

# Subtle signs of an unhealthy gut, from skin issues to sugar cravings

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The wellness industry has brought gut health to the forefront, and for good reason. Our digestive system's condition affects various aspects of our well-being, from mood to skin health. While bloating is a well-known sign of gut inflammation, other indicators can be subtle and easily overlooked.

Dr. Kenneth Brown, a board-certified gastroenterologist, explained to

Well and Good that digestive issues are often the most obvious indicator of gut inflammation. Bloating, caused by trapped gas in the upper GI tract, can signal conditions like small intestinal bacterial overgrowth or other inflammatory issues.

Skin conditions may also reflect gut health. "The [gut microbiome](#) modulates the immune system's response to inflammation, influencing the development and progression of skin conditions," Brown said. Unexplained acne flare-ups, eczema or unusually dry skin could indicate an unhappy gut.

Fatigue and insomnia are additional signs of gut inflammation, largely because of serotonin's role in regulating [circadian rhythms](#). "Serotonin is the building block of melatonin, which is associated with keeping us in our proper sleep cycles. Research is proving that our guts are a major source of melatonin production," Brown explained. An unbalanced microbiome can disrupt sleep patterns and cause insomnia.

Another sneaky symptom? Persistent sugar cravings. Brown stated, "When you eat a diet rich in processed foods and sugar, your microbiome changes to favor the bacteria that like sugar. These bacteria release chemicals that signal your brain's need for more sugar," perpetuating a cycle of inflammation.

If you have these signs of an unhealthy gut, consider adopting an anti-inflammatory diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Probiotics may also help restore balance to your gut microbiome. However, consult with a health care professional if symptoms don't go away or interfere with your [daily routine](#).

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