THE FIVE FOUNDATIONS

The Calm Gut Guide

Five foundations for bloating, constipation, reflux, and life between diverticulitis flares.



START HERE

Hi, I'm Ashley. If your gut has been running the show lately, this guide is for you. Maybe you're bloated by mid-afternoon, your bathroom schedule is unpredictable, or you're unsure what to eat after a diverticulitis flare.

I teach foundations first. Digestion is one of five, and it works alongside stress, sleep, blood sugar balance, and a nutrient-dense diet.

Pick one or two ideas and give them a week. Gentle and consistent beats a dramatic overhaul.

Digestion from top to bottom

Brain	The sight and smell of food help your body get ready to eat.
Mouth	Chewing breaks food into smaller pieces.
Stomach	Stomach muscles and digestive juices mix and break down food.
Small intestine	This is where you absorb most of your nutrients.
Colon	The colon absorbs water, and gut bacteria break down some fibers.

Start with how you eat

01 Digestion

If you eat quickly or while distracted, it can be harder to notice how much you've eaten and how the meal feels.

- **Chew until the food is soft.** You don't have to count each bite.
- **Put your fork down between bites.** It can help you find a slower pace.
- **Give yourself time.** If you usually finish first, try keeping pace with a slower eater.

02 Stress

Your gut and brain are in constant conversation. If you tend to eat on the run, try giving yourself a calmer start.

- **Sit down to eat** instead of eating at the counter or in the car.
- **Take five slow breaths** before your first bite.
- **Put your phone down** for the first five minutes of a meal.

03 Sleep

If reflux bothers you at night, the timing of your last meal is a good place to start.

- **Finish eating two to three hours** before you lie down if nighttime reflux is a problem.
- **Keep sleep and wake times steady** when you can.
- **Start your morning with a glass of water** if that helps you remember to drink.

What to put on your plate

04 Blood sugar balance

Start with a meal pattern that fits your day and leaves you comfortably satisfied.

- **Try regular meals** with a source of protein. Follow any meal-timing advice from your care team.
- **Look for your own triggers.** Notice which foods bother you instead of cutting out a whole category.
- **Pair carbs with protein, fat, or fiber.** Try toast with eggs or an apple with nut butter, if tolerated.

05 Nutrient-dense diet

If your gut is touchy, adding a lot of fiber or fermented food at once may make bloating worse.

- **Add fiber slowly.** Try one serving of oatmeal, ground flax, cooked vegetables, or peeled fruit.
- **Drink water throughout the day.** Fluids help fiber do its job.
- **Try a small amount of fermented food** if you tolerate it. A warm soup is another simple option.

Diverticulosis and diverticulitis

Diverticulosis means small pouches in the colon. Diverticulitis is when one or more become inflamed. **During a flare, follow your doctor's instructions instead of this guide.** Between flares, ask how to add fiber back. Most people don't need to avoid nuts, seeds, or popcorn long term.

Taking Ozempic, Wegovy, or Mounjaro?

These medications can slow stomach emptying and cause digestive symptoms. Smaller meals and steady sips of water may be easier to tolerate. Ask your prescriber about symptoms that persist or are severe, and don't change your dose on your own.

Know when to get help

Get medical help right away

Seek prompt medical care for fever with belly pain, severe or worsening belly pain, blood in your stool or black, tarry stool, or repeated vomiting or an inability to keep fluids down. Call 911 for heavy bleeding, fainting, or a life-threatening emergency.

Contact your healthcare provider

Contact your clinician promptly for trouble swallowing, unexplained weight loss, or a change in bowel habits that lasts more than a couple of weeks.

Use the log to notice patterns

The next page gives you three days to notice what you ate, how you felt, and what else was going on. It can help you describe what you're noticing to your healthcare provider. Don't wait to finish it if symptoms need medical attention.

Want help with your gut?

If you'd like help choosing a first step that fits your body and your actual week, let's talk.

Book a free 30-minute discovery call

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Nourish Wise

Further reading

NIDDK · Reflux symptoms · NIDDK · Constipation symptoms · NIDDK · Diverticular disease

This information is educational and not a substitute for medical advice. Always consult your healthcare provider before making changes to your medication.

Your three-day food and symptom log

No calorie counting. Note what you ate or drank and how you felt: bloating, gas, reflux, or anything else you noticed.

DAY 1 Date: _____

When	What I ate and drank	How I felt
Morning		
Midday		
Evening		

Bathroom, stress, and sleep: _____

DAY 2 Date: _____

When	What I ate and drank	How I felt
Morning		
Midday		
Evening		

Bathroom, stress, and sleep: _____

DAY 3 Date: _____

When	What I ate and drank	How I felt
Morning		
Midday		
Evening		

Bathroom, stress, and sleep: _____