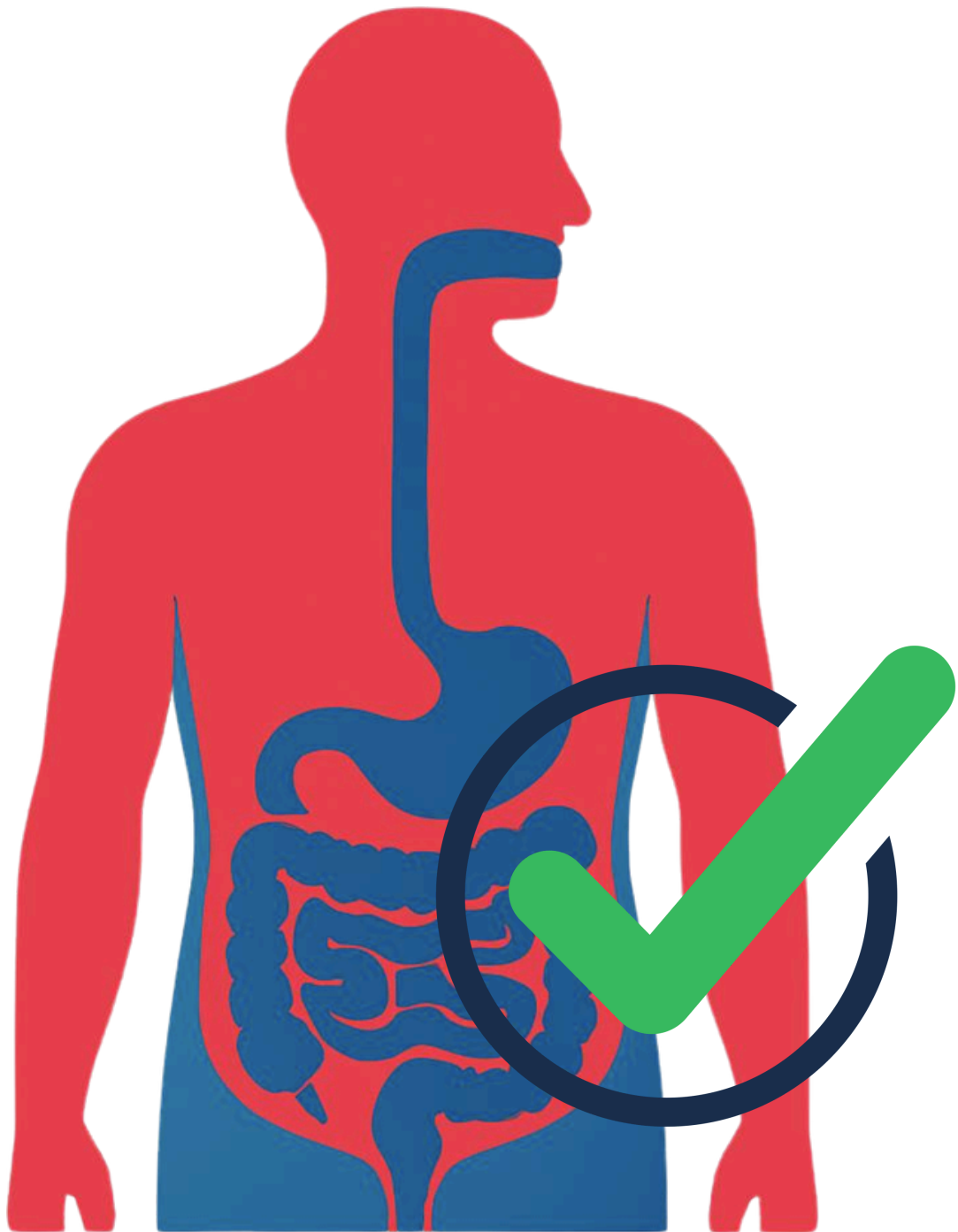


Gut Health Check



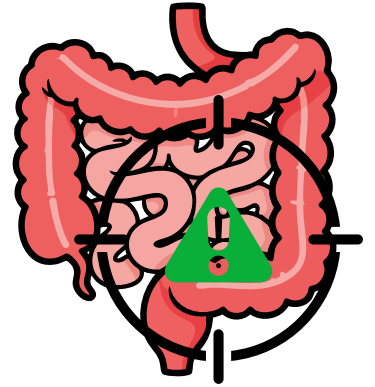
**A SIMPLE TOOL TO UNDERSTAND
YOUR GUT HEALTH AND NEXT STEPS**

What is Gut Health?

Scientific definition

Gut health is “a state of normal gastrointestinal function without active gastrointestinal disease and gut-related symptoms that affect quality of life”.¹

- The International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP)



What does it mean?

Gut health is about how well your digestive system is functioning and how you feel in your everyday life. It includes normal gut function as well as the presence and impact of symptoms. Good gut health can be present with or without a diagnosed gut condition, as long as symptoms are well managed and do not significantly affect daily activities.

How This Reflection Tool Helps

This tool helps you reflect on how your gut is functioning day to day, not just your symptoms. It highlights patterns in digestion, bowel habits, and daily routine to guide next steps.

What you'll be reflecting on

1. How your gut feels
2. Your digestive function and overall health
3. Your daily routine impacts

The Gut Health Check is based on the six-domain framework from ISAPP, which describes gut health as involving digestive function, microbiome activity, barrier integrity, immune function, metabolism, and the gut-brain axis.¹

Many of these areas require specialised or not yet widely validated tests, so this tool focuses on what can be meaningfully reported by individuals, including digestive function (such as bowel patterns informed by the Bristol Stool Chart), gut-brain interactions, and key lifestyle factors like sleep, physical activity, and dietary diversity. It is designed as a simple reflection tool to support awareness and discussion, not to diagnose or assess clinical gut health.

Reference:

1. Marco ML, Cunningham M, Bischoff SC, et al. The International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP) consensus statement on the definition and scope of gut health. *Nat Rev Gastroenterol Hepatol*. Feb 2026. doi:10.1038/s41575-026-01176-x

Gut Health Check

Your gut feels

1

How often do you experience digestive symptoms such as bloating, abdominal discomfort, reflux, or excessive gas?

- 3+ times per week → 0
- 1–2 times per week → 1
- 1–3 times per month → 2
- Less than once a month → 3

Having these symptoms often can be a sign that your gut is more sensitive or under strain. Occasional symptoms are normal, but frequent ones may affect your comfort and daily life.

2

In the past 2 weeks, how often have you felt your mood affected your digestion (e.g. stress causing stomach discomfort, urgency, or loss of appetite)?

- Often (most days) → 0
- Sometimes (1–3 times/week) → 1
- Rarely (<1 time/week) → 2

Your brain and gut are closely connected. Stress can sometimes show up as physical gut changes like stomach discomfort or changes in appetite.

Your digestive function and overall health

3

In a typical week, how often do you take medications that may affect digestion (e.g. antibiotics, pain relief, laxatives, anti-inflammatories)?

- Regularly → 1
- Not regularly → 3

Some medications can temporarily change how your gut works or how your gut bacteria behave.

4

How often do you experience infections or require antibiotics (e.g. colds, respiratory infections, gut infections) in a year?

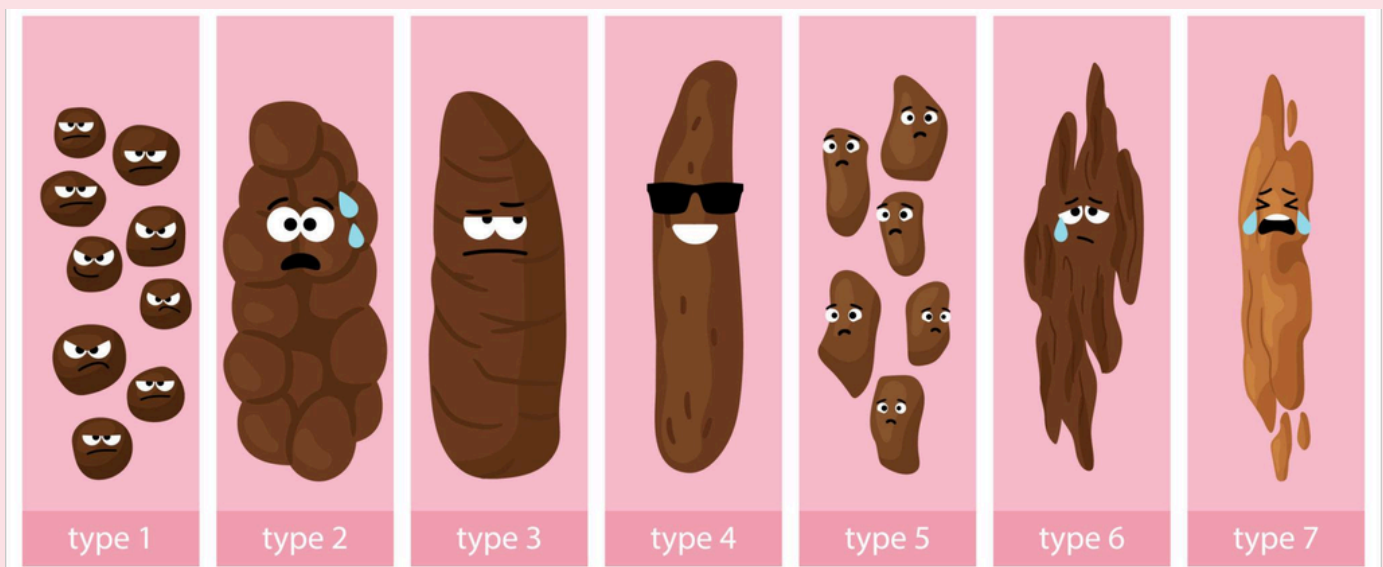
- Monthly → 0
- Every 2–4 months → 1
- Fewer than 3 times per year → 2

Getting sick occasionally is normal, but frequent infections may mean your immune system is under more pressure, which is closely linked to gut health.

Gut Health Check

5 Which best describes your usual stool pattern?

- Type 1 (Hard lumps / difficult to pass) → 0
- Type 2 (Sausage-shaped with lumps) → 1
- Type 3 / 4 (Sausage-shaped with cracks / smooth sausage) → 3
- Type 5 (Soft blobs with clear-cut edges) → 1
- Type 6 / 7 (Watery / mushy) → 0



6 How often do you usually have a bowel movement?

- less than 3 times per week → 0
- 1-3 times per day to 3 times per week → 3
- 3+ times per day regularly → 0

Stool pattern: What is “normal”?

There is a wide range of what is considered normal when it comes to bowel movements. Even healthy people can have different stool patterns depending on their diet, stress levels, hydration, and lifestyle.

“A simple way to understand your bowel habits is by looking at how often you go, and what your stool looks and feels like.

- Hard, separate lumps (difficult to pass) → may suggest slower gut movement
- Firm, smooth, sausage-like (easy to pass) → generally considered a well-balanced pattern
- Soft to very loose stools → may suggest faster gut movement or gut irritation

Gut Health Check

Stool pattern: What is “normal”? (Continued)

Bowel movements can range from 3 times per day to 3 times per week and still be considered normal. Your usual pattern over time is more important than any single day.

Ultimately, the goal is not to achieve a “perfect” stool type, but to have bowel habits that are comfortable, consistent for you, and not disruptive to your daily life. If you notice ongoing changes, such as persistent constipation, frequent loose stools, or symptoms like abdominal pain or blood in your stool, it is important to speak with a general practitioner or dietitian.



Your daily routine impacts

7

On average, how many hours of sleep do you get per night?

- 5 hours or less → 0
- 5–7 hours → 1
- 7 hours or more → 3

Sleep helps your body reset and recover, including your digestive system. Consistent, adequate sleep supports more stable gut function.

8

How many days per week do you engage in moderate physical activity (e.g. walking, gym, cycling, sport)?

- Less than 1 day → 0
- 1–2 days → 1
- 3 or more days → 2

Movement helps keep digestion regular and supports a healthy balance of gut bacteria.

9

How many different plant-based foods (vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, whole grains, herbs, spices) do you usually eat in a typical week?

- Fewer than 10 → 0
- 10–19 → 1
- 20–29 → 2
- 30 or more → 3

Different plant foods help feed different beneficial gut bacteria. More variety supports a more diverse and resilient gut microbiome.

Your Gut Health Results & Next Steps

Your gut health score

Score 18-25

Your current habits and symptoms suggest your gut is generally well-supported. You are likely maintaining a good balance between diet, lifestyle, and digestive comfort.

Score 10-17

You are on the right track, but a few small changes could noticeably improve how your gut feels.

Score 0-9

Your gut may be under strain from frequent symptoms or inconsistent habits.

This section is designed to help you understand your results and highlight practical steps that may support your gut health. Your recommendations are tailored to each category based on your responses. The trigger scores act as a reference point to help identify areas where your current habits may be supporting your gut well, or where there may be opportunities for improvement. Use these insights as a guide to help you focus on small, meaningful changes that can support better gut health over time.

Your gut feels

This section is flagged if you have any of the following lower scores:

- Q1: Digestive symptoms frequency → Score 0-1
- Q2: Stress affecting digestion → Score 0-1

If one or more of these apply, the recommendations below may be helpful.

- Digestive symptoms:
 - Try keeping a simple food + symptom note for 1 week to identify patterns
 - Aim for regular meals (every 3–4 hours) to support digestive rhythm
 - Avoid self-restricting multiple foods without professional guidance
- Stress management:
 - Include a daily stress-management habit (e.g. walking, breathing exercises)
 - Try to eat in a relaxed environment where possible
 - Notice if symptoms increase during stressful periods

Your Gut Health Results & Next Steps

Your digestive function and overall health

This section is flagged if you have any of the following lower scores:

- Q3: Medication use → Score 1
- Q4: Illness frequency → Score 0–1
- Q5: Stool pattern → Score 0–1
- Q6: Bowel frequency → Score 0

If one or more of these apply, the recommendations below may be helpful.

- If medications or illness are a factor:
 - Focus on maintaining routine eating patterns and hydration consistency
 - Track whether symptoms started after a specific trigger (e.g. antibiotics)
 - Seek professional advice if changes persist or worsen over time
- Support stool regularity and comfort:
 - Establish a consistent toilet routine (e.g. after breakfast when the gut is naturally active)
 - Respond to natural urges rather than delaying
 - Adjust fiber gradually and evenly across the day rather than large increases at once

Your daily routine impacts

This section is flagged if you have any of the following lower scores:

- Q7: Sleep → Score 0-1
- Q8: Physical activity → Score 0-1
- Q9: Plant diversity → Score 0-1

If one or more of these apply, the recommendations below may be helpful.

- Improve sleep:
 - Keep a consistent sleep schedule
 - Reduce screen exposure before bed
- Increase physical activity:
 - Start with 10–20 minutes of movement, 3×/week (build consistency over time)
 - Walking after meals can help support digestion

Your Gut Health Results & Next Steps

Your daily routine impacts

- Increase plant diversity in your diet:
 - Add 1 new plant food per day/week
 - Aim for variety across the week
 - Include foods like legumes, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices

Take the next step

Improving your gut health does not require a complete overhaul - small, consistent habits can make a big difference over time.

Explore our “**Foundation of a Healthy Gut**” resource for simple, practical strategies you can start this week, including:

- How to build plant diversity gradually
- Everyday habits that support digestion
- Easy ways to support your gut microbiome
- Fun and interactive gut health activities and tools to keep learning engaging

