

# A Foolproof Recipe for Greater Vitality



Our gut health is the starting point when it comes to improving our energy levels. The integrity of our gut lining, the strength of the beneficial bacteria (flora) population in our gut and of course what goes in our mouth all affects our gut health and how energetic we are.

Our gut lining is made up of tiny finger-like projections called villi. Their job is to absorb nutrients and to protect the gut lining by producing mucous. In people with food sensitivities such as gluten, soy, or dairy, these villi can be easily damaged if those foods are consumed. Other stressors that can cause damage or shrinkage of the villi include giardia, helicobacter pylori, some anti-inflammatory medications, alcohol and auto-immune conditions.

Fortunately for us, the vigour of the villi will return once the cause of the damage has been addressed. Consuming a wholefoods diet rich in nutrients can fast-track the recovery of the villi, including natural anti-inflammatories such as omega 3 fats and turmeric. The better we can absorb the nutrients in our food by having strong villi, the more energy we will have.

The beneficial bacteria in our gut play an extraordinary role in our energy levels. It is estimated that these little bugs combined weigh more than 1 kg, and together consist of more cells than the rest of our bodies cells put together. The bacteria produces short-chain fatty acids (SCFA's) that assist the liver in energy production, help lower cholesterol and feed our colon cells. When we have a strong army of gut flora, our colon cells are well fed and can function at their highest potential. A healthy gut flora population will also improve our immune system, regulate moods and boost our metabolism, all leading to increased energy.

One of the areas in which we can support our beneficial gut flora is to be consuming enough fibre in our diet. The flora relies on fibre to maintain their population and to produce the SCFA's that then provide the fuel for the cells in our gut wall. Eating a variety of vegetables, fruit and legumes will ensure you have the full range of fibres for the flora to feast on. Remember, any sudden changes to your dietary fibre intake affects your gut flora significantly, for example, if your body isn't used to legumes you may experience bloating and gas after eating them. So slowly does it when increasing your fibre intake to ensure a smooth ride with a gradual but delicious increase in your energy levels.

Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods

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