

# THE MISSING LINK IN ENERGY, MOOD, AND IMMUNITY? YOUR GUT

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ASK DR. HIBA

NO. 004

I've had countless patients walk into my office describing symptoms like fatigue, brain fog, breakouts, anxiety, frequent colds, or a general sense that their body just feels "off."

They've seen specialists. Tried new diets. Taken the supplements. Even started meditating. But despite everything they're doing "right," they're still not getting the answers—or the relief—they were hoping for.

When I start asking deeper questions, they're often surprised at where I go first.

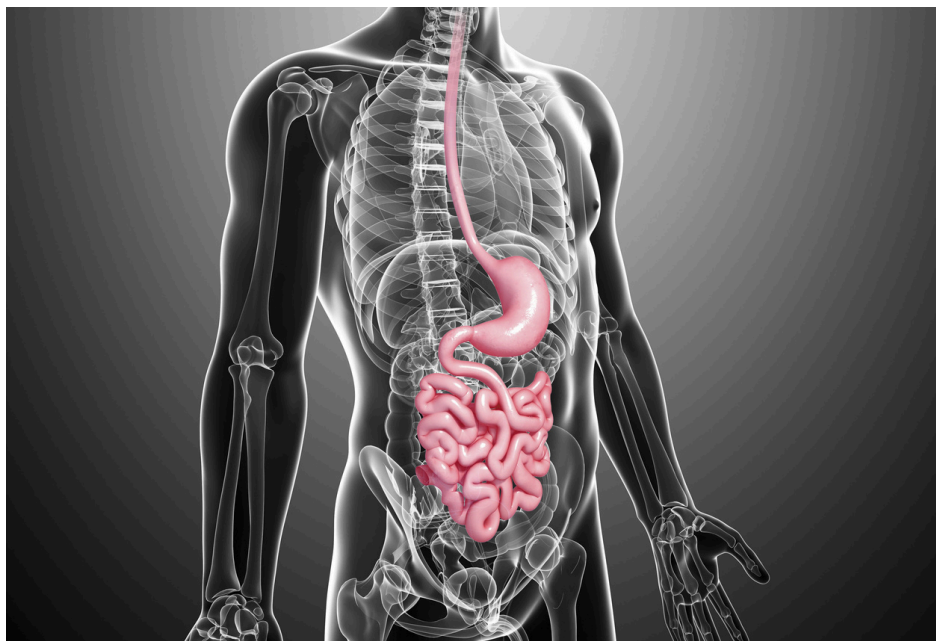
I ask about their digestion.

Not because they came in for bloating or reflux (although sometimes they did), but because even when symptoms show up outside the digestive tract, the gut is often where it all begins.

And that's the part most wellness plans miss.

## The Gut's Role in Whole-Body Health

Your gut is more than a digestion machine. It's a command center.



It houses over 70% of your immune system.

It produces neurotransmitters like serotonin, which influence mood and mental clarity.

It's where nutrients are absorbed—or not.

It communicates constantly with your brain through the vagus nerve.

When the gut is inflamed, imbalanced, or sluggish, the effects ripple throughout the entire body. And those effects don't always show up as digestive symptoms.

They show up as:

- Brain fog
- Hormonal imbalances
- Low energy
- Chronic skin issues
- Heightened reactivity to stress or food
- Immune flares or constant "mystery" symptoms

It's the downstream fallout of a system that's trying to keep up—but no longer can.

## Beyond the Digestive Symptoms

One of the biggest misconceptions I hear is this:

“I don’t think it’s my gut—I don’t have any digestive issues.”

But here’s the truth: You don’t need to have bloating or constipation to have gut dysfunction.

Many of the people I work with come in for non-digestive complaints, only to discover through testing that their gut is inflamed, leaky, or hosting microbial imbalances they never knew existed.

When we begin to address the gut—through targeted support, food shifts, and nervous system regulation—everything else starts to shift too.

Energy improves.

Sleep deepens.

Mood steadies.

The immune system calms down.

And the body starts to feel like home again.

## The Functional Medicine Lens

In functional medicine, we don’t just look at symptoms in isolation. We step back and look at systems. How is the gut communicating with the brain? How is the immune system interacting with the foods being eaten every day? What nutrients are missing—not just in the bloodstream, but in the cells?

We don’t separate the body into compartments. We see it as an ecosystem.

And at the center of that ecosystem is the gut.

## If You’ve Been Told “Everything Looks Normal”

This is the part that breaks my heart. So many people come to me after being told their labs are fine. Their symptoms are “probably stress.” They should just eat better and sleep more.

But they have eaten better. They are sleeping more. And they still don’t feel like themselves.

What they need isn’t generic advice. It’s deeper insight.

Because when we dig into functional testing, we often find:

- Nutrient depletion at the cellular level
- Inflammation that’s not visible on basic panels
- Food reactions that go beyond a typical allergy screen
- Gut issues that weren’t even on their radar

## Start with the System, Not the Symptom

You can chase individual symptoms for years—fatigue, acne, anxiety, food sensitivities—or you can pause and ask:

What system connects all of this?  
More often than not, it’s the gut.

And when you start there—not with surface symptoms, but with the system at the core—you begin to heal in ways that last.

Because real healing doesn’t mean adding more and more to your routine.

It means going deeper.

It means asking better questions.

It means remembering that gut health isn’t just about digestion—it’s the foundation of your entire well-being.