

# Microbiome Makeover

- 85+ years, started by Railway Mail Carriers
- 2+ million members worldwide
- Exclusively for federal and postal workers, annuitants and military retirees
- Extensive international network of doctors, dentists, hospitals and other providers



GEHA<sup>®</sup>

# Today's presenters



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Nutritionist | Giant Food Healthy Living Team

# Agenda

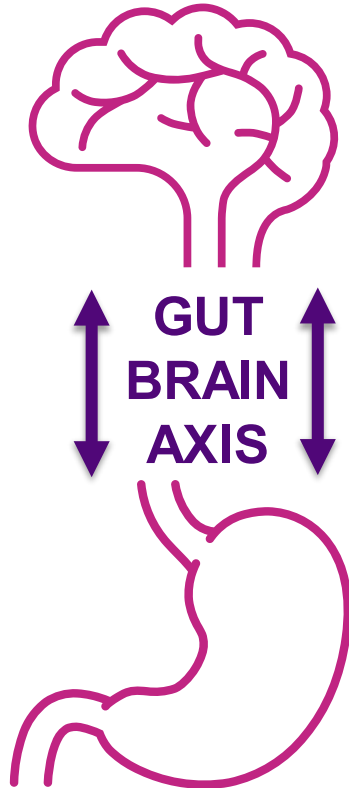
- What is the microbiome?
- Why should we care?
- Microbiome maintenance
- Boosting your microbiome
- Microbiome and lifestyle



# What is the microbiome?



# Microbiome – home of your “2nd brain”



**Have you ever said ...**

- “Trust your gut”
- “Use your gut instincts”

**Maybe felt ...**

- Butterflies in your stomach
- Nauseous in certain situations

# Microbiome – health connection



# Do you need a microbiome makeover?

Check all that apply:

- I enjoy fast food
- I drink diet soda or alcohol
- I've used antibiotics recently
- I smoke
- I often feel stressed
- I don't exercise regularly



# Microbiome maintenance





# Keep the bacteria you already have happy!

## Provide prebiotics

- Found in a variety of foods
- Goal: 25–38 grams per day

## Cut back on the “party” foods

- Foods high in salt, fat and sugar
- Goal: moderation



# Prebiotics: produce

## Vegetables

Lima beans

Squash

Green peas

Collard greens

Broccoli

Carrots

Artichokes

Onions + garlic\*

Asparagus\*

## Fruits

Passionfruit

Avocados

Guava

Raspberries

Blackberries

Pomegranate

Bananas\*

\*Note: Onions, garlic, asparagus and bananas are high in inulin, a prebiotic.



# Prebiotic: grains/beans

## Beans and legumes

- Dry
- Low/no sodium canned

## Whole grains

- Whole is first word in ingredient list
- Offers 5 grams of fiber per serving

## Nuts and seeds

- Keep to a serving size, ¼ cup



# Prebiotic: Boosters

## Mix it Up: Powders

- Wheat dextrin
  - 3 grams of fiber per 2 teaspoons

## Add-ins: Seeds

- Flax – meal or ground
  - 2 grams of fiber per 3 teaspoons
- Chia seed
  - 5 grams of fiber per 3 teaspoons



# Prebiotics: polyphenols

- Coffee
  - Medium or light roast
- Tea
- Dark chocolate (cacao)
- Spices
  - Cloves
  - Dried peppermint
  - Star anise
- Red wine

# Cut back on low nutrient foods

- Highly processed foods
- Sweets and treats
- Too much meat
- Artificial sweeteners
- High fat and fried foods
- Alcohol
- Refined grains



# What prebiotics need a boost in your microbiome?

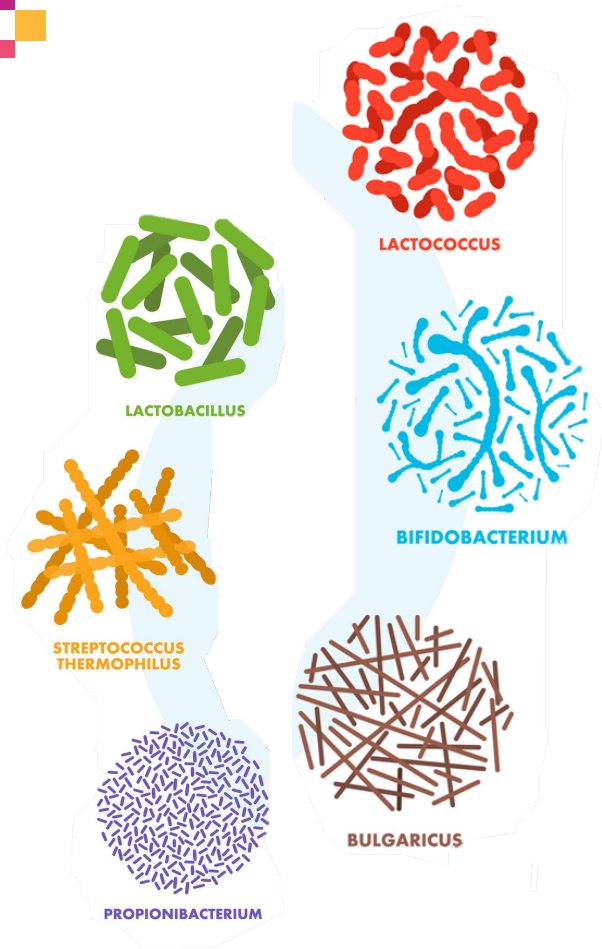
Check all that apply:

- Fruits
- Veggies
- Grains
- Beans and legumes
- Polyphenols (chocolate, coffee)



# Boosting your microbiome





# Probiotics = bacteria

- Live microorganisms, or “friendly bacteria” that help improve or maintain the gut’s microflora
- The most common are:
  - Bacteria that belong to groups Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium
  - Yeasts such as *Saccharomyces boulardii*



## Probiotics: dairy

- Yogurt
  - Cow's milk (all have probiotics)
  - Plant-based (check the label)
- Kefir
- Cheese
  - Cottage cheese
  - Hard cheese



# Probiotics: fermented

## Produce

- Sauerkraut, pickles and kimchi

## Soybean-based

- Tempeh, natto and miso

## Beverages

- Cold: Kombucha, juices, teas and probiotic shots
- Shelf stable: Boxed teas and “live” sodas

# Probiotics: supplement

## Supplement Facts

Serving Size 1 vegetarian capsule

Servings Per Container 100

Amount Per Serving		%DV
L. Acidophilus (DDS-1)	1.150 Billion CFU	*
L. Rhamnosus	1.150 Billion CFU	*
L. Rhamnosus (Type B, Bifidus)	775 Million CFU	*
S. Lactis	275 Million CFU	*
Bifidobacterium Longum	275 Million CFU	*
B. Bifidum	275 Million CFU	*
S. Thermophilus	150 Million CFU	*
Proprietary Blend	215 mg	*

FOS (fructooligosaccharides)  
and ulmus fulva (inner bark).

- Look for a variety of live/active cultures
- Follow instructions for storage closely
- Speak with your doctor if taking with other medications

# Postbiotics: beneficial “waste”

## Postbiotic nutrients include:

- **Antimicrobial peptides:** vitamins B and K, amino acids and antimicrobial peptides that help to slow down the growth of harmful bacteria
- Short-chain fatty acids that help healthy bacteria flourish



# What probiotics will you add to boost your microbiome?

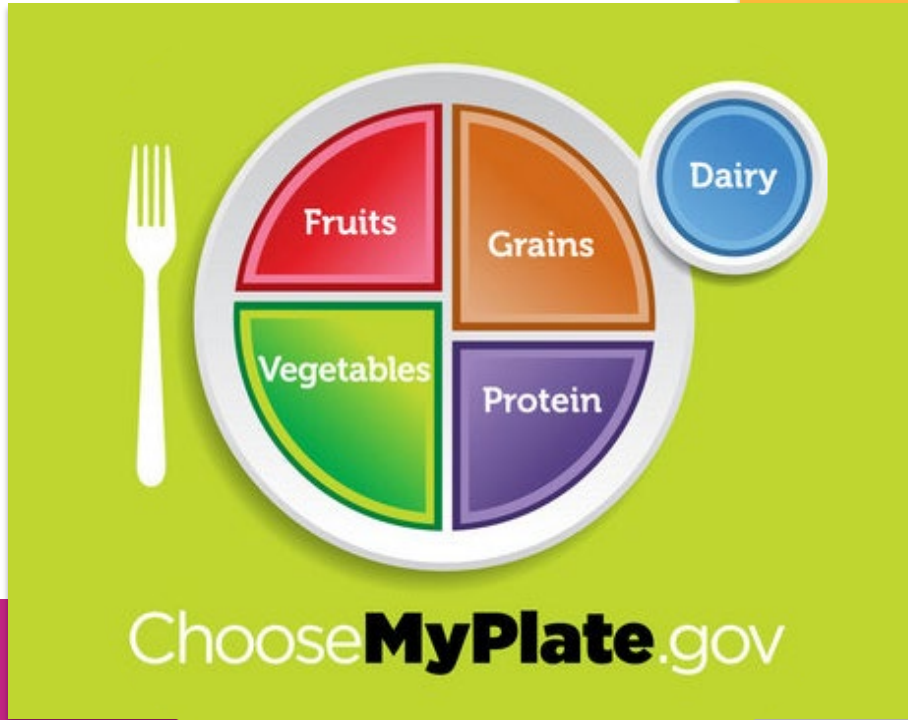
Check all that apply:

- Yogurt or kefir
- Tempeh or natto
- Miso
- Kombucha or other drink
- Supplement



# Microbiome and lifestyle habits

# Lifestyle: nutrition



- A balanced diet creates a healthy gut
- MyPlate
- Shows portion sizes
- Is **75%** plant-based
- Is **75%** prebiotic fiber



# Lifestyle: movement



- Helps increase the number and diversity of beneficial bacteria
- Brain-exercise-gut loop boosts physical and mental health
- American Heart Association, GOAL: 150 minutes a week

Source: [Attributes of Physical Activity and Gut Microbiome in Adults - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

# Lifestyle: physical health



- Drink alcohol in moderation
  - 1 drink/day women
  - 1-2 drinks/day men
- Quit smoking or vaping
- Use antibiotics judiciously

# Lifestyle: emotional health



- Get more sleep: 7–9 hours per night
- Work on stress reduction
- Meditation
- Journaling
- Yoga

# What lifestyle habits will you work on for your microbiome?

Check all that apply:

- Work on eating more balanced
- Strive for more movement
- Reduce my alcohol intake
- Quit smoking
- Get more than 6 hours sleep nightly
- Practice stress reduction



# Wrap-up

## Add prebiotic fiber

- Produce, grains, nuts, seeds

## Add probiotics

- Yogurt, kefir, fermented foods like kimchi, miso

## Build healthy habits

- Balanced eating, exercise, sleep, stress reduction



# GEHA member resources

- Elevate plans
  - Rally digital health platform
    - Register with Rally® for the Real Appeal Weight Management
  - Learn more at [geha.com/Elevate-Rewards](https://geha.com/Elevate-Rewards)
- HDHP, Standard and High plans
  - Health Balance digital health platform
  - Visit [geha.com/HB-Rewards](https://geha.com/HB-Rewards) to learn more
- All GEHA benefit plans
  - For healthy recipes, health and wellness articles, visit [geha.com/Blog](https://geha.com/Blog)
- GEHA website for benefit information [geha.com](https://geha.com)

# Q&A



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