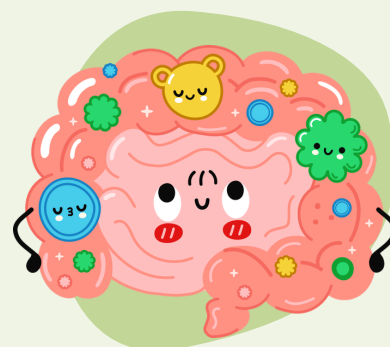




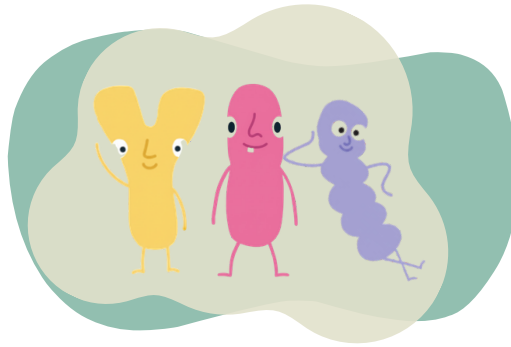
Ages 5 - 7

# My Gut Buddies! Whānau Pack



# Welcome, Whānau!

Meet the Tiny Helpers in Your Tummy! Inside every one of us lives a massive team of 95 trillion tiny helpers called the Microbiome. We like to call them our Gut Buddies! These buddies aren't just there for digestion; they are part of a "Secret Phone Line" (the Vagus Nerve) that talks directly to our brain, helping us feel strong, healthy, and happy.



## Why Gut Health Matters:

The first years of life are the most important for building a diverse gut team. By helping our tamariki (children) love their gut buddies now, we give them a toolkit for life-long Hauora (wellbeing). This pack is designed to help your whole whānau learn, cook, and play your way to a happier gut!

## Bringing the "Microbial City" Home

Health starts in the kitchen, and this pack is designed to bring the science of the classroom to your dinner table. We have included four gut-loving recipes that are:

- 1. High in Fibre:** The essential fuel the Gut Buddies need to thrive.
- 2. Diversity Boosters:** Packed with a rainbow of colours to increase microbial variety.
- 3. Whānau Friendly:** Delicious, simple, seasonal, affordable, and flexible meals that the whole household can enjoy together.

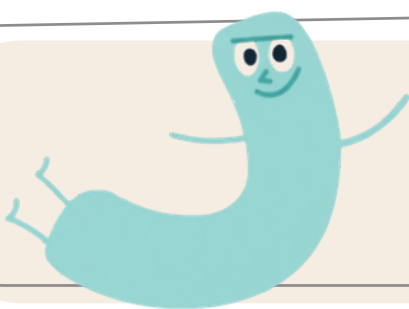
We encourage you to invite your child to be the "Head Kitchen Helper" when preparing these dishes. It is a fantastic opportunity for them to show you which ingredients are Biff's Fibre Fuel or Lacy's Live Food right in your own pantry!

# Meet your Microbes!



**Biff the Bifidobacterium:** Biff is the team's biggest fan of fibre. He loves munching on vegetables and whole grains to stay strong and sends happy signals to your brain.

**Lacy the Lactobacillus:** Lacy is a legend at absorbing nutrients and making warm, fuzzy feelings. She is a "Live Food" buddy found in things like yoghurt.



**Roz the Roseburia:** Roz is the "Germ Kicker." She helps our immune system fight off bad bugs to keep us from getting sick.

**Bax the Bacteroides:** Bax is the team's Protector! He protects you from pathogens (bad bacteria and viruses) and makes sure there is plenty of good food to share with the other team members.



## Social Spotlight

### We love seeing our ākonga in action!

Whether you are masterfully demonstrating your Veggie Nuggets, showing off colourful Berry Bark, or sharing a "Kitchen Bloop" that made the whole whānau laugh, we want to celebrate your journey.

You can join our community by sharing your photos and videos on our social media! Or, write a short story or keep a diary of your kitchen experiences and share with us via email at [EATucation@getafeed.co.nz](mailto:EATucation@getafeed.co.nz)

Follow us at **GutFoundationNZ & EATucation** on Instagram and Facebook & tag us in a pic or video showcasing your kai & go in the draw to win a \$150 Supermarket Voucher for your whānau!



## Te Reo Kai

Try using these Te Reo Kai words to empower your tamariki as "Head Kitchen Helpers" while fueling their Gut Buddies!

Kai (Food)

Tinana (Body)

Manawa (Heart/Seat of emotions)

Hauora (Health/Wellbeing)

Rongoā (Remedy/Medicine)

Hua whenua (Fruits of the land)

Whakatā (To rest/relax)

Kōpū (Belly/Abdomen)

Kākano: Seed (Like the fiber seeds Biff loves!)

Harikoa: Happy / Joyful (How our brain feels with happy signals)

Hua rākau (Fruits of the trees)

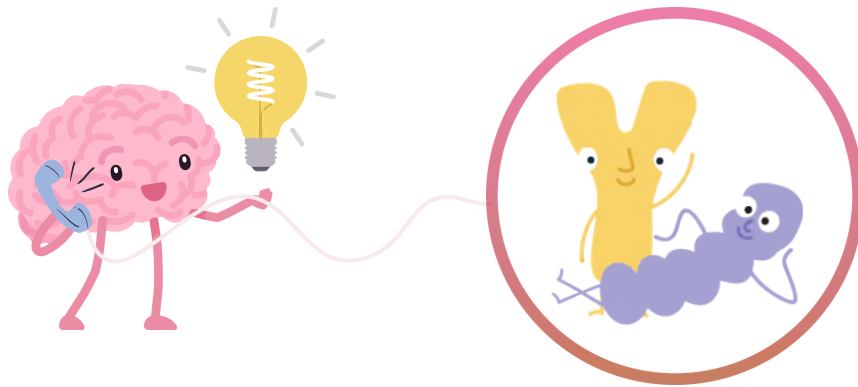
***Kai te rongoā, ko te rongoā he kai (Food is medicine, medicine is food)***



# The Mood & Food Connection

Did you know that 95% of your Serotonin - the "happy potion" that helps you sleep, eat, and feel joyful - is made right inside your gut? Your tummy is lined with millions of tiny nerves. This means what you eat doesn't just fill your belly; it actually "talks" to your brain!

- The Secret Phone Line: Your gut and brain are connected by a special superhighway called the Vagus Nerve. When we eat fibre-rich veggies, it's like our Gut Buddies are sending a "Good Vibes" phone call directly to our brain.
- The Rainbow Effect: Different coloured vegetables have special "brain boosters" (phytonutrients) that protect our brain cells and help us stay focused and calm.



## Mood Food Chat

Talk with your tamariki about how they feel after eating different foods.

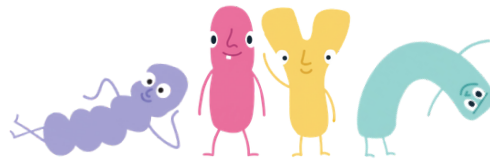
When eating a Rainbow Salad: "My tummy feels light and my brain feels like it has a Happy Signal!"

After too much "Grumpy Food" (sugar): "My tummy feels heavy and my brain feels a bit grumpy or tired."

Discussion Prompt: "Which Gut Buddy are we feeding tonight? Is it Biff with some broccoli, or Lacy with some yoghurt?"

# Eat the Rainbow!

Eating a wide range of colours isn't just about making your plate look good, it's about giving your body a full spectrum of different "phytonutrients." Each colour group contains specific natural compounds that do different jobs, from purple foods that boost brain power and memory, to green veggies that help your muscles recover and keep your nervous system calm. By 'Eating the Rainbow,' you ensure your Gut Buddies stay diverse and healthy, which directly impacts your energy and mood. Just like in life, diversity is the key to success - eating as wide a variety of whole foods as possible is the best way to feed all the different gut bugs in your microbial city!



## Here is how each colour helps:

**Red** foods like tomatoes, red peppers, and strawberries help your heart stay healthy, protect against some cancers, and boost your immune system with vitamin C.



**Orange** and **Yellow** foods like carrots, kūmara, pumpkin, oranges, and bananas are good for your eyes and immune system thanks to vitamin A. They also have vitamin C and potassium.



**Green** foods like spinach, kale, and broccoli help your body repair and grow cells with folate, and are important for strong bones. They provide iron, vitamin K, and calcium.



**Blue** and **Purple** foods like blueberries, eggplant, and purple cabbage support our brain health & protect the heart with powerful antioxidants. They also have vitamins C and K.



**White** and **Brown** foods like cauliflower, garlic, and mushrooms have compounds that fight bacteria and reduce inflammation.



## Fruit and Veggie Tracker

**Use this colour guide for your provided fruit and vegetable tracker.**

Every time you eat a meal, check if you've included a variety of colours and see if you can tick the "Rainbow" by getting at least 75% of your whānau to try the different fruit or vegetables on the plate.



# Berry Bark

This bark is a “Live Food” snack. When we eat these tiny living helpers in the yoghurt, they join our gut team and help us absorb all the goodness from our other food. It makes our tummies feel very happy!

**Yield:** 4-6 servings (depending on size of pieces)

## Ingredients

- 2 cups plain Greek or natural yoghurt (480g)
- 1-2 tablespoons honey or maple syrup (21-42g) – optional
- 1 cup mixed sliced fruit (150g). Choose from strawberries, raspberries, mango, peaches, orange segments, kiwifruit, blueberries, blackberries
- 2-3 tablespoons seeds or low-sugar granola (20-30g) - e.g., pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, sunflower seeds

## Method

Prep the Tray:

- Line a baking tray or large flat plate with baking paper.

Mix the Base:

- In a bowl, mix the yoghurt with honey or maple syrup if using.

Spread the Magic:

- Pour the yoghurt mixture onto the paper.
- Use a spoon to spread it out evenly to a thickness similar to a pancake (about 0.5 cm).

Decorate (The Fun Part!):

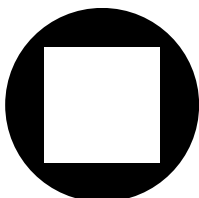
- Add your choice of colourful fruit toppings and seeds on top of the yoghurt base as desired.
- Use designs like "Gut Buddy Garden" (kiwi = bushes and berries = flowers), "Rainbow Arch" (rows of fruit by colour), or "Swirl" (dots of pureed fruit).

Freeze:

- Place the tray flat in the freezer for at least 3 hours or until the yoghurt is completely firm.

Snap & Snack:

- Once frozen, peel the bark off the paper.
- Break into shards or large chunks.
- Store in an airtight container in the freezer until ready to eat.



Scan the QR codes to step into the kitchen with Chef Matt! Watch him bring our recipes to life and discover even more tips for mastering your veggies.



# Let's Make Berry Bark!

## A Yummy Snack for Your Gut



### GATHER YOUR INGREDIENTS

**The Base & Sweetener:**  
2 cups Greek yogurt mixed with 1-2 tablespoons of honey or maple syrup.



**Prep the Tray:**  
Line a large baking tray or flat plate with baking paper first.



**The Rainbow Toppings:**  
1 cup sliced fruit/berries, (like mango or strawberries) and 2-3 tablespoons of seeds or granola.

### SPREAD, DECORATE, AND FREEZE

1



**Spread the Magic:**  
Pour the yogurt onto the paper and spread it thin like a pancake.

2



### CREATE A MASTERPIECE!



Design a Gut Buddy Garden



Rainbow Arch



The Swirl

- Gut Buddy Garden:** Use kiwifruit for bushes and berries for flowers.
- Rainbow Arch:** Arrange fruit in rows by their bright colors.
- The Swirl:** Use dots of pureed fruit to make patterns.

3



3 HOURS



**The Big Freeze:**  
Freeze flat for 3 hours, then snap into shards to eat!



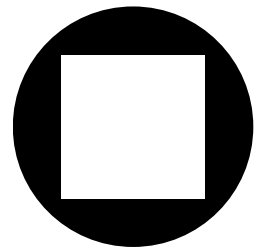
# Veggie Nuggets

These nuggets are a secret weapon for your gut! By using white beans, we are giving Bax the Bacterioide exactly what he needs to stay strong. Remember, Bax is our Protector, he guards us against bad bugs and shares his food with the rest of the gut team.

Yield: About 12-15 nuggets

## Ingredients

- 1 can white beans (Cannellini or Navy beans), rinsed and drained (400g)
- 1 cup finely grated vegetables (carrot and courgette), squeezed to remove excess water (120g)
- 1/2 cup wholemeal breadcrumbs or oat flour (50g)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder (1g)
- 1/2 cup grated cheese (60g)
- Olive oil for brushing (1-2 tablespoons / 15-30g)



## Method

Mash the Beans:

- Place the rinsed beans in a large bowl.
- Use a potato masher or fork to mash the beans into a smooth paste.

Mix in the Magic:

- Add the grated vegetables, cheese, garlic powder, and half the breadcrumbs to the bean paste.
- Mix until a soft dough forms that can be rolled into balls.
- If too sticky, add more breadcrumbs a little at a time.

Shape the Nuggets:

- Scoop 1 tablespoon of mixture, roll into a ball, then flatten into a nugget shape.
- Press each side of the nugget into the remaining breadcrumbs to coat lightly.

Bake:

- Place nuggets on a baking tray lined with baking paper.
- Lightly brush or spray with olive oil.
- Bake at 190°C for 10 minutes.
- Flip nuggets and bake another 8-10 minutes until golden brown.
- Alternatively, bake at 190°C in an Air Fryer for 8-10 min, flipping over halfway through (at about 5 minutes).

Serving Ideas

- Arrange nuggets in a circle around a small bowl of hummus or yoghurt dip.
- Decorate nuggets with cucumber slices as eyes and red capsicum strips as smiles to create “Happy Faces.”



# Let's Make Magic Veggie Nuggets!

## The Magic Ingredients



**The Power Base (Beans & Veggies):**  
Use 1 can of white beans and 1 cup of grated carrots and courgette.



**The Glue (Cheese & Crumbs):**  
Mix in 1/2 cup of cheese and 1/2 cup of breadcrumbs to hold it together.

Serves

Makes 12-15 Nuggets:  
This recipe makes enough nuggets for a whole group of friends!

## 3 Steps to Nugget Magic



### 1. Mash and Mix

Mash beans into paste, then stir in veggies, cheese, and half the crumbs.

Wash Hands



### 2. Shape and Coat

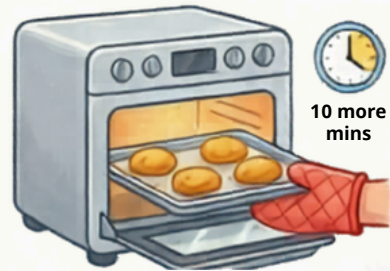
Roll dough into balls, flatten them, and press into the remaining breadcrumbs.



### 3. Bake and Flip

Bake at 190°C for 10 minutes, flip them, and bake 10 more minutes.

HOT



## Create a "Happy Face" Plate



**Decorate Your Plate:**  
Use peas for eyes, red capsicum strips and sunflower seeds for a smile.



**The Dipping Circle:**  
Arrange your nuggets in a circle around a bowl of hummus or yogurt.



## Kai Connection Challenges

Get the whole whānau involved with these "Gut Buddy" approved activities and tick the box once you're done!



**The Fibre Fuel Scavenger Hunt:** Can you find 3 things in your kitchen that Biff would love to eat? Look for "Fibre Fuel" like colourful vegetables, oats, or fruit with the skin on.

- **Bonus:** Find a "Rainbow Vegetable" - something purple, orange, or bright green!



**The Secret Phone Line Call (Tummy Breathing):**

- Lay down together and place a small toy on your tummy.
- Breathe in deep to make the toy rise like a boat on a wave, then breathe out to let it sink.
- This sends a "Calm Down" message through the Secret Phone Line to your brain.



**Microbe Movers:**

- Exercise shakes up our gut buddies and makes them happy! Put on your favourite song and have a "Gut Buddy Boogie."
- Try to move in different ways - wiggle like a microbe, jump like a germ-kicker, and stretch like a long fibre!



**Gut Buddy Art:**

- Use recycled materials (bottle caps, egg cartons, or fabric scraps) to create your own 3D Gut Buddy.
- Give them a name and a superpower. Do they help you sleep? Do they give you energy for sport?



**Obi's "Garden to Gut" Observation:**

- Obi the Rhizobia is our Garden Helper! While the other buddies live inside us, Obi lives in the soil and helps our vegetables grow big and strong.
- If you have a garden or some pots, go outside and look for Obi's helpers (worms and bugs in the soil).
- Talk about how healthy soil grows healthy plants, which makes healthy food for our tummies!

