**Gut Microbiome Health Strategies – Video Script**

**Slide 1**

The gut microbiome has been linked to almost every system in the body and is very important for overall health. Dysbiosis has been linked to many chronic diseases, including IBS. So, it’s super important to keep your microbes healthy and happy!

**Slide 2**

In this video, we’ll touch on a number of strategies you can use to improve the health of your gut microbiome. For a more in-depth look, scroll down the page for more information and links you can follow to other sections.

**Slide 3**

You’ll probably notice that the strategies for the health of your gut microbiome are similar in many ways to the strategies for managing inflammation and that’s because they’re connected.​ There is still much to be learned about this relationship, as with everything concerning the gut microbiome, but more and more evidence is showing that the relationship is bidirectional, meaning they can affect each other.

So, reducing inflammation could improve the health of your gut microbiome and a healthy gut microbiome could help to reduce inflammation, both of which have been linked to IBS.

**Slide 4**

What you eat and drink is very important for the health of your gut microbiome.  Diet is one of the key factors that determines what kind of bacteria live in your gut.  But the good news is that the best way to fuel and protect your microbes is to eat a healthy, balanced diet.  You may notice that the diet tips to ease inflammation are almost identical and that's because, of course, your gut microbiome and inflammation are connected.

**Slide 5**

Fibre is the main source of fuel for your gut microbes. Polyphenols, naturally occurring compounds in plant foods that give them their colour, flavour and smell, can also be fuel for your microbes. So, eat a rainbow of fruits and veg, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds.

On the other hand, you should limit ultra-processed foods that contain lots of salt, added sugars, saturated fats, additives, preservatives and synthetic flavours. Studies show that people who eat a lot of ultra-processed foods have less diversity in their gut microbiomes, which means their microbes may not function properly and harmful bacteria could increase in numbers.

The Mediterranean Diet is an eating pattern that has been shown to be anti-inflammatory and good for your gut microbiome.

Fermented foods have been shown to increase the diversity of your gut microbes and may improve your gut microbiome.

Alcohol has been shown to promote dysbiosis in frequent and/or heavy drinkers and studies into its effects on the gut microbiome are ongoing.

**Slide 6**

FODMAPs are something that people with IBS could have to contend with when it comes to the health of their gut microbiome. Remember that FODMAPs are carbs that are fermented by gut bacteria causing gas, which can be a problem if you have a hypersensitive gut.

But many FODMAPs are also prebiotics, which means they provide fuel for your gut microbes and help to protect the health of your gut microbiome.  Some studies have shown that eliminating FODMAPs can increase the risk of dysbiosis, which has been linked to IBS and many other health conditions.

​Definitely something to keep in mind if you are going to try the Low FODMAP elimination diet.

**Slide 7**

You've probably guessed already that too much or unmanaged stress is not good for your gut microbiome. Research is still looking into exactly why this is, but it has been found that poorly managed stress could lead to dysbiosis.

​The relationship between stress and your gut microbiome is not a one-way street.  Changes in the gut microbiome can affect your stress responses as well.

**Slide 8**

As with every other area concerning the gut microbiome, a lot more research is needed before we know exactly what and how much exercise you need to benefit your unique gut microbiome.

​But evidence is suggesting that regular aerobic exercise, which means getting your heart rate up, is beneficial for your good gut microbes.  There's already lots of evidence that shows it's good for overall gut health, so probably a good idea to get moving anyway!

**Slide 9**

Sleep and the gut microbiome are closely linked and can affect each other in a number of ways. For example, there are specific bacteria that appear to directly affect how long we sleep and whether we have certain sleep problems and not getting enough sleep or sleeping poorly can affect the composition, diversity and function of the gut microbiome through the brain-gut-microbiota axis.

**Slide 10**

Antibiotics save millions of lives every year and are necessary for the treatment of many conditions.  But they can also disrupt your gut microbiome, reducing both the number of microbes and diversity.

​Scroll down to find out how you can improve the health of your gut microbiome before and after antibiotics use.

**Slide 11**

I’ll say it one more time, much more research needs to be done. But it does appear that the gut microbiome reacts badly to environmental toxins like air pollution and smoking and is less diverse in people who live in urban environments.

​On the plus side, gardening and getting out into nature may improve the diversity of the gut microbiome.  As they could also help with stress management, probably a good idea anyway!

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