



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.