

## *Module 4, Lesson 6 Handout:*

### **Food Plan for Leaky Gut**

Leaky gut is a fancy name for intestinal permeability. With this condition, there are gaps or holes in the gut where undigested materials, bacteria and even toxins and pathogens can leak, causing inflammation and changes to our gut flora. With this leaking comes symptoms like stomach pain, cramping, bloating, diarrhea or constipation. Though leaky gut itself is not a medical diagnosis, research shows the condition is a widespread phenomenon and it's often seen in people with autoimmune or gastro-related diagnoses. While there are no great human studies showing definite cause and effect and research is still in its very early stages, we do know that diet can play a role in managing symptoms of inflammation seen with leaky gut. Here are some specific foods to include (and not include) in the plans for clients with leaky gut.

#### **Foods That May Help**

- **Fermented foods.** We know fermented foods promote healthy gut bacteria because they contain probiotics. Recommend foods like kimchi and sauerkraut
- **Fruits and vegetables.** Your gut craves the fiber found in fresh fruits and vegetables, plus the antioxidant compounds found in produce have been shown to support gut health too
- **Whole grains and beans.** You want to bulk up the fiber to promote a healthier gut. Gluten free grains like oats are a definite yes (we'll get to gluten further below)
- **Fatty fish.** The omega-3 fatty acid content in fatty fish like salmon and sardines can help reduce inflammation in an inflamed gut
- **Olive oil.** The anti-inflammatory benefits of olive oil are strongly supported in research. Make a point to swap out any refined vegetable oils and replace them with a high quality olive oil to help reduce inflammation

#### **Foods That May Harm**

- **Packaged processed foods.** This one's a no brainer. We know processed foods trigger inflammation, the exact last thing you want when you have a leaky gut
- **Artificial sweeteners and refined sugar.** Both of these ingredients can promote inflammation and be damaging to gut health
- **Alcohol.** Alcohol is known to cause inflammation in the gut, and there's even evidence that alcohol consumption can actually cause leaky gut because of the way it's metabolized

- **Dairy.** This one is a definite “may harm,” depending on the specific client. Though many argue that the protein casein in dairy can trigger inflammation, double blind studies have found no evidence that a casein-free diet can help with symptoms. Recommend clients try it out, but if they see no relief it may not be necessary to avoid dairy
- **Gluten.** Ditto the study on dairy. That same study looked at the effect of a gluten free diet and found no evidence that gluten must be avoided. Give it a go and see if it works for the client, but if there is no difference in symptoms the client might be better off getting the nutrients and fiber found in whole grains