

# How stress bugs your gut

Nutrition Editor Eve Kalinik explains how stress can lead to a beleaguered physical state, including in our sensitive gut



THE FIGHT OR FLIGHT STRESS response essentially prioritises tackling perceived threat over most other systems in the body. This is a normal healthy response but, when we

experience ongoing stress, this response is never switched off and the resulting stream of hormones such as cortisol can lead to chronic, low-grade inflammation, and issues for our gut. This includes compromising the numbers of 'good' gut microbes, as well as increasing the permeability of the gut barrier. This can result in what is referred to as a 'leaky gut' and more systemic inflammation in the body, so it becomes a stress-fuelled inflammatory loop.

## Sting in the tail

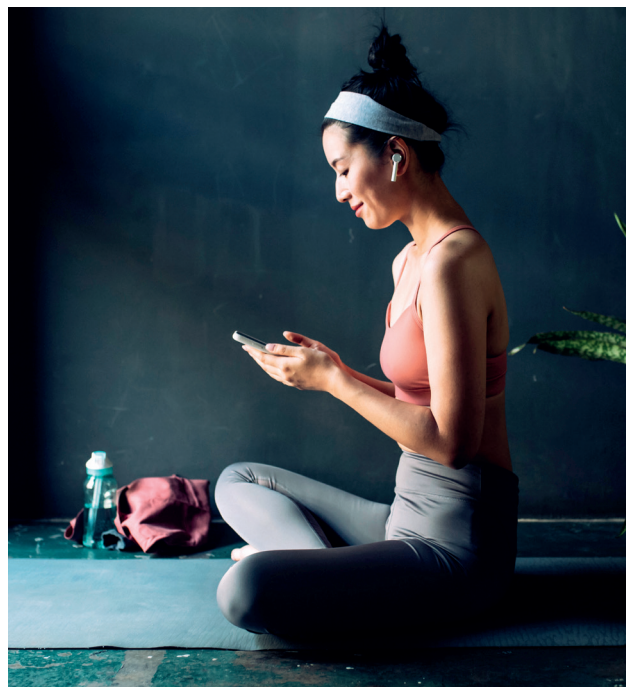
The physical effects of stress on our gut include nausea, diarrhoea and an unsettled gut. This can be from psychological stressors but our gut microbiota also has a role in our stress response. Moreover, a gut microbiota that is lacking in beneficial bacteria may lead to a propensity for heightened stress reactions. Noradrenalin, another stress hormone, not only increases the numbers of potential pathogens but studies suggest it also makes them more aggressive.

Help manage the effect of stress on the gut by seeing mealtimes as dedicated and worthy moments. This allows us to rest and digest, instead of barely chewing and with multiple devices on the go!

Increase foods that are rich in omega-3, such as oily fish, grass-fed meat and flax and chia seeds, which can assist with brain function and give anti-inflammatory support. Also consider foods rich in vitamin C – peppers, berries, broccoli and kiwi; those high in vitamin B5, such as sunflower seeds and avocados; and sources of magnesium – nuts and seeds, wholegrains and leafy greens. Myriad and diverse types of dietary fibre across all vegetables, fruit, wholegrains and nuts and seeds, as well as fermented foods, such as live yoghurt, cheese, sauerkraut and kimchi can help nourish our gut microbiota to keep it calm and collected. @evekalinik

**Next month, we explore sleep and the gut health connection**

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES



“A mindfulness practice is a necessary part of helping us and our gut feel less frazzled. Meditation, walking, breathing exercises or gentle yoga – as part of our daily routine – can give respite to mind and body.”



## Savour

Agua de Madre is a water kefir made with 'live' grains for a gut-lifting drink that's also a fab cocktail mixer.

**Reader offer** Quote code 'Homemade' and get 20% off Agua de Madre until 30 September 2020.

• Original and Pomegranate & Hibiscus water kefir, £23.70 for six bottles, [aguademadre.co.uk](http://aguademadre.co.uk)

## Soothe

Inessa BioSoothe is a unique formula created by a nutritionist to help ease inflammation.

• Food supplement, £38.99 for 60 caps, [inessawellness.com](http://inessawellness.com)



## Calm

CBII pure CBD oil is a full-spectrum oil that brings calm to mind and body. Its journey from extract to shelf is completely traceable.

**Reader offer** Quote code 'Eve20' for 20% off oils and capsules (excluding bundles) until 30 September 2020.

• Discovery Duo (oil and capsules), £19, [cbii-cbd.com](http://cbii-cbd.com)

