

## GUT HEALTH

### YOUR GUT HEALING ROADMAP

*A Functional Medicine Guide from Balanced Body Functional Medicine*

Your gut is not just where food is digested — it is one of the most powerful control centers in your entire body. It influences your immune system, inflammation, hormones, and even your brain and mood.

When your gut is not functioning well, symptoms can show up anywhere in the body — not just in digestion.

This guide explains why that happens and how we restore balance.

### WHY YOUR GUT MATTERS

Your gut contains trillions of bacteria, fungi, and viruses called the microbiome. These microbes:

- Help digest food and absorb nutrients
- Make vitamins and anti-inflammatory compounds
- Train your immune system
- Influence brain chemistry, mood, and energy

About 70% of your immune system lives in and around the gut, so when the gut is inflamed or imbalanced, inflammation spreads throughout the body.

This is why gut problems are linked to:

- Fatigue
- Brain fog
- Joint pain
- Skin issues
- Autoimmune disease
- Anxiety and depression

### SIGNS YOUR GUT MAY BE STRUGGLING

Gut imbalance often shows up as both digestive and whole-body symptoms.

Digestive symptoms

- Gas, bloating
- Heartburn or reflux
- Constipation or loose stools

- Abdominal pain
- IBS or IBD

#### Whole-body symptoms

- Fatigue
- Brain fog
- Joint or muscle pain
- Headaches
- Skin issues (acne, eczema, rashes)
- Frequent infections
- Mood changes, anxiety, or low mood

These symptoms are common and not “all in your head.”  
They are signals from your gut-immune-brain system.

Certain things increase the risk of gut problems:

- Repeated antibiotics
- NSAIDs (ibuprofen, naproxen)
- Acid-blocking medications
- High sugar or ultra-processed foods
- Chronic stress
- Frequent infections

## THE FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE ROADMAP: THE 4–5 R’S

We heal the gut using a step-by-step framework called the 4–5 R’s.  
This is a roadmap — not a one-size-fits-all protocol.

R #1 – REMOVE (take away what is irritating the gut)

We reduce:

- Ultra-processed foods
- Excess sugar and alcohol
- Seed-oil-heavy fast foods

We may temporarily remove foods that commonly trigger immune reactions when the gut is inflamed:

- Gluten
- Cow’s-milk dairy
- Highly processed soy
- Certain fermentable carbohydrates (FODMAPs)

This gives the gut a calm environment to begin healing.

#### R #2 – REPLACE (support digestion)

Many people have low stomach acid, bile, and digestive enzymes, which leads to:

- Bloating
- Reflux
- Nutrient deficiencies
- Bacterial overgrowth

This is why we often work to reduce or come off acid-blocking medications when safe — without enough acid, food cannot be broken down properly.

We support:

- Stomach acid
- Bile
- Digestive enzymes

We also emphasize:

- Chewing well
- Eating slowly
- Drinking enough fluids

So digestion can actually turn on.

#### R #3 – REPAIR (heal the gut lining)

The gut lining is only one cell thick. When it is damaged, food and toxins leak into the bloodstream, triggering immune reactions and inflammation.

We support healing with:

- Colorful fruits and vegetables (antioxidants)
- Bone broth and slow-cooked meats (collagen and amino acids)
- Healthy fats (olive oil, avocado, omega-3 fish)

Sometimes we use targeted nutrients like glutamine, zinc, or omega-3s as part of individualized care.

#### R #4 – REINOCULATE (feed the good microbes)

After removing harmful influences and repairing the gut lining, we rebuild the microbiome.

We do this by:

- Eating a wide variety of plant foods

- Including fermented foods if tolerated
- Using targeted probiotics or prebiotics when appropriate

This restores microbial diversity and immune balance.

R #5 – REBALANCE (calm the nervous system)

Stress directly affects:

- Gut motility
- The microbiome
- Leaky gut
- Inflammation

When the nervous system is stuck in survival mode, the body cannot digest, detox, or heal properly.

This is why we emphasize:

- Sleep
- Gentle movement
- Time outdoors
- Breathing and relaxation
- Brain-retraining programs (such as PrimalTrust, BrainHarmony, BrainTap)

When the nervous system calms, the gut and immune system can heal.

## WHAT YOU CAN START DOING NOW

Build a gut-healthy plate

At most meals:

- ½ plate non-starchy vegetables
- A palm-size portion of protein
- A thumb-size portion of healthy fats

This stabilizes blood sugar, feeds good microbes, and reduces inflammation.

Aim for 20–30 different plant foods per week

Fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, nuts, seeds, beans, and whole grains all count.  
More variety = more microbial diversity.

Drink mostly water

Minimize sugary drinks and limit alcohol.

Practice “rest-and-digest” at meals



Sit down, take a few slow breaths, chew thoroughly, avoid screens, and allow 15–20 minutes to eat.

Do one 5-minute stress-calming practice per day

Breathing, prayer, meditation, walking outdoors, gentle stretching — start small and build.

## TRACK YOUR PATTERNS

Keeping a simple gut journal helps identify what helps or hurts:

- What you ate
- How you felt
- Stress level
- Sleep quality

Wearable devices (Oura, Whoop, Apple Watch) can show heart rate variability (HRV) — a measure of nervous system balance.

Biofeedback tools like HeartMath, Muse, or BrainTap help train your nervous system to leave stress mode and enter healing mode.

## HOW WE PERSONALIZE CARE

At Balanced Body Functional Medicine, we use:

- Your history
- Your symptoms
- Targeted lab testing

To find root causes, not just treat symptoms.

This may include:

- Stool testing (to see bacteria, yeast, inflammation, digestion)
- Immune-based gut testing (like Cyrex BiomeBurden)
- Blood work for nutrients, inflammation, and hormones

Your treatment plan combines:

- Food
- Lifestyle
- Nervous system support
- Supplements and medications when needed

The goal is not short-term symptom relief — it is long-term healing and resilience