

6 THE EDITORIAL PAGE

These 5 Easy Tips Will Keep Your Gut Healthy And Happy This Festive Season

While there is no harm in treating yourself during the holiday season, things can very quickly get out of hand for your gut if you don't set some boundaries.

Abigail Banerji

For most people, the holiday season is defined by spending time with their near and dear ones, indulging in feasts made by their mum, and just letting loose after a long year of constantly having to stay at the top of their game. So it is obvious that you will find yourself reaching for those sugary mithais, a glass or two of wine and even a carb-laden plate because these foods give you comfort. Add to the fact that it is the winter season, and your body will be craving some warmth regardless, which comes in the form of rich foods.

While there is no harm in treating yourself, and it is hard to stick to a strict diet during the holiday season, things can very quickly get out of hand for your gut if you don't set some boundaries. Instead of completely ruling out all the fun for yourself this festive season, make small swaps.

Nutritionist Mugdha Pradhan tells Hindustan Times Lifestyle that one needs to follow 5 simple habits to help them live a gut-healthy life, especially when on vacation or during the festive period:

Drink Something Warm in Morning

Give your day a warm start by having a warm beverage in the morning. Choose a drink you like – tea, coffee, matcha or even a glass of warm water. The nutritionist recommended having a warm drink as it would keep the bowels regular and reduce bloating from the night before. She adds,



"Warm water with a pinch of lemon or a spoon of soaked chia seeds is enough to wake up your digestive system gently."

Don't Ignore Sleep

If your calendar is filled with parties, sleep is often sacrificed. If you have headed home for the holiday season, meeting friends and hanging out with cousins and family extends till late into the night, leading to disrupted sleeping hours. The nutritionist warns that constantly having late-night parties and irregular sleep can increase cortisol levels and affect your digestion and slowing it, while also making you prone to cravings. Instead, she recommended, "A calm wind-down ritual that is an early dinner, dim lights, and no screens for 30 minutes keeps your gut hormones in balance."

Prioritise Protein and Fibre at Meals

Holiday feasts are indulgent and have a variety of dishes, from appetisers to desserts. When eating, one should prioritise protein and fibre at every meal. Eat eggs, chicken, meat, etc, along with fibrous foods such as salads, veggies, chia, and flaxseeds. This will slow the spike in sugar and keep you full for longer and prevent overeating. The nutritionist reveals what to limit: "Most festive foods are carb-heavy, like sweets, fried snacks, parathas, biryani, kachoris, which lead to quick blood sugar spikes and sluggish digestion."

Eat Mindfully, Consume Healthy Fats

There are 2 kinds of fats – healthy and unhealthy fats. Mugdha shares, "A2 ghee, coconut oil, nuts, seeds, and

free-range eggs, as well as fatty fish, are gentle on digestion and also help in reducing inflammation." The healthy fats support the gut lining, which can get irritated with excess sugar, spicy foods, or alcohol. Do not overeat or consume the food too quickly. Make it a habit to eat slowly and mindfully, stopping when you are comfortably full.

Walk After Meals

After you have eaten food, try to get some movement and make this a non-negotiable habit. The nutritionist recommends, "Even a 10-to 15-minute walk after heavy festive lunches or dinners can drastically improve gut motility." By walking, it helps your body move glucose into the muscles, reduces gas buildup, eases acidity, and prevents uncomfortable post-meal bloating.

5 Meditative Practices That Reduce Cognitive Overload In A Hyperconnected World



Swati Chaturvedi

Your mind today is rarely at rest. Notifications compete for attention, screens blur boundaries between work and personal life, and even silence feels unfamiliar. From an Ayurvedic lens, this constant mental stimulation aggravates Vata dosha, leading to restlessness, scattered focus, and a persistent sense of inner noise. Here's where meditation can help. It is not about escaping the world but about training the mind to remain steady within it.

Dr Partap Chauhan, Ayurvedacharya and founder of Jiva Ayurveda, shares five meditative practices rooted in Ayurvedic wisdom that you can integrate into daily life to gently reduce cognitive overload. None of these demands hours of effort, just a little patience:

Breath Anchoring for Mental Reset

Before any deeper meditation begins, the breath must be steadied. This practice centres your awareness on natural inhalation and exhalation without controlling rhythm. You simply observe. Sit comfortably. Close your eyes. Notice how the breath enters and leaves. When thoughts wander, and they will, you bring attention back to breathing. Over time, this trains your mind to pause rather than react. It sounds simple, maybe too simple, yet its effects are quietly profound.

Trataka to Sharpen Focus

Trataka involves gazing steadily at a fixed point, traditionally a candle flame. In a distracted world, this practice builds single-pointed attention. After lighting a candle, sit at eye level and gaze softly at the flame for about one minute. Blink naturally. When the eyes close, visualise the flame internally. This practice strengthens concentration and calms visual overstimulation caused by the screens.

Body Awareness Meditation

Many of you live in your heads while the body waits patiently for attention. Body awareness meditation restores that connection. You mentally scan from toes to head, noticing sensations without judgement. The mind begins to slow when attention moves into the body. Some days feel easier than others. That is fine.

Mantra Meditation for Mental Rhythm

Mantras introduce rhythm to the mind. Repeating a sound like Om or a personalised mantra aligns mental activity and reduces thought clutter. The repetition does not silence thoughts instantly. It gently reorganises them. With consistency, mental chatter loses its urgency. You may feel this shift subtly, almost unexpectedly.

Silent Sitting for Emotional Balance

This practice involves sitting in silence after meditation without technique or effort. You simply remain. Silence allows emotional processing that constant input often suppresses. Initially, discomfort may arise. Stay with it. Silence has its own intelligence.

Cognitive overload is not a personal failure, but a natural response to modern living. Ayurveda recognises that the mind, like the body, needs regular cleansing and rest. Meditation offers this reset, not dramatically but steadily. When practised daily, even for a few minutes, these techniques help you respond to life rather than react to it. And slowly, the mind remembers how to be still again.

Scent Can Trigger Memory & Mood: This Perfume Guide Is Perfect For Christmas Gifting

Abigail Banerji

The sense of smell is fascinating. It is the only sensory experience that can take you back in time without moving a step. A fragrance is not something you wear; it's something you experience and begins as an emotion.

Fragrances have the power to uplift your mood and recreate memories. Rajat Jain, Co-Founder & Olfactory Expert, Kimirica, shares, "One of my earliest memories goes back to childhood, every morning, my mother would apply rose water to her face. To this day, if I smell a hint of rose, I can see my mother in front of her dressing table. Our sense of smell is a powerful doorway; it can transport us to another time and place, heighten our awareness, and create memories that last a lifetime."

The week before Christmas brings one of the most packed OTT slates of the year, with Fallout Season 2, Emily In Paris Season 5, Four More Shots, Please! finale and several major film premieres.

After Residing 30 Years In US, 60-Year-Old Woman Detained During Green Card Interview

Babblejit "Bubbly" Kaur, who has resided in the US since 1994, was arrested during a biometric scan for her pending green card application.

Christmas Gifting guide: From sparkling jewellery and elevated fashion to smart tech, beauty essentials, and home upgrades, this curated guide brings together gifts your loved ones will truly appreciate



A single scent can bring back an emotion or a memory with surprising clarity, and in a world where life moves faster than ever, these emotional anchors have become increasingly important. If you want to

create a lifelong memory in someone's mind, gift them a perfume this Christmas.

We have collated a list of some of the best perfumes on offer that will make for a great stocking stuffer or a pre-festive gift:

Carrera 770 Original

Steeped in Italian heritage and born in the heart of a global fashion capital, Carrera Parfums is a celebration of craftsmanship, sophistication, and timeless design. A magnetic scent from the Oriental Woody family, Carrera 770 Original, exudes warmth and charisma. Rich, layered, and undeniably versatile, it's designed for those who enjoy a fragrance that leaves a lasting impression without overpowering the room.

Moi by Nykaa – Candy Marshmallow

?Moi by Nykaa has launched a range of yummy fragrances for the season as part of their Gourmand Collection. A soft and playful fragrance that opens with airy, cloud-like sweetness, instantly evoking the joy of your favourite childhood treats. The scent melts into a creamy vanilla heart that feels warm, familiar, and beautifully comforting. It leaves behind a delicate, fluffy trail that is nostalgic yet elevated, perfect for anyone who loves a sweet scent with a refined finish.

BVLGARI Man In Black

The BVLGARI Man In Black parfum is a fragrance that captures the richness and warmth of the season. Its vibrant spices are softened with elegant florals and grounded in deep woody notes. It is a luxurious scent that leaves a lingering trail. The parfum celebrates the magnetic force of fire through spicy top notes of cardamom, cinnamon, and black pepper; refined florals of tuberose and iris at the heart; and a dark, ambery, woody base of patchouli, cypriol, and benzoin.

Fraganote Royal Amber

Fraganote travel, memories, and life's small joys into fragrances. Each scent is built around an emotional story, drawing inspiration from diverse landscapes, nature, and design. Royal Amber is bold, strong, and commanding scent with warmth from a blend of spices with hints of woods, balanced by amber's golden glow and vetiver's earthy calm. It's a fragrance that feels timeless and powerful, that truly roars with the strength of the Tiger from the East of India.

Can A Common Flu Or Covid-19 Bring Cancer Back Years Later? New Study Raises Alarm

Diksha Modi

Recovering from cancer is often seen as the end of a long and gruelling battle. But new scientific evidence suggests that common respiratory infections such as influenza and Covid-19 could reignite cancer years, even decades, after successful treatment.

A study published in the journal Nature on July 30, 2025, shed light on why cancer can suddenly return long after patients are declared cancer-free. Researchers said viral infections may awaken "sleeping" cancer cells that have quietly spread to other organs and remained dormant.

How cancer hides after treatment

Cancer cells can break away from the original tumour and travel to distant organs, a process known as

metastasis. These cells, called disseminated cancer cells (DCCs), often settle in organs such as the lungs, bones or liver. In many cases, they remain inactive for years or even decades, evading detection and causing no symptoms. What causes these dormant cells to awaken has remained a mystery, until now.

Viral infections act as a trigger

A research team led by Dr James DeGregori at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus investigated whether respiratory viruses could be the missing trigger. Using mouse models of breast cancer, scientists studied the effects of influenza and Covid-19 infection on dormant cancer cells in the lungs.

Before infection, only a small number of isolated DCCs were present. But within just three days of influenza infection, the number of cancer cells in the lungs rose sharply. Over the next



two weeks, these cells multiplied rapidly, and alarmingly, they remained active even nine months after the virus had cleared. Similar effects were seen in mice infected with Covid. In experiments conducted on mice, researchers observed dramatic changes. Mice carrying dormant breast cancer cells in their lungs were

infected with the influenza A virus. Within just 15 days, the number of cancer cells in their lungs increased between 100 and 1,000 times. The viral infection altered the lung environment in a way that made it more favourable for cancer growth. Alarmingly, even two months after the virus had cleared from the body, the cancer cells remained active.

The infection didn't just increase cancer cell numbers; it also reduced the proportion of cells that were dormant, effectively pushing them back into an active, tumour-forming state. Researchers from Harvard University and Albert Einstein College of Medicine found that after treatment, some breast cancer cells do not disappear entirely. Instead, they migrate to other organs such as the lungs, bones or

liver, where they enter a "sleeping" state. These cells can remain inactive for years and often escape detection through routine medical tests.

The role of inflammation and IL-6

Scientists found that this reawakening was driven by inflammation, particularly by a protein called interleukin-6 (IL-6), which the body produces during infections. Mice that were unable to produce IL-6 showed far less cancer cell growth after infection, with more cancer cells remaining dormant.

Further lab experiments showed that IL-6 directly promoted tumour growth. When breast tissue organoids were treated with IL-6, their growth increased significantly, reinforcing the protein's role as a key driver.

Immune cells may help cancer grow

The study also uncovered a surprising role played by immune cells. Dor-

mant cancer cells were found clustering near CD4+ T cells in the lungs. When these CD4+ T cells were removed, fewer cancer cells stayed active a month after infection.

At the same time, levels of CD8+ T cells (immune cells that kill cancer and virus-infected cells) increased. These CD8+ cells were also more effective at destroying breast cancer cells, suggesting that CD4+ T cells may indirectly help cancer grow by suppressing the body's natural cancer-fighting response.

Human data backs the findings

The risk is not limited to animal models. Researchers analysed health records from the UK Biobank, focusing on nearly 5,000 people who had previously had cancer and were believed to be in remission. Those who tested positive for Covid-19 had nearly double the risk of dying from cancer compared to those who did not.