



Peggy Lillis
Foundation
C. diff Education and Advocacy

Nutrition and Lifestyle Guide for *C. diff* Recovery

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Foreword by Bruce Hirsch, MD

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Foreword



We Love Your Guts

Foreword by Bruce Hirsch, MD

Eat healthy.
Eat well.
Eat like your life depended on it.

Having *C. diff* has changed our lives. Whether first-hand or through a loved one, we have fought this disease and know its devastating effects. We've put together this nutrition guide and recipes to help repair, rebuild and sustain a healthy gut by rehydrating, soothing, adding fiber—a natural, simple and delicious ingredient that is a powerhouse in gut health—and avoiding foods known to cause inflammation and may be poorly tolerated during an active infection.

The recipes in here are for all of us. For those who have had *C. diff* and those who never had *C. diff*, for everyone who wants to promote the best health and reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. For those of us who love to eat delicious foods. For those who believe that there is nothing better than celebrating life by sharing great food with great people, AND for those healthy bacteria inside of us that keep the best parts of us vital.

This Guide is for our beneficial bacteria to keep us healthy. If our guts have a diversity of beneficial bacteria, then our bodies will be resilient and less

likely to develop *C. diff* and other infections if exposed. Whether you're dealing with an active infection, are in recovery or want to prevent *C. diff*, this Guide will aid you along the way.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND *C. DIFF* AND AN IMBALANCED GUT

C. diff, formally known as *Clostridioides difficile*, is a bacteria that can cause terrible diarrhea, colitis, dehydration, toxic megacolon, and even death.

C. diff proliferates when good bacteria are diminished in the large intestine and are no longer able keep this opportunistic germ in check. It takes over the colon and produces toxins that cause inflammation of the colon's lining. Just like fluid rushes in to cause a blister when skin is inflamed, fluid rushes in the large intestine. That fluid is the diarrhea of *C. diff* infection. The diarrhea is the body's defense mechanism to wash away the toxin and to try to flush out the *C. diff* germ itself. This natural defense, however, causes many complications.

C. diff usually occurs after taking antibiotics. Antibiotics are lethal against the bacteria that cause infection, but also kill off beneficial bacteria that help preserve health and keep *C. diff* at bay. Biologically, we are not alone. We live in a world that teems with microbial life. There are bacteria on the surfaces of our body that keep our skin healthy. Our bodies co-evolved with our bacterial partners. There are more bacterial cells than human cells that contribute to the healthy body. The total of bacterial genes outnumber our own genes 100 fold. Microbially, each of us resembles more of a diverse forest than a solitary tree.

Foreword *Continued*

The good germs of our intestines do many jobs. They crowd out and prevent dangerous germs from taking hold ("colonization resistance.") They metabolize nutrients that we are otherwise unable to ingest, and make substances which nourish our colonic lining and promote health throughout the body ("short chain fatty acids.") The diversity of microbial life in our intestines, called the *gut microbiome*, stimulates and strengthens the immune system, keeps our metabolism healthy, decreases obesity, reduces atherosclerosis, and reduces inflammation in a symbiotic relationship that makes all aspects of our health vital and resilient.

When the gut microbiome is diminished and distorted by frequent antibiotics and unhealthy diet, the chronic diseases of our modern world prevail: obesity, diabetes, heart disease, depression. We describe this sick microbiome as "dysbiosis."

So, what to do? Feed the good guys! You can do so with a high fiber diet that focuses on whole foods, and minimizes processed foods.

Apart from avoiding antibiotics when possible (remember, proper antibiotic treatment saves lives!), the best way to promote the good bacteria in our guts is to feed them.

ABOUT OUR GUIDE

The Guide is organized in line with most people's experience of *C. diff* infection. First, we delve into how to ensure you're well-hydrated and getting proper nutrition during an active infection. Then, we provide tips on how to use nutrition to improve your recovery and mitigate the chances of recurrence, as well as how to prevent *C. diff*. Lastly, the Guide contains

information and tips on how to repair your relationship with food, which is often disrupted by a *C. diff* infection.

The recipes were developed by people who have battled *C. diff*. They contain hard-won wisdom. They were also all assessed for caloric and nutritional information by a registered dietitian, including the amount of fiber provided. The recipes are meant to be nourishing, soothing, and fairly easy to make. While fiber is very good for our guts, during an active infection, inflammation can make easing insoluble fiber uncomfortable.

So go slow in the beginning. If you don't have a lot of fiber in your diet right now, the high fiber fares can cause bloating, gas, and pain. Start with a quarter of a regular portion of one fiber filled dish per day and eat a similar amount for 4 or 5 days and then increase by an additional quarter portion. Increasing fiber intake gradually every 4–5 days allows the system to adjust so there will be little discomfort and bloating, but there will still be gas: Let the winds blow free! Passing gas is your gut microbiome tooting its horn and commending you on your wonderful diet.

Each of us are individuals with individual needs. Serious digestive issues should prompt consultation with your medical provider. If certain dishes or foods don't agree with you, stay away from them for a while, but try them again after several weeks; the body is dynamic and changing. Our health surges and improves with care and we are able to enjoy new things over time.

Eat fun.

Eat well.

Eat healthy.

We love your guts, and your guts love you too.

Introduction

Our Mom Peggy loved to cook and bake. She enjoyed trying out new recipes and modifying favorites to make them healthier and tastier. Mom used to joke that she could be thinner but “I love my own cooking too much.” Mom found cooking relaxing, and beyond her own love of food, Mom loved to feed people. Though she had grown up eating typical Irish-American fare (most things were boiled), Mom eventually taught herself to make Italian Sunday sauce, stir-fried Asian food of all kinds, and bake her own cheesecake.

Among our family and friends, Mom’s cooking was legendary. Most summers, she would host “Mexican Mondays” at our Surf Club cabana, when she would make an entire Mexican feast (tacos, guacamole, rice, and beans, etc.) using only a gas grill and a hot plate. Every Easter, she baked a “do it yourself” bunny cake, which all of her nieces and nephews loved. If a friend stopped by, Mom offered them food. It was one of the many ways that — despite being a poor single parent — Mom made sure we never felt poor.

Raising two sons in the 1970s and 80s, Mom was determined that we would know how to cook. She used to say “I’m not going to have the two of you be useless in the kitchen,” something our spouses have benefited from greatly. In the years since she passed, cooking has also been a way for us to connect with her. In particular, when we miss her during the holidays, making a recipe that she always served helps us feel connected to Mom.



Peggy’s son Liam with her grandson Greyson.

We cannot live without food. Food can also bring joy, solace, and community. But when someone is battling a *C.diff* infection, food can seem like an enemy. We have heard from thousands of *C.diff* patients and survivors, desperate to know what they can and should eat. The symptoms of a *C.diff* infection, particularly nausea, make eating difficult. At the same time, our bodies need nutrition to bolster our immune systems to fight infection. Because *C.diff* infections occur when our gut microbiome is disrupted, restoring our guts to a healthy state is important to prevent recurrences.

That’s why we are thrilled to offer this nutrition and lifestyle guide for *C.diff* patients and survivors. Initially the idea of our Board members Dr. Bruce Hirsch and Christina Fuhrman, this guide has been a labor of love for many volunteers. The guidance has been vetted by both doctors and a registered dietitian, and all the recipes were developed by *C.diff* survivors. We have also included nutritional information for each, so you can see if you’re getting enough calories and nutrients.

Battling *C.diff* is hard, and it can be isolating. So in addition to nutritional information and recipes, this guide also has tips on how to care for your mental and emotional well-being. And, if you need additional help, reach out to our Peer Support Network at peersupport@peggyfoundation.org. We wish you a speedy recovery and a life of delicious meals.

Be well,

Christian & Liam Lillis

Peggy’s sons and co-founders

Guide to Dealing with Active Infection

When dealing with an active *C.diff* infection, either an initial one or a recurrence, eating can be very difficult. Even once you're being treated, it can take time for the symptoms to come under control. Symptoms like diarrhea, nausea, fever, and others associated with an active *C.diff* infection can seriously impact a person's appetite and digestion. During an active infection, focusing on foods that are gentle on the stomach while ensuring you're properly hydrated and getting sufficient nutrition is critical. This section includes priorities for nutrition and tips to help you get what you need.

Navigating an Active *C. diff* Infection

In the US, half a million individuals suffer from *C. diff* each year, but there isn't an agreed-upon diet when it comes to active *C. diff* infections.¹

Further, people who have experienced a *C. diff* infection, particularly those who have battled recurrences, may deal with post-infectious irritable bowel syndrome. Post-infectious IBS can mimic the symptoms of an infection, so speak with your doctor about what it means to be cured.

Navigating your diet with *C. diff* can come with challenges—both physical and emotional—that can make mealtimes anything from tricky to even traumatic.

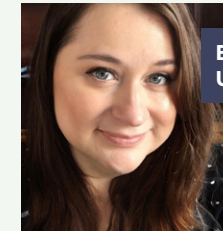
If you have *C. diff* and are looking for answers, this guide suggests foods to focus on, foods to limit, and tips for how to nourish yourself during this time.

Before getting into which foods to focus on, let's talk about what's happening in your body during an active *C. diff* infection. *C. diff* is an opportunistic bacteria that grows when the microbial balance of the gut is disturbed. As it reproduces, *C. diff* bacteria release toxins that can cause frequent diarrhea, nausea, severe stomach pain, fever, and inflammation of the colon.

The pain, discomfort, and inflammation caused by *C. diff* also can lead to a loss of appetite, poor nutrient absorption, dehydration, and weight loss. Every gut is unique and what works for one person may not work for another, but the food you choose to include in your diet at this time can be a powerful tool to facilitate healing. So listen to your body. In the pages that follow, you'll find strategies for managing symptoms and supporting your recovery process step-by-step and day-by-day.

“

I had no idea what to eat both while I was sick and while I was recovering. Much of the medical advice recommended foods that made my symptoms worse, such as gluten and dairy.”



ELMIRA
UTZ

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/what-is.html>

The 3 Priorities During An Active Infection

During the acute phase, there are three main priorities when it comes to diet:

1. Rehydrate and replace
2. Limit irritation and inflammation
3. Nourish and soothe

1. REHYDRATE AND REPLACE

Symptoms during an active *C. diff* infection can lead to a significant loss of fluid and electrolytes which are both important for many key functions in the body. This means rehydrating and replacing those electrolytes (such as, sodium, potassium, and calcium) is the first priority.

During severe symptoms, sufficiently hydrating may be difficult which is why it's not uncommon for those with *C. diff* to be hospitalized with clinical dehydration. To reduce this risk, hydrating and replacing electrolytes is essential.

To hydrate: Sip water, herbal tea, or chew on ice chips throughout the day. Ideally, you want to hydrate before you begin to feel thirsty. Keep in mind that while drinking water throughout the day helps support hydration, water doesn't replace electrolytes.

To replace electrolytes: Broths and soups help to hydrate while offering some electrolyte replacement. Beverages like Pedialyte are specifically designed to replenish electrolytes following sickness. You can also make a homemade sports drink by using the recipe for Homemade Coconut Lime Electrolyte-Ade on [page 33](#).



The 3 Priorities During An Active Infection *Continued*



Dairy Products



Gluten-Containing Foods



Gas-Producing Foods



Alcohol



Sugar and
Sugar Substitutes



Raw Vegetables



Spicy Foods



Foods Rich in
Insoluble Fiber



Caffeine-Containing
Food or Drinks



Processed Meats

2. LIMIT IRRITATION AND INFLAMMATION

C. diff causes significant inflammation in the gut, making it extremely sensitive. During an active infection, limiting items that can cause further irritation or inflammation is an important step to support the gut's healing.

It may also seem counterintuitive, but many nutritious foods like whole grains, nuts, and raw vegetables can lead to additional discomfort and may need to be avoided during this phase in recovery. In particular, foods rich in insoluble fiber (whole grains, nuts, seeds, and unpeeled fruits and vegetables) create roughage (indigestible material) as they travel through the gut which can irritate the already inflamed intestinal walls.

Potential Irritants/Inflammatory-Promoting Foods

When it comes to *C. diff*, there really are no “wrong” or “right” foods — just different priorities. While the foods below could be irritating or inflammatory, you don't have to avoid a food that you find appealing. The list below offers a basic guide on potential irritants, but you may find there are items on this list you do well with or items not included that don't feel great to eat.

- Dairy products
- Gluten-containing foods (e.g. pasta, bread, etc.)
- Gas-producing foods (this may depend on the individual, but cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts may contribute as well as legumes)
- Alcohol
- Sugar and sugar substitutes
- Raw vegetables
- Spicy foods
- Foods rich in insoluble fiber (e.g. whole grains, nuts, seeds, etc.)
- Caffeine-containing food and drinks
- Unpasteurized items (these foods can come with an increased risk of food-borne illness)
- Processed meats

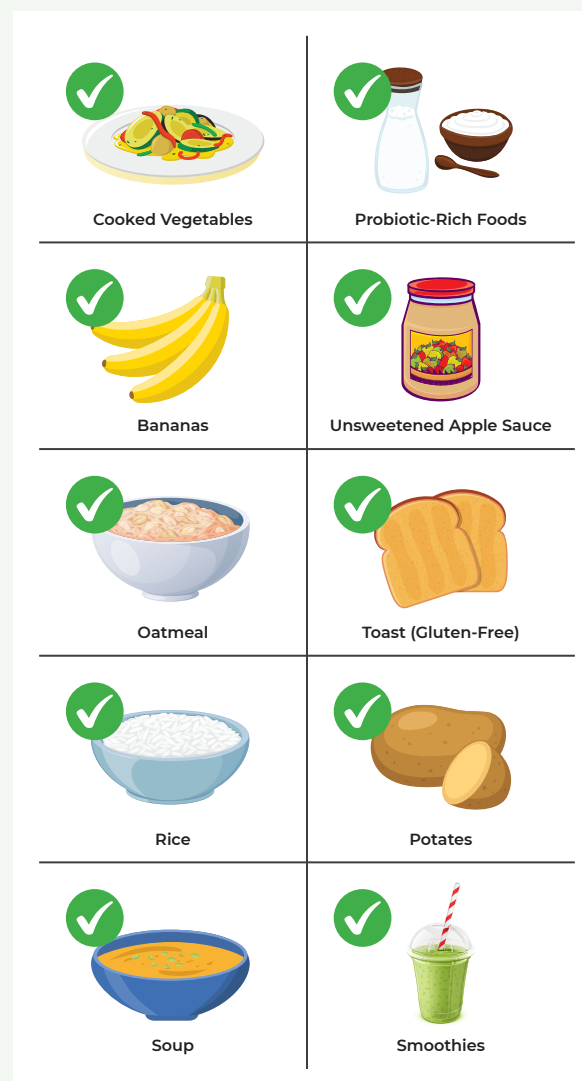
The 3 Priorities During An Active Infection *Continued*

3. NOURISH AND SOOTHE

In addition to hydrating and limiting irritants, your body also needs energy and nutrients to help fight the infection. In general, foods that are simply-prepared and have a soft texture tend to be well tolerated. Of course, the severity of the infection and its symptoms can vary widely so you may like certain foods more than others, but the options below can give you a starting point.

Part 2 (on [page 13](#)) includes more details on specific foods to help rebuild gut health, but the list below includes some ideas for foods that can be soothing with an active *C.diff* infection.

- Cooked vegetables
- Probiotic-rich foods (tempeh, miso, kefir)
- Bananas
- Unsweetened apple sauce
- Oatmeal
- Toast (Gluten free seems to be well tolerated)
- Rice
- Potatoes
- Soup
- Smoothies (blended drinks can reduce roughage, making some fruits and vegetables easier to tolerate)



Tips for Eating During an Active Infection



TIPS FOR FOOD PREPARATION DURING AN ACTIVE INFECTION

1. Practice mindful hygiene

Practicing good cleaning while cooking is essential to avoid spreading *C. diff* because spores can last outside of the body for months. It's also important to frequently wash hands with soap and warm water and disinfect surfaces regularly with bleach.

2. Use a pressure cooker/slow cooker

While it's not necessary to invest in new appliances, a slow cooker or pressure cooker can be a helpful kitchen companion because both require little active cooking time. When you're not feeling well, throwing in a few simple ingredients and letting the appliance do the work ensures you'll have a nourishing meal that doesn't require you to spend hours in the kitchen.

3. Make a big batch

If you do have the energy to prepare something, make a big batch so you can limit future cooking. If there are leftovers, freeze them in meal-sized portions so all you have to do is heat them up.

4. Be mindful of food safety

With gut health already compromised, you want to make sure you're reducing exposure to food-borne illness by avoiding cross-contamination, washing produce thoroughly, and cooking food to its proper temperature.

TECHNIQUES TO BOOST HYDRATION AND REPLENISH NUTRIENTS

Whether you're preparing your own food or not, eating and drinking when you're not feeling well can be challenging. *C. diff* infections often bring about nausea and/or a lack of appetite, so oftentimes the last thing you want to do is eat. At the same time, nutritious foods can help your body fight off the infection, so being strategic about your approach can help make nourishing yourself an easier process.

Tips to help boost hydration and replenish nutrients:

1. Eat smaller, more frequent meals

Smaller meals may feel better to eat than larger meals. In fact, large meals may seem totally overwhelming, so if you relate to that, opt for smaller portions.

2. Keep it simple

No need to go crazy with multiple ingredients and flavors. Bland, simply-seasoned food tends to be better than spicy.

3. Try cool options

Food that is chilled tends to give off less odor, which can be helpful if you're already feeling nauseous. A cool applesauce or chilled overnight oats can do the trick.

4. Drink your calories

If a meal seems like too much, go for calories in liquid form — soups, broths, smoothies, or shakes provide good nutrition without the roughage that you may experience with meals.

“

What was most frustrating was finding the balance of what my body could tolerate combined with the nutrition that I needed.”



CHRISTINA
FUHRMAN

Tips for Eating During an Active Infection *Continued*

“

C. diff has taught me a lot about diet and nutrition — what we eat does matter, and feeding the good bacteria is important. It's a realization that was hard-won, but worth it.”



CHRISTINA
FUHRMAN

5. Try baby food purées

It may seem strange, but the amount of high-quality baby food has really increased over the last few years. When you're really feeling symptomatic, baby food can be a nutritious, unfussy option that doesn't need any prep and is made from whole foods. Look for options with no added sugar.

6. Consider a digestive enzyme

Digestive enzymes may help your body to break down your food properly allowing you to absorb more of its nutrients.

7. Ask about probiotics

Probiotics help replace the good bacteria in the gut, which gets overwhelmed with a *C. diff* infection. There isn't a specific probiotic recommendation, while dealing with an active infection, but certain strains (like Bifidobacterium, Lactobacillus, and Saccharomyces boulardii) may be helpful. Probiotics may help in preventing infection, but are slightly controversial during active infections due to limited evidence.

Chat with your doctor or Registered Dietitian about which one may be best for you.

8. Add anti-inflammatories

Herbs and roots like ginger, turmeric, peppermint, and cinnamon may help to reduce inflammation, whether you drink them as tea or add them to your food.

9. Be strategic about eating times

You may find there is a certain time of day when you feel more open to eating. Whether that's earlier in the day or later, plan meals for when you have the most appetite.

10. Start slow

As you begin experimenting with adding foods back into your diet, start slow. You may want to start with a few bites to see how it feels and give your gut some time to adapt.

Guide to Preventing Recurrence and Re-establishing Gut Health

Once you've moved beyond the acute phase, re-establishing gut health and reducing risk of recurrence are the next priorities. 1 out of 6 people who have suffered with *C. diff* experience a recurrence (but it may affect up to 35%²). Likelihood also increases with each episode of *C. diff*.³ Diet and lifestyle shifts can help to reduce this risk.⁴

Recurrences are most likely to occur 2-8 weeks following treatment, so activity during this time can be important in reducing recurrent infections.⁵ Those who've had *C. diff* before, are over age 65, have had a prolonged stay at a healthcare facility, or who are taking additional antibiotics are also at an increased risk of recurrence.⁶

If you're on the road to recovery, read on for some tips to reduce recurrence and re-establish gut health.

2 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25668664/>

3 <https://www.ccjm.org/content/87/6/347>

4 <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/after.html>

5 <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/after.html>

6 <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/article/131/1/109/5580530>

Tips for Reducing Risk

While these tips may help some patients, we recommend you discuss any changes with your physician who is familiar with your particular health background.

1. COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PRACTITIONER

If you have a history of *C. diff*, be sure to communicate this to your healthcare providers who can keep that in mind when considering prescribing an antibiotic. Research shows that 1 in 3 outpatient antibiotic prescriptions is unnecessary. Meaning the person who received the antibiotic didn't have a bacterial infection.⁷ One day you may need an antibiotic, but some may be preferred over others for individuals who've had *C. diff* in the past.

2. REDUCE INFLAMMATION

Research is increasingly showing a connection between inflammation in the body and health. Inflammation is an important part of how the body is able to heal itself, but constant inflammation stresses the immune system.

Reducing inflammation in your body through diet can help reduce your risk of a *C. diff* infection. *C. diff* exposes the gut to toxins that significantly increase inflammation; this inflammatory environment allows the infection to thrive while making it difficult for beneficial microbes to survive.⁸

By reducing inflammation in the body, you reduce immune load and help to facilitate the healing process. Reducing inflammation can also help boost nutrient absorption which can be significantly compromised with a *C. diff* infection.

“

Diet and nutrition have played a large role in my recovery, learning what I could and couldn't eat. I went through a long journey to teach my body how to digest food again. The damage *C. diff* caused was real and painful.”



PAM
MCCOLLISTER

⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/data/outpatient-prescribing/index.html>

⁸ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-20746-4>

Tips for Reducing Risk *Continued*

3. VITAMIN D

Low levels of vitamin D may be associated with a reduced ability to resolve a *C. diff* infection and an increased length of hospital stays.⁹

Vitamin D is a nutrient that can come from the diet, but it can also be synthesized in the body following exposure to the sun. Depending on where you live, the time of year, and your age, you may not be able to synthesize adequate amounts of vitamin D. You may need to make vitamin D-rich foods more of a priority in your diet or consider a vitamin D supplement to meet your needs.

Foods like fatty fish, egg yolks, some mushrooms, and fortified foods like milk, plant-based milks, or orange juice, offer vitamin D. If you're curious about your vitamin D level, ask for it to be checked with a blood test next time you see your practitioner.

4. TALK TO YOUR PRACTITIONER ABOUT YOUR MEDICATION

Some common medications may be associated with an increased risk of *C. diff*. For example, proton-pump inhibitors and other medications that reduce stomach acid (antacids) may increase risk of recurrence.¹⁰ Similarly, H2-blockers may have the same effect.¹¹

Always talk to your physician before stopping any medication.



⁹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3871280/>

¹⁰ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2612117>

¹¹ <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0056498>

Tips for Reducing Risk *Continued*

“

I wasn't prepared for how different my digestion would be even when I was clear of *C. diff*. I became anxious about eating because I wasn't sure what was going to hurt and every digestive upset would bring with it the worry that *C. diff* was coming back.”



5. MITIGATE EXPOSURE

Keep in mind that even if you aren't experiencing symptoms, you can also still be colonized with *C. diff*. This means it is possible to spread the bacteria to others or re-expose yourself. *C. diff* can live dormant on surfaces for months and may reactivate in the gut if they're ingested. If possible, use a dedicated restroom that can be disinfected regularly and wash your hands with soap and warm water after using the restroom and before meals.

To clean surfaces effectively, the CDC recommends making your own cleaning solution that includes 1 part bleach to 9 parts water to clean surfaces.¹²

6. REPLENISH BENEFICIAL GUT BACTERIA

Lastly, during the recovery process you will want to help restore balance of the gut bacteria by eating a variety of whole foods rich in both prebiotics and probiotics.

Check out the next section to learn more about strategies to help do this.

¹² <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/prevent.html>

Foods to Focus On

There isn't a specific recommended diet to reduce risk of relapse, but a focus on nutrient-dense, anti-inflammatory, and easy-to-digest foods can help restore balance to your gut and support the healing process.

Following antibiotic use and *C. diff* episodes, the gut's bacterial diversity is wiped out. Eating a variety of whole foods (foods that are not highly processed and do not contain added sugars, artificial ingredients, etc.) can help repopulate beneficial bacterial strains and prevent recurrence.

Once your symptoms subside, you may find some foods you used to enjoy may not work for you, so start slow as you add more foods to your diet during recovery. Healing the gut takes time.

Let's explore which foods may best support the healing process...

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

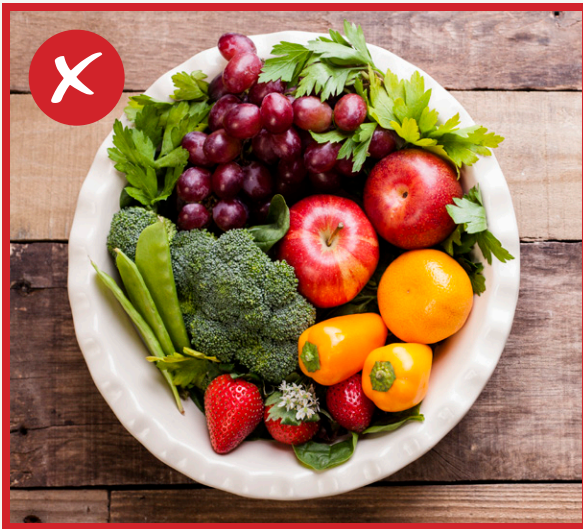
Fruits and vegetables are rich in nutrients and anti-inflammatory compounds that help support gut health, but depending on where you're at in the recovery process, some may feel better to eat than others.

For example, cruciferous vegetables like brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, and broccoli may cause gas in some people which can be uncomfortable and may feel irritating. On the other hand, starchy vegetables like peeled potatoes and peeled sweet potatoes tend to be good options that may help to reduce symptoms of diarrhea.

Very fibrous fruits and vegetables like celery, hardy greens, or unpeeled fruit and vegetables may be uncomfortable. These foods are high in insoluble fiber which passes through the gut



Foods to Focus On *Continued*



undigested and creates what is referred to as roughage. While insoluble fiber has a major role in supporting gut health, when the intestinal walls are already inflamed (like they are following a *C. diff* infection), these foods can brush against the intestinal walls and create further irritation and inflammation.

But, that doesn't mean fibrous fruits and vegetables need to be avoided altogether. In fact, blending them into either a soup or a smoothie can offer nutritional benefits while reducing roughage and potential irritation. Fruits and vegetables rich in insoluble fiber are highly nutritious and generally health-supportive foods, but until inflammation in the gut has receded, you may want to go slowly and take note of how you feel when you eat them.

Unlike insoluble fiber, soluble fiber dissolves and creates a soothing gel as it moves through the gut. Fruit and vegetables high in soluble fiber, like bananas, apple pulp (minus the peel), berries, and citrus fruits are nutrient-dense options that are less likely to cause irritation and may actually help to clear *C. diff* from the GI tract.



GRAINS

Grains tend to be high in B vitamins and can be an excellent source of fiber. They're also energy-rich and can be comforting foods that aid in the recovery process.

There are two categories of grains — whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains are grains that contain 3 parts — the germ, the endosperm, and the bran. They're nutritious, heart-healthy options that offer healthy fats and fiber. On the other hand, refined grains are processed to only have 1 part of the grain, the endosperm. This makes refined grains more shelf-stable, but it also removes the fiber and healthy fats that whole grains contain.

Foods to Focus On *Continued*

Refined grain sources, including white bread, white rice, white crackers (like Saltines), and white pasta, can be a good option during recovery. They're considered low residue foods which means they can be an easy-to-digest option as the gut is still healing.

While whole grains foods like brown rice and whole wheat bread are healthful foods, they contain insoluble fiber that may further irritate an already inflamed gut. During recovery when you're trying to reduce inflammation, you may want to limit whole grains that are particularly rich in insoluble fiber — like corn, wheat bran, and whole-wheat breads — and opt for whole grains that are higher in soluble fiber like oats and barley.

FATS

Fats are essential for neurological health, hormonal health, nutrient absorption, and they help give our food flavor.

Of course, not all fats are created equal. For example, unsaturated fatty acids like those found in plant-based fat sources like olive oil, avocados, and walnuts, as well as fatty fish like salmon, have been shown to be anti-inflammatory. Whereas saturated fats, such as those that come from animal-based foods like red meat, may be more inflammatory.

When recovering from *C. diff*, fatty foods, like fried foods, may be particularly irritating.

NUTS/SEEDS

Nuts and seeds are a great source of healthy fats that can help to reduce inflammation. They're also another source of insoluble fiber and, like the fruits and vegetables and whole grains discussed earlier, they create roughage as they travel through the digestive tract. Nut butters can help to be a good source of nutrients without the irritation.



“

Now that *C. diff* is behind me, I'm passionate about eating for gut health. I think about everything that goes in my mouth, and my meals are not only nutritious, but also include plenty of probiotic and prebiotic foods to keep my gut healthy and strong so that I never again have to go to war with *C. diff*.”



KEE KEE
BUCKLEY

BEANS/LEGUMES

Beans and legumes are rich in protein, soluble fiber, iron, and magnesium, but they can also be gas-producing which increases discomfort for some. Soaking uncooked beans overnight or adding a piece of kombu seaweed during cooking may reduce this effect and make them easier to digest.

FERMENTED FOODS

Fermented foods are rich in probiotics — the beneficial bacteria that can get wiped out following antibiotic use. These foods play a major role in helping to restore balance of good bacteria in the gut. Examples include fresh sauerkraut (i.e., not from a can), kimchi, tempeh, and miso. Probiotic supplements may be helpful, but due to how the Food and Drug Administration approves supplements, it can be hard to discern the potency and effectiveness of over-the-counter probiotics (see [page 22](#)).

DAIRY

Dairy as a category can be a bit confusing, because some people may do well with it and others may find it highly irritating. The recommendations around dairy can also seem contradictory because patients are told to limit dairy as a category during *C. diff* recovery, but some foods that are considered dairy may be recommended.

While this seems like a discrepancy, it's because some forms of dairy may be easier to digest than others. For example, many people find they're able to enjoy foods like yogurt or kefir without issue. These foods contain live cultures that add good bacteria to the gut while also helping to break down lactose (which some people may find irritating).

Foods to Focus On *Continued*

ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES AND ANTIMICROBIALS

Some foods may also be particularly helpful for their anti-inflammatory and/or antimicrobial properties in helping to reduce risk of *C. diff* relapse. Garlic, cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, and peppermint may also help to reduce risk of re-infection.^{13,14}

Teas may also offer comfort and hydration as well as reduce inflammation.

FOODS TO LIMIT

During the recovery process, you may be balancing different priorities or motivations when it comes to your diet, but the following items may lead to additional inflammation and/or discomfort and prolong the healing process.

- Sugar and artificial sweeteners
- Spicy foods
- Greasy foods
- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Dairy
- Carbonated beverages

“

It was a slow, steep uphill battle to reintroduce a variety of food items to my diet.”



CAROL
RAYE

¹³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/nrgastro.2015.220>

¹⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28489336/>

C. diff FAQs

SHOULD I TAKE SUPPLEMENTS?

Supplements can be a helpful part of the recovery process, but choosing the right supplement may take some research. Some nutrients consumed in excess, like iron, may potentially increase risk of a recurrent infection.

The FDA doesn't regulate supplements in the U.S., so what's on the label may not match what's in the bottle. To ensure you're getting what you want, opt for supplement brands that are third-party tested (for example, by NSF-certified).

Lastly, a blood test will confirm if your nutrient levels fall within normal limits. If you're concerned about a particular nutrient or are curious about your levels, request a blood test next time you visit your doctor.

WHAT ABOUT PROBIOTICS?

Research on whether probiotics help reduce the risk of initial and/or recurring infections is inconclusive, which means they aren't currently recommended by clinical guidelines. While there is research to show they may offer significant benefits, probiotics may be harmful in some patients — for example, those who are immunocompromised.

The issue is further compounded by the fact that probiotic supplement quality varies widely and label claims may not accurately reflect the contents of the supplement.

However, probiotic-rich foods may offer the benefits without the potential downsides of supplements.

SHOULD I CONSIDER A FECAL MICROBIOTA TRANSPLANT (FMT)?

In your research following a *C. diff* diagnosis, you're likely to see mention of a treatment called fecal microbiota transplant, or FMT. While there are several methods employed, an FMT is when stool from a healthy donor is transplanted into a sick patient's large intestine, repopulating the gut microbiome with diverse good bacteria.

This treatment option has been shown to be effective, however, this practice isn't widely available. While this may be a promising area of opportunity for healing from *C. diff* and has been a life-saving intervention for many who have suffered from *C. diff*, long-term studies of their impact are mostly lacking and sample sizes included in existing studies tend to be small.¹⁵

FMT is considered experimental by the FDA and clinical guidelines suggest it as a potential treatment only after 2 recurrent episodes of *C. diff* have been documented.^{16 17}

If you're interested, talk it over with a physician who has expertise in this area. You can also find additional information about treatment in our **Care Guide**.

15 <https://www.nature.com/articles/nrgastro.2015.220>

16 <https://www.ccjm.org/content/87/6/347>

17 <https://www.healio.com/news/gastroenterology/20210518/acg-publishes-guidelines-for-preferred-treatment-of-c-difficile-infection>

Navigating the Emotional Impacts of *C. diff*

The journey to recover from *C. diff* is both physical and emotional. While the emotional impact of *C. diff* is often overlooked, it's no less significant.

The physical symptoms caused by *C. diff* can take a significant emotional toll. For example, common feelings may include isolation, disconnection from and distrust of your body, anxiety over food, and grief over missing out on everything from typical daily activities to larger life events. If you're on the journey towards physical recovery, you're not alone in the mental and emotional frustration that may come with it, but there are some strategies that can help.

Lifestyle-based Suggestions

Diet is an important aspect of the recovery process, but when it comes to overall well-being, nutrition is just one piece of the puzzle. In fact, there are many lifestyle factors that have nothing to do with food, but can still support the recovery process.



BREATHE DEEPLY

How you breath impacts how your body operates on a cellular level. Short, shallow breaths initiate the body's stress response, which means the body goes into survival mode so things like digestion and repair get put on hold. It also creates inflammation, which can already be elevated during a *C. diff* episode.

Deep breaths, on the other hand, activate what is referred to as the body's parasympathetic nervous system, which helps the body enter a more relaxed, "rest and repair" state. Since stress can trigger *C. diff* to release toxins, deep breathing may be an effective strategy to relieve stress and lessen the severity of symptoms.¹⁸

Breathing deeply becomes more natural with practice and there are a variety of techniques that may help. One such method is box breathing (inhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4, exhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4 and repeat). Even the deceptively simple practice of taking a slow, deep breath while focusing on filling up your belly, ribs, and then chest, can work wonders.

¹⁸ <https://asm.org/Articles/2021/March/Targeting-the-Metabolic-Basis-of-C-difficile-s-Lif>

Lifestyle-based Suggestions *Continued*



RECONNECT WITH YOUR BODY IN A POSITIVE WAY

Illness may create a sense of disconnection with, or a negative connection with your body. As you heal, re-establishing a more positive relationship with your body will help you reclaim joy. Like deep breathing, movement is another way to reconnect with your body. Enjoyable movement allows you to reconnect with your body on positive terms. This may look different for everyone, but things like yoga, dancing, tai chi, qigong, walking, and stretching may help to re-establish a positive relationship and trust with your body.

As you recover, allow your movement to be more intuitive rather than putting pressure on yourself to align with a particular movement routine. You may find going for a walk helpful, or you may find doing some light stretching to your favorite music is more your speed for now. Your movement routine may look different compared with your routine prior to *C. diff* and that's okay, be patient with and kind to yourself as you re-engage.



REACH OUT

Having people in your life who you can truly connect with and share your feelings with is good for your personal well-being. Dealing with *C. diff* can feel isolating, so talking with loved ones helps you know that you're not alone.

If you don't feel comfortable sharing your feelings with someone or if you feel you need more support, a trained therapist can offer professional help in navigating your feelings as you work to heal. Online support groups can also be helpful, as can **PLF's Peer Support Network**.

Lifestyle-based Suggestions *Continued*



SPEND TIME IN NATURE

Being in nature has a way of helping us to feel more grounded and at ease. In fact, the practice of “earthing” or walking barefoot has been shown to help reduce feelings of stress and pain and may also help to increase sleep quality.¹⁹

A brisk walk outdoors or even sitting in the shade and observing local wildlife may help to refocus your thoughts and renew your energy.



PRACTICE GRATITUDE

When recovering from *C. diff*, it's not uncommon to question your strength or have thoughts of powerlessness or of being out of control. It may be hard to not get swept up with these feelings, but research has shown that a gratitude practice can help increase psychological wellbeing and happiness while increasing resilience.

There are many ways to practice gratitude—some may choose to journal about things they are grateful for, others may find they like to share what they're grateful for out loud.

¹⁹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3265077/>

Lifestyle-based Suggestions *Continued*

“

I was given zero guidance during my recovery when it came to food. What could cause symptoms that mimicked symptoms of the infection, what to avoid, and what to help rebuild my microbiome. I created a fear of food because it seemed like everything I put in my mouth made me ill.”



PAM
MCCOLLISTER

FACE THE FEAR

A *C. diff* infection can be scary and it may stir up a sense of fear that can be hard to move past. You may feel afraid about passing *C. diff* to someone else or experiencing a recurrence, be nervous about which foods to be eating, or anxious about trying to disinfect your space.

If this is something you relate to, acknowledge the fear and try to breathe through it. Many times fear or anxiety is based on something you think may happen in the future, so a strategy that can be helpful is to bring your awareness to the present moment—notice where you are, feel your feet touch the ground, put your hands on your body, and slow your thoughts.

Heal Your Food Relationship and Overcome Diet-Based Fear

Nourishing during an active *C. diff* infection or during recovery is not only physically difficult, but can also be mentally and emotionally challenging. Frustration and tension may spill over into your relationship with food which might have a negative impact on eating behaviors and attitudes.

Following an experience with *C. diff*, you may find yourself feeling more anxious or preoccupied with food than you did before. Read on for some tips for healing your food relationships and overcoming diet-based fear.



EXPAND YOUR IDEA OF NOURISHMENT

After a *C. diff* infection, you may feel the need to eat “perfectly,” which can put a lot of pressure on the eating experience. Expand your idea of diet and recognize there is no one perfect way to eat. The emotional sustenance you get from food is totally valid and it’s okay if that also plays a role in your food choices.

You can feel nourished in many different ways—spending time with loved ones, doing an activity that inspires you, or eating a comforting meal—each of these has value.



MAKE MEALS SOCIAL

If possible, eating with others often makes the experience more enjoyable. If you can’t physically be with someone, you can still make a meal social by planning a cooking video chat or sharing photos with friends or family.

Lifestyle-based Suggestions *Continued*



GET INVOLVED IN THE FOOD PROCESS

Following the trauma of *C. diff*, it's common to feel a sense of fear when it comes to food — fear that a food will be irritating, cause diarrhea, or lead to a recurrence. One way to reduce this anxiety and improve your food relationship is to cook and prepare food.

Explore recipes that seem exciting to you, plan a menu for the week, visit your local farmer's market, and take your time washing and chopping your vegetables. Feeling invested in the food process can help you enjoy your meals more, and you may actually absorb more nutrition from meals you enjoy.



BE PATIENT

As you recover, you may find that foods you used to enjoy may cause discomfort. It may take some time as your gut health rebuilds for you to return to some of your old eating habits. Focus on small wins and start slow as you introduce new foods into your routine.

Recipes

The following are a collection of recipes our Advocates found comfort in during their experience with *C.diff*. We hope they help provide some inspiration as you navigate your healing journey, but know that everyone's experience may look different.



BREAKFAST

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Homemade Coconut Lime Electrolyte-Ade

Recipe by Shauna McQueen, MS RDN

.....

This recipe replaces electrolytes in the body (that can be lost through frequent diarrhea or sweat) and helps reduce risk of dehydration.

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

- 4 ounces coconut water
- 2 ounces water
- Juice of half a lime
- ⅛ teaspoon baking soda*
- Dash of salt
- ½ teaspoon agave or maple syrup (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients and stir thoroughly. Can be served at room temp or over ice.

NOTE

If pregnant, omit baking soda. If on medications, consult with your physician prior to consuming baking soda.

Wild Blueberry Mango Zinger Smoothie

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegetarian
- Gluten-Free
- Anti-inflammatory

The goal of this smoothie is to add probiotics and prebiotics to build and maintain healthy gut flora, decrease inflammation, and aid in digestion while helping soothe and heal the stomach lining. By blending the fiber, it may be easier for the digestive system to handle.

Calories	415	Protein	24g
Fat	11g	Vitamin A	507 IU
Cholesterol	15mg	Calcium	664mg
Carbohydrate	58g	Vitamin C	36mg
Fiber	8g	Iron	3mg
Sugar	35g		

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain kefir
- ¼ cup rolled oats*
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin seeds
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 knob fresh ginger (about 1 teaspoon)
- ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
- Pinch of black pepper
- ½ cup frozen wild blueberries
- ½ cup frozen mango

OPTIONAL ADD-INS

- 1 tablespoon nut butter (for protein and taste)
- ¼–½ cup non-dairy milk (if the smoothie is too thick)
- collagen powder
- L-glutamine powder
- prebiotic powder

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Blend all ingredients in a blender until smooth and creamy. This smoothie has a kick, so enjoy the zing!



recipe continued on next page

Wild Blueberry Mango Zinger Smoothie

continued

NOTES

The following is a breakdown of how each ingredient benefits the gut:

- kefir: Wider diversity of live probiotics than yogurt. Fermentation in kefir results in a low-lactose product, thus easier to digest. Also, a source of protein.
- rolled oats: prebiotic fiber
- pumpkin seeds: prebiotic fiber, antioxidants to reduce inflammation
- chia seeds: prebiotic fiber, thickens smoothie
- fresh ginger: anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial, helps with digestion and fights bloat
- turmeric: anti-inflammatory, helps with digestion
- black pepper: increases the bioavailability of turmeric
- wild blueberries: packed with antioxidants (wild blueberries have 2x the antioxidants of cultivated blueberries), anti-inflammatory, prebiotic fiber.
- mango: good source of the digestive enzyme amylase, anti-inflammatory, prebiotic fiber.

**Oats are gluten-free by nature, but are often processed on equipment shared with gluten-containing ingredients. If you aren't consuming gluten, look for options that are certified as gluten-free.*

Mason Jar Overnight Oats

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegetarian
- Gluten-Free
- Anti-inflammatory

Soaking oats overnight in a nut milk makes them soft, creamy, and easier to digest.

Calories	546	Sugar	25g
Fat	19g	Protein	22g
Cholesterol	8mg	Vitamin A	289 IU
Sodium	203mg	Calcium	446mg
Carbohydrate	75g	Vitamin C	7mg
Fiber	13g	Iron	3.5mg

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup oat milk (or any other non-dairy milk, such as almond milk, coconut milk, or soy milk)
- ½ cup kefir or Greek yogurt
- ½ banana
- ⅔ tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 heaping spoonful of almond butter (or any other nut butter or sunflower seed butter)
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- Fresh or frozen organic berries

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mash the banana in a mason jar or bowl. Mix in the oats, chia seeds, kefir (or Greek yogurt), almond butter, cinnamon, and oat milk. Stir thoroughly.
2. Top with berries. Cover and place in the fridge overnight. In the morning, stir and enjoy.

Miso Toast

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegan
- Probiotic-rich

Toast is an important part of many anti-diarrhea diets like the BRAT diet (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Toast). Toast not only helps with nausea, but it also can help bulk up stool. Miso is a probiotic food that helps support digestion by adding beneficial bacteria to your digestive tract. Miso toast is a good staple for when C.diff has made you nauseous with no appetite and no energy to prepare a more complex recipe.

Calories	142	Sugar	3g
Fat	2g	Protein	3g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	1 IU
Sodium	744mg	Calcium	65mg
Carbohydrate	24g	Vitamin C	0.1mg
Fiber	2.5g	Iron	2mg



Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS

- 1 slice of whole-grain bread or gluten-free bread*
- miso (fermented soybean paste)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Toast the bread. Spread miso on it. If you want something more filling, add a poached egg and microgreens on top of the miso toast.

NOTE

If you're feeling very sensitive, you may also consider white bread. White bread is lower in fiber and is referred to as "low-residue" meaning it doesn't create friction as it travels through the GI tract, which can be helpful if it is already inflamed. As the inflammation calms down, options with higher fiber can help feed the beneficial bacteria in the gut.

Spiced Apples

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Vegan
- Gluten-free

These apples will have your house smelling amazing! They taste great as a snack or coupled with our Whole Wheat and Coconut Flour Crepes.

Calories	85	Sugar	10g
Fat	3.5g	Protein	0g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	27 IU
Sodium	1mg	Calcium	7mg
Carbohydrate	13g	Vitamin C	8.4mg
Fiber	2g	Iron	0.12mg

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 4 medium sized apples of your choice, cored and sliced into ¼ inch slices.
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- Dash of cloves, allspice or cardamom
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oil in large skillet on medium heat. Place sliced apples in skillet and drizzle with spices.
2. Mix and cook the apples, stirring occasionally until slightly soft, but not mushy.

NOTE

Peeling the apples can help reduce insoluble fiber which can be irritating in the acute stage while still allowing you to benefit from the soluble fiber in the apples which can be soothing. Cinnamon also has anti-microbial properties and anti-inflammatory properties. Coconut oil contains lauric acid, which may help inhibit the growth of *C.diff*.¹

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5776096/>

Whole Wheat and Coconut Flour Crepes

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Vegetarian

These crepes are hearty, yet light. They pack a punch with fiber and flavor.

Calories	135	Sugar	0g
Fat	6g	Protein	5g
Cholesterol	62mg	Vitamin A	490 IU
Sodium	360mg	Calcium	343mg
Carbohydrate	16g	Vitamin C	0mg
Fiber	2g	Iron	1.5mg

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup whole wheat flour
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup coconut flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon melted coconut oil, plus more for skillet
- 2 eggs
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk of your choice (I use unsweetened coconut milk)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In medium bowl, combine dry ingredients: whole wheat flour, coconut flour, baking soda, salt.
2. In another medium bowl, wet ingredients: melted coconut oil, eggs, milk, water.
3. Add a bit of coconut oil to a small skillet and heat on medium to medium-high heat until hot. Combine the dry ingredients to the wet and mix until smooth.
4. Pour a small amount of batter into the skillet and cook until it until semi-firm. Gently flip and cook the other side.
5. Serve with warm, spiced apples (recipe on [page 38](#)) or maple syrup.

Instant Pot Turmeric Ginger Congee

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

.....

- Vegan Option
- Gluten-free
- Anti-inflammatory

Congee is a healing rice porridge that is soothing to the gut and easy to make. Top the congee with anything that sounds appealing.

Calories	154	Sugar	0g
Fat	1g	Protein	4g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	0 IU
Sodium	40mg	Calcium	6mg
Carbohydrate	34g	Vitamin C	0mg
Fiber	2g	Iron	1mg



Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup brown rice
- 1/2 cup white jasmine rice
- 6-8 cups water or bone broth (use less for thicker congee and more for a thinner soup-like dish)
- 1-inch fresh ginger (peeled and minced)
- 1 1/4 teaspoons ground turmeric
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Rinse rice.
2. Combine the rice, bone broth or water, ginger, turmeric, and salt in the Instant Pot. Close and lock the lid and set the pressure release valve to sealing.
3. Press "Manual" and set for 30 minutes at high pressure.
4. Allow the pressure to release naturally (it should take 30–40 minutes)
5. Unlock the lid and open away from you.
6. Serve the congee warm with any toppings that sound good.

recipe continued on next page

Instant Pot Turmeric Ginger Congee

continued

Here are some topping ideas:

- crispy fried shallots
- sauteed bok choy or spinach
- chopped salted peanuts
- thinly sliced radishes
- cooked ground chicken or turkey
- crumbled fried tempeh
- micro greens or sprouts
- sauteed mushrooms

NOTES

The gelatinous nature of congee is very soothing. If you make this recipe with bone broth instead of water, the gelatin in bone broth supports healthy digestion. Bone broth's collagen reduces inflammation and nourishes the intestinal lining. The congee will keep in the refrigerator for three days.

Baked Salmon

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Gluten-free
- Anti-inflammatory

Calories	257	Sugar	1g
Fat	18g	Protein	21g
Cholesterol	58mg	Vitamin A	111 IU
Sodium	279mg	Calcium	19mg
Carbohydrate	2g	Iron	0.57mg
Fiber	0.8g		

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb fresh salmon
- 1 lemon, halved
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 3–4 sprigs fresh dill
- Olive oil for drizzle, salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375. Place salmon on aluminum foil. Place garlic and dill on top of salmon, and put the lemon wedges on the side. Drizzle with oil and salt and pepper.
2. Bake until flaky and cooked through (30 minutes or so).

Kitchari

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

.....

- Vegan
- Gluten-free

Kitchari is a nourishing porridge used in ayurvedic cooking that is designed to be very gentle on digestion. It is made from healing spices, split mung beans, and basmati rice. It is easy to make and can be eaten for any meal. Split mung beans (also called yellow moong dal), are delicate, protein-rich legumes that have been husked and split, thus making them easier to digest.

Calories	179	Sugar	1g
Fat	4g	Protein	5g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	19 IU
Sodium	447mg	Calcium	26mg
Carbohydrate	28g	Vitamin C	0.6mg
Fiber	4g	Iron	1.34mg



Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup basmati rice
- ½ cup husked split mung beans (also called yellow moong dal)
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- ½ teaspoon fresh ginger, peeled and minced (or a pinch of ground ginger powder)
- ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 4 cups water
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- Freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
- Optional
 - 1 cup chopped steamed vegetables
 - 1 poached egg
 - baked salmon

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the rice and split mung beans in a bowl and cover with water. Stir in 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar. Cover and soak for 15 minutes to two hours. After soaking, put the beans and rice in a strainer and rinse with cool water.

recipe continued on next page

Kitchari

continued

2. Warm coconut oil in a medium pot, and then add ginger, turmeric, and cumin and cook for 1 minute, until the spices become fragrant.
3. Add rice and split mung beans to the pot and mix thoroughly.
4. Stir in 4 cups of water.
5. Turn the heat to high, and then bring the mixture to a gentle boil. Immediately turn heat down to medium-low, cover, and simmer mixture, stirring occasionally, until all the water is absorbed and there is a soft and creamy porridge-like consistency (this will take 20–40 minutes).
6. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately. Store leftovers in the refrigerator for up to three days.

NOTES

If your gut can tolerate it, once the kitchari is cooked, stir in a cup of steamed chopped vegetables, top with a poached egg, or top with baked salmon (recipe on [page 42](#)).

Gingery Sunshine Sauerkraut

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegan
- Probiotic-rich

An important part of healing your gut is eating fermented foods, which help restore the beneficial bacteria in your gut. Add a variety of fermented foods to your diet: kimchi and sauerkraut (look for live versions, which can be found in the refrigerated section); kefir and yogurt; tempeh, miso, and kombucha.

It is surprisingly easy and fun to make your own sauerkraut. The red cabbage in this recipe will make the final sauerkraut an enticing, cheery, rosy color. It's crunchy and sour, and so delicious that you'll likely eat it straight out of the jar.

Calories	18	Sugar	2g
Fat	0g	Protein	1g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	287 IU
Sodium	258mg	Calcium	25mg
Carbohydrate	4g	Vitamin C	23mg
Fiber	1g	Iron	0mg

Makes about 20 servings

INGREDIENTS

- ½ medium head of green cabbage
- ½ medium head of red cabbage
- 1 small carrot, sliced into 1/8th inch rounds
- 4 radishes, sliced into 1/8th inch rounds
- 1 tablespoon peppercorns
- Thumb-sized piece of ginger, peeled and minced (or more if you want it to be extra gingery)
- 2 teaspoons caraway seeds
- A couple of sprigs of fresh dill
- Approximately 1 tablespoon pink Himalayan salt or sea salt (see note below)
- Wide mouth quart-size mason jar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash your cabbage in filtered water.
2. Grate or chop cabbage into thin ribbons.
3. Transfer the cabbage to a large bowl and sprinkle with the salt.
4. With clean hands, massage the salt into the cabbage for about 5 minutes, which will begin to extract liquid out of the cabbage. Let sit for 60–90 minutes so that more brine forms from the salt and liquid from the cabbage.



recipe continued on next page

Gingery Sunshine Sauerkraut

continued

5. With your hands, stuff the cabbage into the mason jar, tossing in a layer of the radishes, carrots, peppercorns, ginger, caraway seeds, and dill every inch or two. Every so often, use your hands or a cabbage pounder to compress the cabbage down, which will extract even more liquid.
6. Leave about 2 inches of space at the top of the jar and ensure that the brine completely covers the cabbage mixture.
7. If you don't have enough brine, make additional brine by mixing 1 teaspoon of salt in one cup of water.
8. Cover the top of the cabbage mixture with a large outer leaf of cabbage (this will keep the contents submerged in the brine, which is important for proper fermentation and to prevent mold growth). You can also add a glass fermenting weight on top of the top piece of cabbage, or even use rocks that have been sterilized by boiling them in water.
9. Place the lid on your jar.
10. For the first five days, open the lid to release the pressure one or two times a day. Watch the magic happen as the mixture bubbles and fizzes.
11. After five days, taste to see if it is ready. It may need 10–30 days of fermenting until it is ready.
12. When you are happy with the taste, move to the refrigerator and enjoy! It will keep in the fridge for months.

NOTES

- The amount of salt is best determined by weighing your cabbage and adding 1 ½ teaspoons of salt per pound of cabbage.
- If you don't want to burp your mixture every day, use a mason jar fermentation lid that allows the gas to escape.
- This recipe can help add extra probiotics to your diet during the acute phase, but can be a helpful dish to prepare in the maintenance phase, as well.

Sunchoke & Carrot Soup

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegan
- Gluten-free
- Anti-inflammatory
- Fiber-rich

Sunchokes, also known as Jerusalem artichokes, are part of the sunflower family. They provide inulin-rich dietary fiber, which is a prebiotic that helps increase good bacteria in your colon.

Calories	291	Sugar	18g
Fat	15g	Protein	6g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	155 IU
Sodium	68mg	Calcium	70mg
Carbohydrate	38g	Vitamin C	16.5mg
Fiber	6g	Iron	5.5mg

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons coconut oil
- 2 onions, diced
- 4–5 cloves of garlic, diced
- Two thumb-sized pieces of fresh ginger, diced
- 6 medium sunchokes, peeled and diced
- 2 large carrots
- 4 stalks of celery
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- Juice of 1 lime
- 6 tablespoons coconut cream
- Zest of 1 lime
- Garnishes:
 - Kale chips (toss bite-size pieces of kale leaves lightly in olive oil, salt, and bake at 350F until crispy (10–15 minutes)).
 - Carrot chips (thinly slice carrots, add to a heated frying pan with some olive oil and cook until crisp).
 - Lime zest

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat the coconut oil in a soup pot or Dutch oven, and then sauté onions and until soft (about five minutes). Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute.
2. Add ginger, sunchokes, carrot, celery and lime zest to the pot. Stir well.
3. Add the vegetable stock and lime juice and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook until vegetables have softened (about 20 minutes).
4. Using an immersion blender or upright blender, puree the soup until it is smooth.
5. Add coconut cream and blend again until combined.
6. To serve, sprinkle with black pepper, and garnish with lime zest and either kale chips or carrot chips.

Brussels Sprouts with Prosciutto and Sage

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Gluten-free
- Dairy-free
- Fiber-rich

This is a fiber-rich side dish which is seasoned with sage which studies have shown may help to reduce diarrhea.

Calories	176	Sugar	3g
Fat	9g	Protein	12g
Cholesterol	20mg	Vitamin A	8 IU
Sodium	794mg	Vitamin C	112mg
Carbohydrate	13g	Iron	2mg
Fiber	5g		

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb brussels sprouts, halved and quartered
- 1 package (3–4 ounces) prosciutto, diced
- 4 garlic cloves
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon ground sage
- Olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 475 degrees Fahrenheit. Toss all ingredients together, and drizzle with olive oil. Roast in a glass dish for 20–25 minutes, stirring at least once.

Six Bean Salad

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegan
- Gluten-free
- Fiber-rich

Beans are full of protein and fiber, providing nutrition for the beneficial bacteria that live in your gut. You can also make this recipe with canned beans, but if you take the time, the flavor and texture of cooked dried beans will make the extra effort worthwhile.

Calories	304	Sugar	2g
Fat	18g	Protein	8g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	316 IU
Sodium	337mg	Calcium	82mg
Carbohydrate	27g	Iron	2mg
Fiber	9g		



Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of dried beans (fill a measuring cup with a variety of dried beans, such as black beans, chickpeas, Great Northern beans, kidney beans, adzuki beans, and black-eyed peas).
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup finely chopped fresh tender herbs, such as basil, oregano, mint, dill, parsley, cilantro)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- Sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put the cup of dried beans in a bowl, add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and fill with filtered water to generously cover the beans. Soak for 8 hours (pre-soaking beans helps aid with digestion and cuts down on bloating and flatulence).
2. Rinse the beans and put in an Instant Pot, with water to cover the beans by about 2 inches. Press "Manual," set to high pressure, and cook for 20 minutes. Let the pressure release naturally for 20 minutes, then, if the safety pin hasn't dropped yet on its own, release the remaining pressure manually.

recipe continued on next page

Six Bean Salad

continued

3. Drain the beans and let cool.
4. Combine shallots and apple cider vinegar in small bowl and let sit for 5 minutes.
5. In a separate large bowl, mix herbs and olive oil. Add cooled beans and crushed red pepper and toss to combine. Season with salt.
6. Add shallot mixture to the beans and herbs and toss gently.
7. Cover and chill.

NOTES

If using dried beans, you can also cook stove top if you don't have a pressure cooker. Canned beans work too if you are short on time.

Speedy Black Beans

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Gluten-free
- Dairy-free
- Fiber-rich

This recipe has helped me many times in a pinch for a quick and healthy side-dish or main course for one.

Calories	406	Sugar	11g
Fat	9g	Protein	20g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	62 IU
Sodium	239mg	Calcium	114mg
Carbohydrate	63g	Vitamin C	3mg
Fiber	17g	Iron	7mg

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed.
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- Salt, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small skillet, heat oil until hot. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute.
2. Add lime juice, stir, and then add the chicken stock and beans. Heat until warm, add salt to taste.

Apple, Fennel, and Celery Salad

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegan
- Gluten-free
- Anti-inflammatory
- Fiber-rich

Apples and fennel are great sources of fiber. Fennel can help relieve gas and bloating, and celery supports digestion.

Calories	335	Sugar	19g
Fat	21g	Protein	10g
Cholesterol	6mg	Vitamin A	1775 IU
Sodium	459mg	Calcium	213mg
Carbohydrate	31g	Vitamin C	17.5mg
Fiber	10g	Iron	2mg

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cup walnuts
- 4 apples, halved, cored and thinly sliced
- 4 fennel bulbs, trimmed, halved, cored and thinly sliced
- 6 celery sticks, sliced diagonally
- ½ cup basil leaves
- Sea salt and cracked pepper
- Pecorino cheese shavings, for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Dry roast the walnuts in a frying pan until they smell toasty. Then coarsely chop.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice and salt and pepper.
3. Add apples, fennel, celery and basil to the bowl and toss until coated. Add more olive oil if needed.
4. Top with toasted walnuts and Pecorino cheese shavings.

Jicama-Cucumber-Mandarin Prebiotic Salad

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegan
- Gluten-free
- Anti-inflammatory
- Fiber-rich

This bright and refreshing crunchy salad is easy to make and is rich in both soluble and insoluble fiber.

Calories	367	Sugar	20g
Fat	23g	Protein	5g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	74 IU
Sodium	355mg	Calcium	98mg
Carbohydrate	42g	Vitamin C	114mg
Fiber	15g	Iron	1.79mg



Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large jicama, peeled and then julienned (about 3 cups)
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- ½ cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1 English cucumber (aka seedless cucumber), diced
- 4 mandarin oranges, peeled and cut crosswise into ¼ inch thick rings
- 2 avocados, diced
- ½ cup chopped cilantro
- ⅓ cup lime juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Pinch cayenne
- Pinch paprika
- Sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, add jicama, bell peppers, red onion, cucumber, orange, avocado, and cilantro.
2. Add lime juice, olive oil, cayenne, paprika, and sea salt. Mix well.
3. Let sit for at least 30 minutes for flavors to marinate.

Roasted Asparagus with Garlic and Parmesan

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegetarian
- Gluten-free

Asparagus and garlic are good sources of prebiotic fiber that feed friendly gut bacteria.

Calories	77	Sugar	1g
Fat	6g	Protein	2.5g
Cholesterol	4mg	Vitamin A	475 IU
Sodium	308mg	Calcium	55mg
Carbohydrate	3g	Vitamin C	3.4mg
Fiber	1g	Iron	1.28mg

Makes 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

- ½ pound fresh asparagus
- Olive oil
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly cracked brown pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Rinse asparagus and trim off woody ends.
3. Toss the asparagus in a bowl with olive oil. Add salt, pepper, minced garlic and Parmesan cheese and toss again.
4. Spread the asparagus out on a rimmed baking sheet lined with aluminum foil.
5. Bake in the preheated oven until tender for 10–12 minutes, depending on thickness.
6. Serve immediately.

Gluten-Free Brazilian Cheese Bread (Pão de Queijo)

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Vegetarian
- Gluten-free

This recipe is a comforting gluten-free bread option that can be ready in less than 30 minutes!

Calories	338	Sugar	2g
Fat	20g	Protein	7g
Cholesterol	83mg	Vitamin A	281 IU
Sodium	432mg	Calcium	189mg
Carbohydrate	28g	Vitamin C	0mg
Fiber	0g	Iron	0.71mg

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup milk
- 3 cup tapioca flour
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 cup grated Romano or parmesan blend
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Place all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth.
2. Fill a cupcake tin three quarters full of batter and bake for 20–25 minutes until lightly golden brown.

Radishes (That Don't Taste like Radishes)

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Vegan
- Gluten-free
- Anti-inflammatory

This recipe is an excellent source of vitamin C which acts as an anti-inflammatory agent while the cilantro offers anti-microbial benefit.

Calories	84	Sugar	3g
Fat	7g	Protein	1g
Cholesterol	0mg	Vitamin A	1 IU
Sodium	170mg	Calcium	38mg
Carbohydrate	5g	Vitamin C	23mg
Fiber	2g	Iron	0.55mg



Makes 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch fresh radishes (not packaged, but fresh with stems)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- Olive oil to drizzle
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remove root and ends of radishes. Pulse in a food processor or chopper until finely chopped.
2. In a small bowl, mix together the chopped radishes with cilantro, cumin and salt. Drizzle olive oil and lemon juice. Toss, serve and enjoy!

Whole Wheat Pasta with Spinach and Beef

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Fiber-rich
- Protein-rich

This pasta recipe is rich in protein, iron, and vitamin C.

Calories	688	Protein	39g
Fat	30g	Vitamin A	31 IU
Cholesterol	82mg	Calcium	148mg
Sodium	265mg	Vitamin C	21mg
Fiber	8g	Iron	7mg
Sugar	2g		

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz whole wheat pasta (any type)
- 1 lb grass-fed ground beef
- 1 package organic frozen spinach, rinsed, thawed and drained of all liquid
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoon dried basil, or 1 tablespoon fresh
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- Salt and pepper
- Parmesan to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium skillet, cook ground beef until done. Season with salt.
2. In a separate small skillet, cook the garlic in the olive oil over medium heat for a few minutes. Remove from heat.
3. Cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain.
4. In a large bowl, add pasta and cooked beef, toss in the frozen spinach. Drizzle the olive and garlic mixture over the pasta and toss.
5. Sprinkle the herbs and toss again. Add salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle parmesan to taste.

NOTES

This dish can be made gluten-free by subbing a gluten-free pasta like chickpea or rice.

Whole Wheat Gnocchi with Escarole

Recipe by Christina Fuhrman

- Fiber-rich
- Protein-rich

As part of the chicory family, escarole is a good source of prebiotic fiber which helps support the gut as it continues to heal.

Calories	376	Sugar	3g
Fat	13g	Protein	11g
Cholesterol	13mg	Vitamin A	2547 IU
Sodium	910mg	Calcium	81mg
Carbohydrate	45mg	Vitamin C	17mg
Fiber	7g	Iron	1mg

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 4 slices prosciutto
- 1 small head escarole, chopped
- 1 package whole wheat potato gnocchi
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- Parmesan cheese for sprinkling
- Black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oil in a large skillet on medium heat. Add onions and meat, cook until tender. Stir in escarole and cook until wilted. Remove from heat.
2. Cook gnocchi according to package directions, drain and add to the skillet with escarole. Add tomatoes, cheese and black pepper, to taste.

NOTES

This can be made gluten free by subbing gluten-free gnocchi.

Vegan Chickpea Cookie Dough Bites

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

- Vegan
- Gluten-free
- Fiber-rich

A gooey guilty pleasure of children and adults alike is raw chocolate chip cookie dough. Try this gut-friendly version made from chickpeas, a high fiber nutrient-rich legume that can camouflage itself as scrumptious cookie dough.

Calories	247	Sugar	10g
Fat	14g	Protein	7.5g
Cholesterol	2mg	Vitamin A	17 IU
Sodium	249mg	Calcium	77mg
Carbohydrate	26mg	Vitamin C	0.1mg
Fiber	7g	Iron	1.71mg



Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can of chickpeas, drained
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2–3 tablespoons maple syrup
- ¼ cup cashew butter
- 1 tablespoon nut milk (soy, rice, or almond), plus more if necessary
- 3 tablespoons flax meal
- ⅓ cup dark chocolate chips

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add all ingredients except chocolate chips to a food processor and blend until dough is smooth.
2. If the dough is too thick, add more nut milk, one tablespoon at a time.
3. Transfer the cookie dough to a serving bowl and stir in dark chocolate chips.
4. Chill dough in the fridge for 10–15 minutes.
5. Roll the dough into bite sized balls and place in the fridge for 10–15 minutes before serving.

Pumpkin Pie Chia Pudding

Recipe by Kee Kee Buckley

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- Vegan
- Gluten-free
- Anti-inflammatory
- Fiber-rich

Pumpkin Pie Chia Pudding is a gut-healthy option to the holiday favorite, pumpkin pie. The pumpkin, chia seeds and optional cacao nibs provide fiber. Additionally, chia seeds create a gel-like substance which helps soothe the gut.

Calories	300	Protein	5g
Fat	27g	Vitamin A	4420 IU
Cholesterol	0mg	Calcium	113mg
Sodium	18mg	Vitamin C	4mg
Fiber	8g	Iron	3mg
Sugar	4g		



Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can coconut milk (13.5 oz)
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 teaspoon cacao powder
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1–2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice, to taste
- Optional 1 tablespoon maple syrup to sweeten
- 6 tablespoons chia seeds
- Toppings for garnish:
 - Cinnamon stick
 - Chopped walnuts
 - Shredded coconut
 - Cacao nibs
 - Whipped coconut cream

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add coconut milk, pumpkin puree, cacao powder, vanilla extract, pumpkin pie spice and maple syrup (if using) to a blender and mix well.
2. Pour mixture in a bowl and stir in chia seeds. Mix well and let sit for 15 minutes, stirring every five minutes or so until the chia seeds begin to absorb the liquid and are well distributed.

recipe continued on next page

Pumpkin Pie Chia Pudding

continued

3. Place in the fridge for at least 4 hours to chill and firm.
4. Serve in bowls, and top with optional garnishes and/or whipped coconut cream.

Thank You!

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