

# Onions for gut health

Eating more plants is one of the best ways to improve your health. Plants are rich in dietary fibre that provides numerous gut health benefits and can also reduce the risk of lifestyle diseases including gastrointestinal disorders.



## Diversity is essential for good gut health

It's important to eat a wide variety of plants in your everyday diet as this helps increase the diversity and number of bacteria living in your gut microbiome. Research has shown that eating more than 30 types of plant foods a week has a beneficial effect on gut microbiome diversity.<sup>1</sup>

Half a medium onion contributes one serve towards achieving the recommended 'five serves of vegetables a day'. However, the real gut health magic occurs when you incorporate a variety of different coloured vegetables or salads every day. So add red, white, brown or pink onions to your meals, along with other vegetables.

Half an onion (75g) has 1.6g of fibre which is 5.3% of the recommended daily intake



## Prebiotic fibre

Onions, like all vegetables, contain dietary fibre which supports digestive health. However, it's the fructans in onions - a type of prebiotic fibre that resists digestion - which is most relevant for good gut health. Prebiotic fibres such as fructans pass through the gastrointestinal tract undigested and stimulate the growth and activity of certain 'good' bacteria lower down in the large intestine.

Fructans are a source of food for the gut microbiome and promote the growth of healthy bacteria such as bifidobacteria.

Half an onion contains 1.4g of fructans, which contributes to your total daily fibre intake



Vege and onion-packed pasta bake to help boost gut health [click here for the recipe](#)



Less than 20% of Australian adults eat enough fibre to reduce the risk of chronic disease.<sup>2</sup> Adding onions to your daily meals can help meet daily fibre needs and support optimal digestive health.

## 5 Gut-friendly ways

### to add onions to your meals

Onions offer a distinct flavour boost from light and delicate to sharp and crisp, and can be added to so many dishes for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

#### 1. Dice



**Diced onions** for a stir-fry, stews, omelettes, frittatas, savoury baking and soups

#### 2. Raw



**Raw onions** in salads, sandwiches, wraps, sauces, salsa, chutneys and dips



#### 3. Pickle

[Click here for recipe](#)



**Pickled onions** on a grazing plate, as an accompaniment to your homemade burger or in a salad

#### 4. Bake or fry

[Click here for recipe](#)



**Baked or fried onions** served with your main meal or as a side for the Sunday roast

#### 5. Stuff

[Click here for recipe](#)



**Stuffed onions** filled with mushrooms, feta and fresh herbs

## Organosulfur compounds

The organosulfur compounds found in onions have beneficial effects on intestinal health. Studies have shown these compounds have a positive impact on the gut microbiome composition, increasing the beneficial bacterial populations.<sup>3</sup>



#### References:

1. McDonald D, et al. American Gut Consortium, American Gut: an Open Platform for Citizen Science Microbiome Research. *Systems*. 2018 May 15;3(3):e00031-18. doi: 10.1128/mSystems.00031-18. PMID: 29795809; PMCID: PMC5954204. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29795809/>
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian Health Survey: Nutrition First Results—Foods and Nutrients, 2011-12. ABS Cat. No. 4364.0.55.007. ABS, Canberra, Australia: 2014.
3. Guillamón E, et al. Beneficial Effects of Organosulfur Compounds from *Allium cepa* on Gut Health: A Systematic Review. *Foods*. 2021;10(8):1680. Published 2021 Jul 21. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8392556/>

For information purposes only. Please consult your Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) or doctor for advice on your personal dietary requirements. © Australian Onions 2022