

THE CELIAC SOCIETY OF INDIA PRESENTS

GRAIN MATTERS



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supported by



MILLETS FOR GUT REVIVAL

Ancient Grain that
Resets your Gut

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TRUST YOUR INNER COMPASS

Microbes That Mould
Your Mind

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INSIDE HER GUT STORY

Women's health begins
in the gut

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers,

Your health drives us to study the gut, just as the gut drives your health every single day. This is why, the previous year has been rather eventful for the Celiac Society of India (CSI). We've extensively engaged in some massive drives that circulate around public engagement, nutritional education and general awareness about the incredible advances in the health and food industry.

Of these, the series of seminars organised with Illness to Wellness and Prana cannot be ignored.

Each seminar has been painstakingly planned to deliver conversation and understanding around gut health and microbiomes – from leading experts to celebrities and incredible

brands that deliver wholesome, nutritional food and services, it's been incredible! We've uncovered the connection between the gut and the brain (refer to page 4) – did you know that your gut actually helps you in making social decisions – and addressed gender-specific health needs (hello, ladies!)?

We've also discovered a miracle superfood – the humble millet – and its ability to inspire incredible lifestyle changes (refer to page 3).

From medicine to psychology, public health to diagnostics, Brahma Kumari diets (thank you Sister Shivani) to [What Virat Kohli eats](#) (don't forget to follow me on social media), we've gone the whole hog and then some!

I have to thank my team – a bunch of hardworking around-the-clockers who have delivered with patience and love just to ensure your health, dear readers. But most of all, I have to thank you for participating, for forming opinions and for supporting our work here. And if you haven't started any of these yet, well, then this edition is the right way to rhumba!

Happy reading, and stay curious!
Warm regards,

A stylized, cursive signature of the word 'Ishi' in a dark grey or black ink.

Ishi Khosla
President, Celiac Society of India



MILLET MEDICINE

Discover why your "second brain" deserves superstar treatment and how ancient grains can transform your well-being.

On 6th July 2024, CSI and the Indian Coalition for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD), with support from Illness to Wellness, organised a seminar titled “Gut, Microbiome & Millets: The Inflammation Fix” at the India International Centre, New Delhi. The event featured prominent speakers including Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi, Padmashri Dr. Chandrakant S. Pandav, Dr. Vinod Paul (NITI Aayog), Dr. Arjun Dang, Dr. Meena Mishra, Dr. Kapil Yadav (AIIMS), Ms. Ishi Khosla, and other distinguished experts from healthcare, nutrition, and social entrepreneurship. The seminar brought together professionals, researchers, and the public to spotlight the crucial link between gut health, inflammation, and chronic disease prevention—emphasising the role of millets and the microbiome in restoring health.

Often called our "second brain," the gut is home to a rich microbiome that influences digestion, immunity, mood, and more. But poor food choices — like sugary snacks, fried foods, and processed meats — can disrupt this balance, leading to gut dysbiosis. This allows harmful bacteria to take over, triggering inflammation, weight gain, insulin resistance,

and even mental health issues like anxiety and depression. A weakened gut lining (or “leaky gut”) may also lead to food allergies and immune reactions.

So how can you heal your gut naturally? Enter millets, nutrient-dense ancient grains packed with protein, fibre, and essential minerals. They support the growth of good gut bacteria that produce short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), which reduce inflammation, strengthen the gut barrier, and enhance immune function. Simple methods like soaking, fermenting, or germinating millets improve their digestibility and nutritional value.

Despite their rural roots, millets can prove to be incredibly versatile when added to your daily diet. They can easily replace rice or wheat in dishes like dosas, upma, rotis, salads, and even baked goods. New to millets? Introduce them gradually, and stay hydrated to avoid temporary digestive discomfort from the fibre boost. Adding millets to your plate is an easy yet impactful way to reset your gut and protect against chronic illness. These humble grains may just be your gut’s best ally. ■

THINKING WITH YOUR GUT

The How Intuition and Digestive Wellness is linked

On 12th September 2024, CSI and Prana organised a seminar, titled “Gut Feeling” to debunk the interconnection between gut health and mental wellbeing, in association with Illness to Wellness. The event held at Club Vita, Gurgaon, featured Dr. Chandrakant S. Pandav, Padmashri as the Chief Guest, along with a speaker panel comprising of Dr. Ashima Shukla, Founder, Prana Centre for Integrative Medicine, Dr. Ashutosh Shukla, Co-Founder of Prana Centre and Senior Director, Internal Medicine, Max Hospitals, Dr. Deepak Gupta, Psychiatrist, Founder, Centre for Child and Adolescent Wellbeing, Dr. Puja Kapoor, Paediatric Neurologist, Paras Hospital, Dr. Alok Mishra, Psychologist, AIIMS and Ms. Ishi Khosla.

The bi-directional relationship between the gut and the brain is defined by a communication system called the gut-brain axis. The gut sends messages to the brain via the vagus nerve, chemical messengers and hormones. Gut bacteria also play a role by producing serotonin (‘feel good’ hormones), SCFAs and neurotransmitters. They, altogether, influence an individual’s memory, stress response and mood as well as sleep. A dysbiotic gut flora can lead to memory issues, depression, anxiety and even autism. For instance, when you’re anxious or stressed, the brain sends signals that can cause indigestion, stomach pain or even diarrhoea.

Dr. Shukla elaborated on the gut-brain axis as a co-evolutionary communication system, designed to protect us through dietary and emotional feedback. For instance, when we eat something that is harmful, such as stale food, the gut

sends warning signals to the brain and this ends up making us feel nauseous.

Dr. Mishra drew the attention on the need for people to reconnect with their health priorities and become more self-aware to maintain this gut-brain relationship. Ms. Khosla described that the gut is not just linked to mental health but extends to physical and social wellbeing.

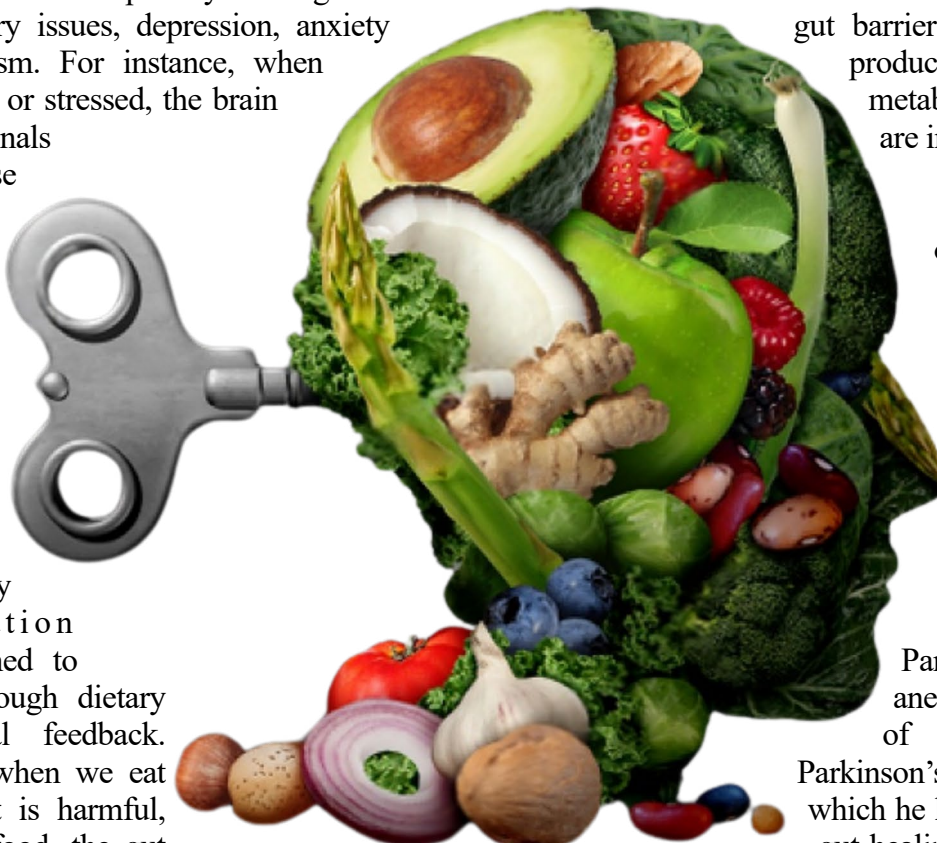
A healthy gut supports mental health and improves physical well-being by improving digestion, enhancing nutrient absorption, reducing systemic inflammation and supporting metabolic health and thereby lowering the risk of chronic diseases.

Following an anti-inflammatory, gut-friendly diet and the “half-plate rule”, rainbow diet are some key tips to promoting a healthy microbiome. According to Dr. Puja Kapoor, changes in food composition, particularly with the rise of processed foods, negatively affects gut integrity and contributes to rising rates of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This begins with the disruption of gut microbiome

→ causes inflammation → impaired gut barrier function → altered production of neuroactive metabolites, all of which are implicated in ASD.

Children with ASD often have different gut microbiome compositions compared to neurotypical peers, including imbalances in specific microbes and reduced diversity.

Dr. Chandrakant Pandav, shared his anecdote on his journey of recovering from Parkinson’s disease, during which he lost 15kgs through a gut-healing diet. ■



REWRITING WOMEN'S HEALTH

Why Gut Health Deserves a Seat at the Women's Health Table

On 14th December 2024, the Centre for Science of India (CSI), in collaboration with Illness to Wellness and supported by Apollo Hospitals, hosted a seminar titled "Gut Matters: Women's Health and the Gut Microbiome" at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The panel featured experts across disciplines, including Dr. Chandrakant S. Panday, Dr. Harsh Mahajan, Dr. V.M. Kohli, Dr. Ramesh Sarin, Dr. Tanuja Nesari, Ms. Vinita Sethi, Dr. Angeli Mishra, Dr. Vaneeta Kapur, Dr. Raka Guleria, Dr. Neerja Hajela, Dr. Ashutosh Shukla, Dr. Ashima Shukla, Dr. Mankul Goyal, Dr. Arjun Dang, Ms. Hemangi Bhatnagar, and Ms. Ishi Khosla. The discussion was on the gut microbiome's influence on hormonal imbalances, PCOS, thyroid dysfunction, infertility, and chronic inflammation—highlighting the need for integrative approaches in women's healthcare.

Gut health is central to hormonal balance, mental clarity, fertility, and emotional well-being. Ishi Khosla stressed the need for women-centric clinics, greater awareness of gender-specific health needs, and stronger representation in clinical research. Dr. Arjun Dang pointed to rising food allergies and intolerances among women, underlining the need for precise diagnosis and detailed history.

Maternal gut health affects birth outcomes, mental health, and autism risk, reinforcing the gut-brain connection. A healthy microbiome regulates hormones, inflammation, and nutrient metabolism—vital during pregnancy. Gut imbalances (dysbiosis) can disrupt foetal development and are linked to autism, preterm birth, and low birth weight.

The seminar promoted millets as essential to women's diets. Nutrient-rich and anti-inflammatory, they support menstrual health, weight management, and skin vitality. Speakers backed the government's

Maternal nutrition and exposure to inflammatory foods during pregnancy can set the stage for adult diseases like heart disease and metabolic syndrome in future generations, underscoring the profound responsibility of women's health in shaping the well-being of humanity.

dietary reforms and warned how processed, sugary, and low-fibre foods disrupt gut balance, causing systemic inflammation. low-fibre foods disrupt the gut microbiome, leading to gut dysbiosis and systemic inflammation. ■



INSIDE WOMEN'S HEALTH

How Digestive Health Shapes Hormones, Immunity, and Vitality



The panelists in frame, from left, Dr Meenakshi Pandey, Dr VM Kohli, Dr Anjali Kumar, Dr Angeli Mishra and Chef Manisha.



In frame, Shalini Khanna and a student from NABH talking about the positive health transformation of following a balanced diet.



Exhibition stalls in the event.



Sister Shivani addressing the well being and gut wellness for women.

On 4th March 2025, the CSI and Prana organised “Gut Matters: Women, Wellness and Gut Health”, supported by Illness to Wellness. This seminar, a women’s day edition of GutMatters was held at Club Drive, Gurugram. Renowned spiritual teacher, Brahmakumari Sister Shivani graced the occasion. Speakers included Dr. Ashima Shukla and Dr. Ashutosh Shukla (Prana Centre for Integrative Medicine), Dr. Anjali Kumar (Maitriwoman), Dr. V.M. Kohli (Pushpawati Singhania Hospital), Dr. Meenakshi Pandey (All India Institute of Ayurveda), Dr. Angeli Mishra (Lifeline Laboratory), Chef Manisha Bhasin (ITC Maurya), and Ms. Ishi Khosla (CSI).

To have so many speakers unanimously agree that the root cause of many prevalent diseases today – diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, cancer and autoimmune conditions is gut dysfunction is sobering. Ishi Khosla kickstarted this

high powered event by highlighting the role of the microbiome and gluten as the key trigger of a leaky gut and went on to discuss the presence of zonulin, a protein that regulates junctions between intestinal cells, causing systemic inflammation and immune reaction, which then contributes to conditions like food sensitivity, autoimmune diseases and even neurological symptoms. The seminar underscored the need of treating gut health as a holistic foundation for health and wellbeing rather than an isolated medical concern.

Sister Shivani’s keynote proved the highlight of the event: She stressed on the need to care for both the mind and the body simultaneously, as they directly affect each other. She shared her story of transformation after adopting an anti-inflammatory diet under advice from Ishi Khosla, which has improved her energy, stamina and overall vitality. She also linked her



In frame, from left, Dr Asha Chandra, Dr Angeli Mishra, Dr Anjali Kuamr, Dr VM Kohli, Dr Ashutosh Shukla, Chef Manisha, Ms Ishi Khosla, Sister BK Shivani, Dr Meenakshi Pandey, Dr Ashima Shukla and Ms Anju Khosla.

Ms. Ishi Khosla setting the stage to address why women's health matters and discussing why women shouldn't feel guilty about self-care.

dietary choices with emotional resilience, advocating for the elimination of not just toxic food but also toxic content from one’s daily life. “Our emotional health is directly impacted by five elements – what we eat, drink, read, watch and listen to,” she concluded.

dietary choices with emotional resilience, advocating for the elimination of not just toxic food but also toxic content from one’s daily life. “Our emotional health is directly impacted by five elements- what we eat, drink, read, watch and listen to,” she concluded. ■

Spoonful of Hype? The Matcha Type

WHY THE HYPE?

- Boost metabolism
- Deliver calm, sustained energy
- Support cognitive function
- Soothe the gut
- Enhance skin health

\$167.8MN

Expected revenue generation by the Indian matcha market by 2030

70%

Customer base formed by women

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Moringa outperforms matcha in antioxidants, protein, and insulin regulation

Dairy and sugar cancel out many of matcha’s benefits

Foam isn’t a quality indicator—matcha doesn’t have to be frothy

Ceremonial grade? A marketing term

Greener isn’t always better—shade-grown leaves can appear brighter, but that doesn't guarantee superior quality



Deadly Spice in Disguise

The Tiniest Gluten Trigger that Everyone Ignored

Bipasha Chopra (name changed), a 50-year-old woman with a BMI of 26.1, was living with chronic joint pain affecting her legs, knees, and ankles for nearly 20 years. She was diagnosed with degenerative osteoarthritis and had a history of migraine. Despite being on painkillers, she continued to experience persistent discomfort. Her family history revealed that her mother had blood pressure, diabetes, and heart-related issues. At the time of her visit with Ms. Khosla, she was taking homeopathic tablets for her symptoms.

She was put on an elimination protocol, and as a part of the intervention, was given vitamin B12, vitamin D, magnesium, probiotics, vitamin K2, and some digestive enzymes. The response was remarkable — within 2-3 weeks, she reported being 80% better, and sometime later became completely

pain-free, even forgetting she ever had chronic pain. However, she later noted that the pain began to return intermittently, suggesting a possible dietary trigger causing fluctuation in symptoms. The cause however was unidentified. Upon questioning on minute details of her diet, it was discovered that she had started using hing (asafoetida) more frequently as a digestive aid. Hing in general is not gluten-free. Once it was removed from her diet, her symptoms completely resolved again. This case reinforced the fact that even trace amounts of trigger substances — at levels as low as 20 parts per million (ppm) — can be detected by the body and cause significant flare-ups. ■



THAT'S A WRAP

It's the Gut Feeling (which feels right)



Gut-friendly



Gluten-free



Rich in fibre



www.springfoods.com

Newsletter curation: Celiac Society of India
 Publication layout design: The Partum Collective
 Web optimisation: Himalayan IT Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
 Content research: Anindita Das
 Logo design: Nabadeep Kakati
 Tech support & mailing: Neha Jain

The Celiac Society of India presents its new website, found at celiacsocietyofindia.com.
 More information about ISWD 2019 can be found at iswd2019.com.