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TikTok's wellness community has always been intent on finding holistic ways to improve health and absolve everyday wellness issues. In the past few years, a new obsession has formed around a singular root cause for a myriad of health problems from hormones and acne to bloating and weight fluctuation. It all comes back to gut health. But what exactly are the claimed solutions to improving gut health, and how effective are they?

The internet and social media have made

health and wellness information more accessible than ever. A community where peers can share health struggles and solutions is incredibly important, especially for women whose chronic symptoms or illnesses are often overlooked and under-researched.

While this has been a boon for general health education, it is important to remember that with more information comes an abundance of misinformation. The internet is almost always trying to sell you something, and on platforms like TikTok and Instagram that have a wide

audience of young girls and a penchant for promoting body image issues, the line between wellness information and marketing is blurry.

Wellness creates a massive market for products that claim health benefits, but lack solid y research and FDA approval. These products often target an audience that has historically been pressured to "improve." Are these companies marketing products to improve your health or your appearance?

The gut health niche is no different. What used to be Kim Kardashian posing with appetite



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suppressant lollipops has turned into your favorite fitness influencers mixing up “greens powder” next to their washboard abs.

One of the most well-known advertising campaigns on TikTok is Bloom Nutrition’s Greens and Superfoods powder, marketed as “your daily scoop of gut health goodness!” It boasts over 30 “good-for-you ingredients” and the ability to help relieve bloat, support digestion, and promote energy.

This product was widely promoted all over TikTok during the pandemic, often by mega-influencers with young female audiences like Alix Earle and Daisy Keech, as well as smaller fitness and health influencers. Bloom Nutrition’s website even features a section dedicated to its TikTok promotions. In these videos, the main selling point seems to be the reduction of bloating. The women promoting Bloom Greens often have flat, toned stomachs in full view while they rave about the benefits of taking it.

The messaging is clear: You should drink their powdered greens so you can look like these girls. It isn’t really about feeling your best, it is about looking your best.

The subversion of wellness to fit beauty standards is common but incredibly toxic, especially for young audiences. Wellness should focus on promoting healthy mindsets, not creating a toxic environment constantly

geared towards perfection.

Bloom Nutrition’s powdered greens, like many other gut health supplements on the market, are not backed by enough clinical research to show any real benefit on gut health. It is not approved by the US Food and Drug Administration. Further inquiry has shown that Bloom Greens are not potent enough to be effective.

“The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends daily fiber intake of at least 25 g for women up to age 50 years and 38 g for men up to age 50 years. One serving of Bloom Nutrition Greens & Superfoods powder contains only 1.6 g of fiber,” Melissa Mondala, lifestyle medicine intensivist, said in a Heallo article

In fact, it may even be harmful to gut health. “Despite their claims of ‘no artificial coloring,’ the fine print of ‘other ingredients’ includes artificial flavors, guar gum, xanthum gum and acesulfame potassium which are shown through research studies to increase intestinal permeability, otherwise known as leaky or inflamed gut. Additionally, whey isolate protein powders are often linked to constipation, dysbiosis and inflammation,” Mondala said.

This is a common phenomenon in the world of gut health supplements. A search for “gut health” on TikTok yields countless videos promoting probiotics, prebiotics, digestive enzymes and other supplements with an embedded link for ease of buying, yet almost none have research backing them. Someone looking to improve their gut health might easily

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fall into the trap of quick-fix marketing and end up making their issues worse.

With so much misinformation and capitalization on gut health, it can be difficult to separate fact from fiction parse out the truth. Gut health refers to the balance of the gastrointestinal tract’s microbiome, which impacts almost every system in the body.

“The gut is your largest immune system organ, containing up to 80% of your body’s immune cells,” according to the Cleveland Clinic “These cells help to clear out the many pathogens that pass through it every day. It is

yet almost none have research backing them

also the largest endocrine system organ in your body. They secrete hormones that regulate aspects of your metabolism, including blood sugar, hunger and satiety.”

Gut health also affects the nervous system. Some bacteria directly interacts with nerves positively and negatively. Studies link gut health and neurotransmitter production, like serotonin, which points to gut health’s influence on mental health.

Your microbiome processes nutrients and delivers fuel to the rest of your body. How well this functions is determined by the balance of good bacteria in the gut. Poor gut health, or dysbiosis, occurs when there is an overgrowth of harmful bacteria, a lack of beneficial bacteria or a general lack of bacterial diversity in the GI tract. This can lead to symptoms like uncomfortable bloating, acne, irritable bowel syndrome, mental health issues and inflammation.

You do not need a million supplements or synthetic aides to take care of your gut. Prebiotics, probiotics and



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fiber are all amazing for your gut and can be found naturally in whole foods.

“Some foods that we recommend in our practice include insoluble or soluble fiber-rich foods like ground flaxseed or oatmeal, respectively; fruits and vegetables in general contain a mix of both,” Christine Randazzo Kirschner, MS, RDN, CDN, said in xxx. “Prebiotic foods like asparagus,

onion, garlic, leeks and Jerusalem artichokes are also part of our suggestions.”

Probiotics, good live bacteria that confer a health benefit, are found in certain foods like yogurt, kefir and Yakult. Some fermented foods may be considered probiotics and can add to the biodiversity of the microbiome as well.

The best thing for gut health is maintaining a healthy, balanced and diverse diet and limiting ultra-processed foods.



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Gut health wellness is not as scary or complicated as the internet makes it seem. You do not need to buy mystery powders to “heal” your gut. Focus on what makes your body feel good

“In our practice, we teach our clients that while no foods are off limits, prioritizing whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, and lean proteins is beneficial because these items have been shown to reduce the risk of disease,” Mondala said. “Conversely, UPF consumption should be limited until further research clarifies the effects these additives may have on our health.”

Other important ways to manage gut health include good sleep, regular exercise and stress management.

Gut health wellness is not as scary or complicated as the internet makes it seem. You do not need to buy mystery powders to “heal” your gut. Focus on what makes your body feel good, and do not let wellness marketing convince you that your healthiest self is associated with a beauty standard. Do what makes you feel good in your body, and trust your gut!

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