EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

STEARNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GUT CHECK

Food and drink are gear.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your gut affects your mood, energy and performance. About 95% of your body's serotonin is made in the gut, and first responders are especially prone to stomach and digestive problems.

WHY GUTS TAKE A HIT

Common contributors on the job.

01 Irregular sleep patterns

02 Stress

03 Nutrition on the run

04 Inconsistent hydration

05 Extended sitting

WATCH OUT FOR

Shift work is linked to more GI problems like IBS.

- × Abdominal pain and cramps
- × Bloating
- × Constipation or diarrhea
- × **Antibiotics** seriously disrupt gut bacteria. Use them only when prescribed, exactly as directed.
- × Symptoms that keep coming back? Talk to your doctor.

GUT & MOOD

Gut serotonin doesn't travel straight to the brain, but the **gut–brain connection** does affect mood and stress. That's why it's so important to watch what you eat.

DRINK SMART

- **Drinks count as calories.** Coffeehouse drinks, energy drinks, pop and sweet teas add up fast.
- **Caffeine reduces fatigue. It does not provide fuel.** Real food does.

HYDRATE RIGHT

- Caffeinated drinks **under 300 mg** of caffeine a day still count toward hydration.
- You need **sodium** to hydrate properly, especially when you sweat in gear.
- Sip water steadily through the shift.

FUEL THE BODY THAT ANSWERS THE CALL.

Sources: Gershon & Tack, Gastroenterology 2007 (gut serotonin); Killer et al., PLoS One 2014 (moderate coffee hydrates like water); Maughan & Shirreffs 2010 (sodium and hydration); Knutsson & Bøggild, Scand J Work Environ Health 2010 (shift work and GI disorders). Fact-checked October 2026.

FOR MORE NUTRITION GUIDANCE, CONTACT

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