
- Pinch of salt
- 60g chocolate chips

FROSTING

- 150g 70% dark chocolate
- ¼ cup coconut oil, melted
- 200g cooked sweet potato, cooled
- Pinch of salt
- Optional spices: cinnamon, cardamom or ginger



Method

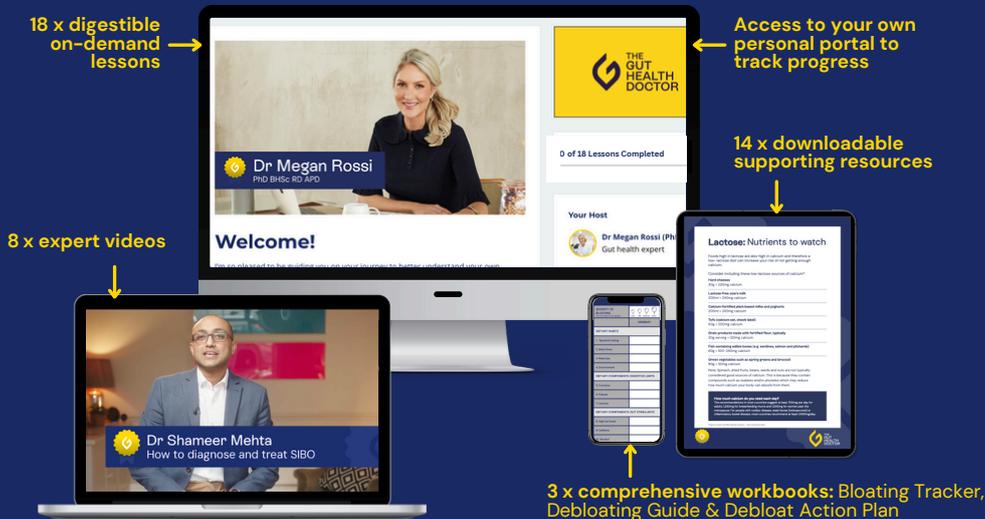
1. To bake the brownie base, add the dates, oats, cocoa powder, nuts, peanut butter, vanilla, cinnamon (if using) and salt to a blender or food processor. Blitz until a thick, sticky dough forms.
2. Tip the mixture into a bowl and fold through the chocolate chips.
3. Press the mixture firmly into a lined dish or container.
4. For the frosting, melt the dark chocolate and coconut oil together. Add this to the blender with the sweet potato, salt and any spices, then blend until smooth.
5. Chill the frosting in the fridge for 15–30 minutes to thicken slightly.
6. Finally, spread the frosting over the brownie base, slice and serve.



PRACTICAL TIP

These brownies keep well in the fridge for up to four days and freeze well if sliced first – ideal for when you want something sweet without starting from scratch.

Master burdensome bloating



With the  **Bloating**
MASTERCLASS

Most people experience bloating from time to time, and that's completely normal. But when it starts to feel like a regular – and stressful – part of your life, it can take a real toll. Perhaps it affects your confidence or energy levels, or leaves you feeling persistently uncomfortable. If that sounds familiar, you're certainly not alone.

It's completely understandable to search for a quick fix – cue the supplements, teas or food restriction (often unnecessarily, and sometimes in ways that can negatively impact gut health in the longer term). But it's important to remember that bloating is highly individual. Your dietary, lifestyle and medical triggers can be very different from someone else's, even if symptoms look similar on the surface. This goes a long way to explaining why bloating often requires a personalised, multi-strategy approach. What's more, many products on the market lack robust scientific backing and, in some cases, may actually make symptoms worse.

Instead, turn to the science and join the thousands of others who have benefited from Megan's comprehensive, results-driven *Bloating Masterclass*. Delivered across 18 digestible lessons (each 5–20 minutes), the masterclass helps you uncover your unique dietary and lifestyle bloating triggers and guides you step by step through proven, science-backed debloating strategies. By cutting through confusion and complexity, it offers a clear, structured action plan, helping you regain control, comfort and confidence.



READY TO GET STARTED?

As a little welcome gift for joining our community, you can get an exclusive 20% off the masterclass by using the code [WELCOMEGIFT20](#)

Next steps in your gut health transformation



Take our free Gut Health Quiz

Discover how your gut health is tracking with our personalised [Gut Health Quiz](#).



Explore Dr Megan Rossi's Sunday Times best-selling books

Your [go-to guides](#) for all things gut health, packed with practical advice, tools and recipes.



Enjoy 15% off SMART STRAINS clinically proven live bacteria

Use the [code TGHDESTRAINS15](#) to help you find the right strain, at the right time.



Save 10% with The Gut Health Clinic

Access personalised gut health and nutrition support using the [code WELCOME10](#).

Try 100+ gut-loving recipes in our Recipe Hub

[Plant-powered inspiration](#) to help you reach your 30+ plant points each week.



Get 20% off Bio&Me gut-loving goodness

Use the [code BIO&TGHD](#) across the full range of no-added-sugar, fibre-fuelled granolas, porridges, snack bars and more.

Dive deeper into gut health science in our Learn Hub

Stay up to date with the latest research and expert-led, [practical guidance](#) to support your gut health goals.



Get inspired by community transformation stories

Follow along and feel supported by others on a similar [gut health journey](#).

Set your gut health goals

As you reach the end of your 10 step starter guide, it's worth taking a few minutes to set some gut health goals.

Think about what you want to focus on over the next month or two, and what might come later. Research shows that setting clear, short-term goals (alongside small, practical actions) makes change more achievable and helps you experience the benefits sooner.

If you're unsure where to start, our [Gut Health Quiz](#) is a useful place to begin. It highlights the areas likely to have the biggest impact for you, whether that's diet, sleep, stress or something else. You can repeat the quiz each month to track progress and notice how far you've come.

To support you as you put this into practice, our [Learn Hub](#) offers science-backed articles and practical guidance to help you apply what you've learned in a way that works in real life. And when it comes to building habits day to day, our [Recipe Hub](#) is there to make gut-nourishing choices easier, more enjoyable and sustainable.

The key is focus. You don't need to work on everything at once. Choose what feels most relevant right now, take action, and build from there. Consistent steps – not perfection – are what drive lasting gut health change.

Megan and Team x



Gut health goal setting

Your gut holds more potential than you realise – now's the time to unlock it.

EXAMPLE		1st Jan, 2026	
 Gut health quiz score		 Action plan (be specific about the steps you take)	
16		20-30 chews per mouthful - support digestion	
 Complete	 Goal Chew more!	 Resources (articles, recipes etc)	
		7 science-backed habits article Download a chewing app (e.g ChewBe)	
Progress Notes		Small wins	
Tried 'box' breathing before meals which helped		Making time for breakfast in the morning instead of eating on my way to work	

EXAMPLE		1st Feb, 2026	
 Gut health quiz score		 Action plan (be specific about the steps you take)	
12		Sign up for & complete the Bloating Masterclass Cut out my generic probiotics	
 Complete	 Goal Reduce my bloating	 Resources (articles, recipes etc)	
		Bloating Masterclass Science-backed things to know about bloating article The pills to pop or not when it comes to your health needs article	
Progress Notes		Small wins	
Limit added sweeteners		Eating kiwi with the skin on! (thinly sliced- can't even notice the fuzziness!)	

Gut health goal setting

Your gut holds more potential than you realise – now's the time to unlock it.

DATE	
 Gut health quiz score	 Action plan (be specific about the steps you take)
 Goal	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
Progress Notes	Small wins

DATE	
 Gut health quiz score	 Action plan (be specific about the steps you take)
 Goal	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
Progress Notes	Small wins