

THAT GUT FEELING

Spring/Summer 2026

gUTS
UK!



What's inside?

Read AR's achalasia story
on **page 15**

Learn how to get your gut
summer-ready on **page 8**

Find out how to dedicate a
flower in the Guts UK Memory
Garden on **page 12**

Hello

from our CEO



Welcome to the latest edition of That Gut Feeling. It's another jam-packed magazine, full of the latest news, stories, and campaigns from Guts UK.

At the start of the year, we welcomed the launch of the National Cancer Plan for England. The plan sets out priority areas for improvement, from earlier diagnosis and better detection, to greater holistic support for people living with cancer and an increase in research funding and clinical trials. Specifically, we are pleased to see that less survivable digestive cancers are finally getting the attention they need and deserve as part of the plan.

We and fellow members of the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce have worked hard to raise awareness and understanding of less survivable cancers across the UK. We've engaged with policy makers and campaigned for clearer targets, improvements to early diagnosis pathways, and increased investment in research. We want the Government and NHS England to take action by prioritising outcomes for people diagnosed with a less survivable cancer and to commit to increasing survival rates. Later this year, we'll be involved in establishing an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) focusing on stomach and oesophageal cancers, two of the less survivable cancers that we provide information and support for.

In 2025 we invested in 20 new research projects, including three on digestive cancers, six which focus on childhood digestive conditions, and others which explore conditions including adhesions, Barrett's oesophagus, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and Hirschsprung's disease. This year, we are also launching a dedicated Pancreatitis Research Funding Call, designed to support pancreatitis research and accelerate progress against the research priorities as identified in our 2022 priority setting partnership (PSP) by patients and healthcare professionals. Research like this is only possible thanks to your continued support.

In July, we'll launch a brand-new public awareness campaign that aims to get the nation talking about their guts. We know there's still much taboo surrounding our gut health and that needs to change. From Monday 13 to Sunday 19 July, you can get to know your gut and help us to champion positive conversations about gut health. There are lots of ways to get involved. Find out more and sign up at gutscharity.org.uk/lets-talk-guts. We hope you'll get involved and do your bit to help the UK get to grips with guts!

Suzanne

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Get in touch

Need information and support for a digestive condition or symptoms? We're here for you.

Call our Helpline on **0300 102 4887** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm, except bank holidays) or go to gutscharity.org.uk/helpline to complete our online form.

If you're contacting us about something else, call our main telephone line on **020 7486 0341** or go to gutscharity.org.uk/contact-us.

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Get to know your gut:

Information about indigestion

Indigestion (or dyspepsia) means pain or discomfort in the upper abdomen or lower chest. Indigestion is a symptom, not a condition, and nearly everyone will experience it at some point. It is rare for it to be caused by a serious condition.



What are the symptoms?

Symptoms typically happen after you eat or drink. It can feel like:

- **Discomfort or pain:** Ranging from mild to severe.
- **Fullness:** A heavy, bloated feeling after eating.
- **A localised ache:** Pain just below the breastbone.

It is important not to confuse indigestion with heartburn, which is specifically a burning sensation behind the breastbone caused by acid reflux. While indigestion often stands alone, it can be accompanied with symptoms like nausea, retching, burping, bringing up food or bitter-tasting fluids into your mouth. In rare cases, it can cause vomiting.

When should I see a GP for my symptoms?

Around 1 in 4 people with indigestion symptoms visit their doctor for advice. You know your body best. If your symptoms are persistent, changing, or causing you concern, it's important to speak to a GP.

What treatments are available?

Before moving to medication, see if anything to do with your lifestyle may be causing indigestion.

Common triggers include:

- **Eating habits:** Rushing meals or over-eating.
- **Dietary choices:** High-fat or very spicy foods.
- **Lifestyle factors:** Smoking, excess alcohol, and weight gain.

Focusing on a balanced diet, staying active, and keeping within recommended alcohol limits are ways to manage indigestion.

Speaking to your pharmacy or GP

If lifestyle changes aren't helping, your pharmacist is a great first step. They can recommend over-the-counter antacids or acid-suppressing liquids that work by neutralising or reducing stomach acid.

If these don't do the trick, see your GP. They can prescribe stronger, long-term treatments and review your current medications to ensure they aren't the cause of your symptoms.

Never stop taking prescribed medication without talking to your doctor first.

Could your indigestion be caused by something more serious?

If your indigestion isn't going away and you've explored lifestyle changes and tried medications from your pharmacy or GP, it's worth paying attention to it.

The red flag symptoms you shouldn't ignore are:

- Unexplained weight loss.
- Ongoing vomiting.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Severe pain that starts suddenly.
- The sensation that food is getting stuck on the way down.

These aren't typical indigestion symptoms and they should be checked by your doctor.

There are a couple of more urgent warning signs to be aware of too. Vomiting blood or noticing black, tarry stools could indicate internal bleeding and should be treated as a medical emergency.

Age and family history matter too. If these symptoms are new and you're over 55, or if there's a history of stomach or oesophageal cancer

in your family, don't delay getting medical advice.

Could it be something else?

Whilst most indigestion is nothing serious, persistent symptoms can be linked to digestive cancers in some cases. This includes stomach, oesophageal and liver cancers.

These cancers often start with vague, easy-to-dismiss symptoms, which is sometimes why they are diagnosed later than they should be. That doesn't mean you should panic. But it does mean you shouldn't ignore the changes in your body.

Getting things checked early is always better than wondering later. If something doesn't feel quite right, trust your instincts and book a GP appointment. It's a small step that could make a very big difference.

To find out more

about indigestion or other digestive conditions or symptoms, visit gutscharity.org.uk/information or call our Helpline on **0300 102 4887**.

Get to grips with Barrett's oesophagus

Some digestive conditions can often be mistaken for everyday annoyances. Barrett's oesophagus is one of them. It occurs when the normal cells lining your oesophagus (gullet or food pipe) change into abnormal cells. This is usually due to long-term acid reflux or gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD).

Whilst these changes can potentially be pre-cancerous, it is important to remember that most people with Barrett's oesophagus will not develop oesophageal cancer. However, the risk is higher than in the general population.

What are the symptoms?

The main symptom is persistent reflux. Symptoms of reflux are heartburn (a burning feeling behind the breastbone) and regurgitation (bringing food back up shortly after eating.). For many, these symptoms are worse when lying down and can even wake them up at night. Because the abnormal cells are sometimes less sensitive to acid, some people find that their heartburn improves, leading them to believe the problem has gone away.

If you experience any persistent symptoms (three weeks or more), it's important you seek medical advice rather than self-medicating with over-the-counter medication. Early diagnosis can make all the difference.

World Barrett's Oesophagus Day 2026

On May 16th, we marked World Barrett's Oesophagus Day. We came together to shine a light on a condition that has been underfunded and misunderstood for too long. We saw you share your stories, helping to strip away the isolating feeling that can often follow a diagnosis

of a digestive condition and raise vital awareness.

We also looked back at the incredible progress made by Guts UK-funded researchers, such as Dr Sara Jamel and Dr Katja Christodoulou, who explored whether a simple breath test could identify cell changes of the oesophagus earlier. To find out more visit gutscharity.org.uk/research/breath-test.

Introducing our Experts by Experience (EBE) Panel

At Guts UK, we believe that those living with digestive conditions are the true experts. We're delighted to introduce you to Peter, the newest member of our Experts by Experience (EBE) Panel. Peter lives with Barrett's oesophagus and is using his personal experiences to help shape and inform our future work.

Our EBEs Panel is a dedicated group of patients and carers who help to ensure that the patient voice is at the heart of everything we do. From helping to shape our direction as a charity, to working with healthcare professionals to decide which life-changing research projects to fund.

In future issues of our magazine, we'll be introducing you to some more of our EBEs and sharing their stories.

Peter's story

"I live in Berkshire and work as an editor and writer in the English language teaching industry. Around 12 years ago, I was diagnosed with Barrett's oesophagus.

I didn't really notice many symptoms of Barrett's oesophagus at first. I'd always experienced bloating and got a bit of heartburn, especially after drinking alcohol, but it didn't feel like anything serious. After tests, I received my diagnosis via letter, with very little explanation. Because I was confused by it, I didn't go to the doctor and ask, which I think I should have.

Guts UK is where I found the clearest, most reassuring information about my condition. I'm proud to be on Guts UK's Expert by Experience (EBE) panel, where I help review patient information. Being able to feed into Guts UK's work means I can help ensure resources are written in a way that people can understand and trust. I can use my experience to help develop information and support for others navigating digestive conditions."



Find out more about Barrett's oesophagus and over 40 digestive conditions and symptoms at: gutscharity.org.uk/information.

Summer proofing your gut

Summer is often a season spent enjoying BBQs, festivals, days out, and afternoons in beer gardens. However, it can feel a bit unpredictable for people living with digestive conditions. Changes in routine, different foods and warmer weather can all affect how your gut behaves. With a bit of planning, you can still enjoy the summer whilst looking after your gut.



Festivals and days out

Festivals, concerts and outdoor events can be highlights of the summer, but busy venues and unfamiliar surroundings can bring challenges.

Toilet access and long queues are often a concern. Checking the event map in advance and locating toilet facilities, including accessible toilets, can help you plan your day with confidence. Some festivals allow you to apply for additional accessible facilities once you have purchased a standard ticket, so it's worth checking their guidance.

Our 'Can't Wait' cards are designed for anyone with a digestive condition who needs to use a toilet urgently. The card discreetly explains that you have a medical need to use the facilities, supporting conversations with staff at events and venues.

You can order your free card at shop.gutscharity.org.uk.

Packing a small essentials kit can also make a big difference. Bring any medications you may need, snacks that suit you, wipes or hand sanitisers, and anything else that helps you feel prepared.

Hot weather, long days on your feet and plenty of dancing can increase the risk of dehydration, so don't forget to take a refillable water bottle and use hydration stations throughout the day.



BBQs

The biggest risk at a BBQ is food poisoning, also known as gastroenteritis, caused by harmful microbes. The good news is that there is a gut-friendly way to barbecue! It's all about how you prepare, cook and serve your food safely.

Keep your gut safe by following a few steps:

Before you cook

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Defrost food properly so it cooks thoroughly.
- Do not wash raw meat, such as chicken, as this can spread bacteria.

While handling meat

- Avoid cross-contaminating foods by keeping raw meat juices away from foods that may be eaten raw, like salads.
- Use separate utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Wash your hands after handling raw meat.

Cooking and serving

- Cook food thoroughly.
- Keep food covered until serving.

Sticking to foods you know agree with you or bringing something you feel comfortable eating can also help you feel more relaxed.

Alcohol and your gut

Alcohol can irritate the gut and worsen digestive symptoms. Fizzy and sugary drinks such as certain mixers may cause bloating for some people too.

The NHS advises that you should not drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week, ideally spread out over 3 or more days. That is approximately six pints of beer or seven glasses of wine. However, it's important to remember that there is no perfectly safe level of drinking.

If you choose to drink, pacing yourself can help. Alternating alcoholic drinks with water helps with hydration, especially in hot weather. Drinking on an empty stomach can be tough on your gut, so make sure you've eaten something. You might find lower alcohol or non-alcohol options or smaller servings easier on your gut too.

Remember to listen to your body. It's okay to stop when you have had enough or to choose not to drink at all. Summer socialising is about connection and not what's in your glass.

Enjoy summer your way!

Summer doesn't look the same for everyone. Planning around your needs or choosing what feels right for your body is part of looking after your health.

Taking breaks, leaving early or planning around what your body needs is not missing out. It is making summer work for you. Let's summer proof our guts and make the most of everything this season brings!

Have you heard of Hirschsprung's disease?

- **Hirschsprung's disease is a rare condition**, usually diagnosed shortly after birth, affecting approximately one in 5,000 babies.
- **It's more common in boys.** For every girl affected, four boys are affected.
- **It's a congenital condition** which occurs when essential nerve cells (ganglions) are missing from parts of the bowel, stopping the natural movement of poo.
- **If left untreated**, Hirschsprung's disease can cause serious complications.
- **There is no cure for Hirschsprung's disease** but with treatment in childhood and further monitoring, most people can lead a full and active life.



David

David's story

David, aged 40, was born in and grew up in London. 16 years ago, he moved to Paris with his wife and teaches English in French businesses and to children. He is also a member of Guts UK's Experts by Experience (EBE) panel.

Talk us through your journey to diagnosis

"I spent the first few days of my life vomiting a lot of bile, not being able to keep anything down. In the months that followed, surgeons initially dismissed Hirschsprung's disease. My dad pushed for tests, and biopsies (tissue samples) confirmed Hirschsprung's. I was moved to a children's hospital under the care of a new doctor."

What about your surgery?

"In January 1986, I was transferred to another hospital and had an ileostomy, a surgical procedure that creates an opening from the small bowel. This then diverts the contents through the abdominal wall into a medical bag which is adhered to the abdomen. During recovery, I had a specific blended, liquid feed."

In September 1986, I had pull-through surgery. My large bowel and 30cm of my small bowel were removed, then everything was joined back up. I managed to be continent from 3 years old."

How are you now?

"Besides a bowel blockage in 1992, then check-ups and advice for my diet since, I haven't needed to see a doctor for my Hirschsprung's."

Having a digestive condition doesn't need to shape your life or dictate the direction of it. I've found that learning to manage my condition really helps. I'm not going to go camping in the middle of a field with no toilet but I'm also not going to sit at home and do nothing. You can still do things and have quality of life."

Can lab-grown nerve cell patches fix Hirschsprung's disease?

Guts UK is delighted to be funding research by Dr William Dalleywater and his team at the University of Nottingham. Whilst surgery is currently the primary treatment, this research is exploring alternatives. Special stem cells are being used to grow the nerve cells and other tissues which are missing in children with Hirschsprung's disease. The team aims to combine these cells to create "mini colons" which could be used in the future to repair the affected part of the bowel and offer a kinder alternative to major surgery.



Dedicate a flower in the Guts UK Memory Garden

This spring, we're pleased to launch the online Guts UK Memory Garden.

The Memory Garden is a special place to remember and honour someone you love. For each tribute created, a flower will blossom in the Memory Garden, bearing the name of your loved one, gradually creating a beautiful landscape of remembrance made up of all the tributes shared.

Each flower in the Memory Garden links to its own personal plot, where family and friends can share messages, memories and reflections, celebrating the life of someone special. Donations made in their memory help the flowers to grow and bloom, creating a lasting tribute. The Memory Garden can be revisited at any time, with additional tribute messages added to mark special occasions.

The Memory Garden is open to anyone who wants to pay tribute to a loved one, whether they had an existing connection to our charity or you are supporting Guts UK for the first time. All donations help fund our vital work and our mission to help the millions of people in the UK affected by digestive conditions and symptoms.

Guts UK supporter, Sarah, from High Wycombe has dedicated a flower in memory of her dad, Charlie, who died of pancreatitis in November 2024. Sarah's heartfelt tribute message reads:

"Thank you for being the best dad. You are missed every minute of every day. I miss your voice, your smile, your laugh. You will always remain in my heart."

Talking about why she wanted to support the Guts UK Memory Garden, Sarah said:

"Instead of funeral flowers, we raised money for Guts UK. We wanted to do something that would make a difference and something Dad would have been proud of. Since then, we've continued to fundraise for Guts UK through birthdays, family events, and my aunt's 70th party. We even held it at one of Dad's favourite pubs. The Memory Garden is a fitting tribute to the best dad, and it's a fantastic way to keep his memory alive, with personal messages and memories from the cherished times we shared."



Sarah's in memory story

"Dad was Maltese. He came to England in his twenties and met my mum not long after arriving. They were married for over fifty years. They did everything together, right down to working in the same greeting cards factory.

In 2022, Dad walked me down the aisle at my wedding in Devon. It was such a beautiful weekend with all our family there, and I'll be forever grateful we had that moment together.

He was just one of those people everyone loved. He was fun, generous, and kind-hearted, and was always doing things for others. I'd come home and he'd have mowed my lawn, and he always helped with DIY projects.

Dad was absolutely fine the day before he fell ill in November 2024; he was decorating his kitchen. The next evening, he had some stomach pains after dinner. They must have been bad because he went to bed, which isn't like him.

He thought it was something he'd eaten, but the pain got worse. My mum suggested going to hospital, but Dad didn't want to make a fuss. Eventually, she persuaded him to go to A&E.

At first the doctors thought it might be a blocked gallstone, and they were going to x-ray him on Monday because it was the early hours of Sunday morning. Just hours later, he was moved to intensive care.

The following day, we were told he was stable, and he was moved to a ward later that day. The next morning, everything changed. Dad called me, sounding breathless, and said he felt blocked up. Shortly after, the hospital rang to say he'd been moved back to intensive care.

When we arrived, they took us to a side room and told us he was critically ill.

That's when we first heard the words 'necrotising acute pancreatitis'. We didn't even know what that meant. They explained that his pancreas had died and that his organs were starting to fail. It was an unbelievable shock; we had no idea something like this could happen so suddenly.

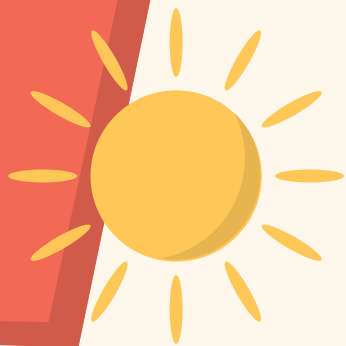
Unfortunately, his organs kept shutting down. The doctors told us there was nothing more they could do. We were all with him when he passed. They didn't even need to turn off the machines, he slipped away on his own, peacefully, surrounded by all of us."



To plant a flower in tribute to someone special in the Guts UK Memory Garden, please visit gutscharity.org.uk/memory-garden.

High joy, low impact summer activities

Summer is here and it's the perfect time to enjoy the sunshine and longer days, even if you need to take it easy. There are plenty of ways to make the most of the season while keeping your energy levels in check.



Enjoy the outdoors

A little time outdoors can feel refreshing. Sit on a bench, lay out a blanket in the park or take a short stroll around your neighbourhood. Bring a book, some music, a podcast or even your camera and notice the world around you. Capture small details that catch your eye like nature or street art. People watching and soaking up the sunshine can be satisfying ways to enjoy the day.

Fun at home

You can bring the joys of summer indoors too. Open a window, put on your favourite playlist or settle in with a film or series. Try puzzles, board games or sort through photos and memories that make you smile. These low-effort activities still feel special and can lift your mood without taking too much energy.

Get creative

Summer is a great time to get creative. Try painting, colouring in, journaling, origami, or knitting. If you like greenery, you can add a touch of nature at home with plants and flowers. You could also experiment in the kitchen with cooking or baking, exploring new flavours or trying out a new seasonal recipe.



Stay connected

Summer is a great time to catch up with friends or family. Invite someone over for a chilled afternoon or connect over calls. You can enjoy the activities mentioned above together. Connection and laughter are just as important as fresh air and sunshine and sharing these moments make them even more special.



Summer is all about enjoying yourself in a way that works for you. With these high joy, low impact summer activities, you can make the season memorable in your own way.

AR's achalasia story

AR, aged 26, is originally from North Wales and now lives in Manchester. She works as an actor and volunteers for the charity Achalasia Action.



Talk us through your achalasia symptoms

"My symptoms began when I was 16. One day, it suddenly hurt to swallow. I felt intense pressure in my chest. Soon, every bite of food became painful. I started regurgitating food (bringing food back up) and I felt like I couldn't breathe until it came back up.

I was studying musical theatre at the time and suddenly couldn't keep up. I was exhausted and kept being told it was stress-related. It made me question myself. Over six weeks, I lost three stone and even struggled to swallow water."

How were you diagnosed?

"My parents took me to A&E and refused to leave until someone listened. At first, I was told I had an eating disorder. It was incredibly distressing.

In December 2016, after a barium swallow test (a test that involves drinking a white liquid called barium that highlights the outline of the oesophagus), I was diagnosed with achalasia and was told my swallowing would never be normal again, but treatment could help.

I had a dilatation (a small balloon passed from the mouth to the sphincter and inflated to break the fibres in

the sphincter), which allowed me to swallow liquids.

In January 2017, I had a Heller myotomy (a procedure that cuts the lining of the oesophagus and stomach), which allowed me to eat again. Since then, I've had nine dilatations to manage my symptoms."

How are you now?

"At first, I struggled to accept my new 'normal'. Transitioning back to food was hard. I worried that treatment would not last. Over time, I've learnt to manage my symptoms and recognise when I need support.

I turned to the online world to find others like me. I realised if I wanted to see change, I had to be the change. I began volunteering and later became a trustee at Achalasia Action. I've graduated, trained as an actor and stepped into opportunities that once felt impossible."

What would you tell others?

"Life with achalasia can be fulfilling. It takes adjustments, but it is manageable. Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong, keep pushing for answers. Rare conditions are often overlooked but you deserve to be heard."



Get to grips with fibre

On social media or even in the news, you might have heard the term 'fibre-maxxing'. It's a trend focused on increasing the fibre in your diet to improve your digestive health. While it might sound like a fad, it is a vital re-branding of one of your core nutritional goals. Most adults in the UK only consume around 16.5g fibre each day, falling short of the 30g recommendation.

Why fibre matters

Fibre isn't just about keeping things moving. It's a vital fuel source for your gut microbiome. When your gut bacteria ferment fibre, they produce short-chain fatty acids that support the gut and overall immunity.

Soluble vs. Insoluble fibre

To get the right type of fibre intake in your diet, you need two types:

- **Soluble fibre:** Found in oats and pulses, it dissolves in water to form a gel, helping to soften stools and manage cholesterol.
- **Insoluble fibre:** Found in whole grains and fruit skins, it adds bulk to help food pass through our digestive system.

Three tips for success

1. **Hydrate:** Fibre acts like a sponge. As you increase your intake, you must drink more water to avoid digestive symptoms such as bloating.
2. **Go slow:** Increase your intake gradually over two to three weeks to allow your gut bacteria to adjust.
3. **Mix it up:** Diversity is key! Aim for a variety of plant-based foods to feed different strains of bacteria.

Did you know?

Just one portion of our paprika beans provides around 16.4g of fibre. That's over half your daily requirement in one sitting!

Please note: This is general information on fibre for the digestive system. This information may not be appropriate for someone diagnosed with a specific digestive condition.



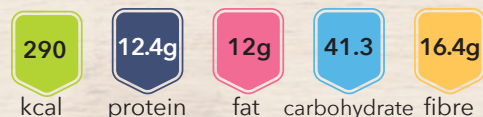
Recipe

Fibre-rich paprika beans

A smoky, gut-loving twist using a classic staple from your kitchen cupboard.

Nutritional information

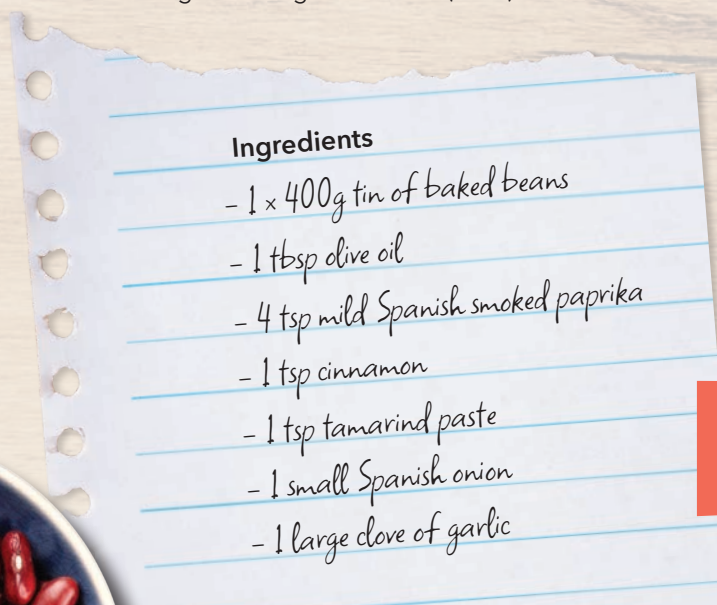
Per 300g portion:



Please note: This recipe is very high in fibre. It is not suitable for a low FODMAP diet or individuals with a galacto-oligosaccharide (GOS) intolerance.

Let's get cooking

1. Peel and chop the onion and garlic.
2. Add the oil to a pan with the onion and garlic and cook until the onion is soft.
3. Add the paprika and cinnamon. Cook for two minutes to release the flavour.
4. Add the tin of beans and the tamarind and cook until heated through.
5. Serve and enjoy!



Ingredients

- 1 x 400g tin of baked beans
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 tsp mild Spanish smoked paprika
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp tamarind paste
- 1 small Spanish onion
- 1 large clove of garlic

For more free, tasty recipes, visit gutscharity.org.uk/recipes.

Magda's story

Magda is 29 and currently lives in Glasgow, after spending much of her twenties living overseas, most recently in New Zealand. She is a policy advisor for the Scottish government and loves swimming, kayaking, hiking and travelling.

After a severe flare-up of gastritis, Magda made the difficult decision to return home to Scotland last year, after living in New Zealand for 18 months.

Following a visit to her GP, she has been referred to a specialist doctor. She explains, "I've been experiencing my latest flare-up of gastritis for over a year. What might previously have lasted two weeks started lasting a month, then six weeks, and then it just didn't go away. The pain just kept escalating. I was in chronic pain daily for most of 2025. I felt like I was on autopilot, just surviving."

Keen to raise awareness of gastritis, Magda has turned her pain into power and fundraised for Guts UK through a channel distance pool challenge, swimming the equivalent of the English Channel in a 25m pool from January to March 2026.

Magda candidly shares her experience of gastritis and explains her motivation behind her fantastic fundraising challenge...

When did your symptoms of gastritis begin and how was the condition diagnosed?

"My symptoms first started when I was 17, during my exams at school. I would

describe them as a burning, gnawing pain in my stomach. I saw my GP, and I was prescribed a proton pump inhibitor (PPI), which is a medication used to reduce stomach acid. I don't tend to get much reflux; for me, it's more of a constant dull, burning pain.

I then moved to Honduras, where I lived for a year to do voluntary teaching. During my time there, I was given an endoscopy, which diagnosed gastritis with no cause identified."

What has the treatment and management of gastritis looked like over the years?

"Over the years, my gastritis has flared up during periods of stress, particularly big life transitions like moving abroad. Certain foods are major triggers, such as coffee, alcohol, spicy food, citrus, onions, and garlic.

The worst flare-ups feel like someone is inside my stomach with a razor blade, pouring acid onto it. It can be relentless and all-consuming.

I've been on PPIs on and off for 10 years, and I'm currently on the highest dose. I've tried every single one that there is, and they just don't seem work for me anymore."



How has gastritis affected your day to day life?

"When you're living abroad and building new friendships, so much of that bonding happens over food and drink. When gastritis took away my ability to enjoy local dishes, it felt like it limited how fully I could experience the place. There were times when I went to social events and couldn't even be present because of the pain.

Eating is no longer enjoyable, it's functional. I stick to very bland foods, and even they can trigger symptoms. Socially, it's difficult as I can't drink alcohol, have coffee, or eat most restaurant food without consequences. It's isolating and can feel depressing sitting with friends while they enjoy meals I can't have."

Channel distance pool challenge

After researching gut health charities and discovering Guts UK, Magda decided to take on a challenge that felt personal.

"I really like the work Guts UK does, especially providing accessible information and funding research into digestive conditions. Gastritis can feel really overlooked but more research could mean better treatments and more answers."



Alongside her mum Lesley, and friends Eugenia, Liz, Lucia, Bjork and Cristina, the group committed to collectively swimming the equivalent distance of the English Channel, which is 45km, in a 25-metre pool over two months. That's around 1,800 lengths in total.

"Swimming has always cleared my head and made me feel strong. Even when I'm in pain, I know I'm swimming to raise awareness about gastritis. That empowers me to keep going."

Swimming in their spare time and logging their distances each month, the virtual Channel swim team took to the pool of the University of Glasgow on 7 March to swim their last lengths together, marking the end of the challenge. Together, they have raised over £1,000 for Guts UK!

Feeling inspired?

Follow in Magda's footsteps and create your own fundraising challenge. Head to our website to download our free fundraising guide, jam-packed with top tips and ideas to help you get started: gutscharity.org.uk/fundraising-guide.

An organised event more your thing? From runs, treks and skydives, Guts UK has places in some of the most iconic challenge events in the UK and overseas. Head to gutscharity.org.uk/events to find out more.

Patient information leaflets

Guts UK is the national charity for the digestive system, providing information and support for a range of conditions and symptoms.

Go to gutscharity.org.uk/information to find our information online or order a free hard copy by post through our online shop at shop.gutscharity.org.uk.

Conditions

- Achalasia
- Acute Pancreatitis
- Adhesions (Updated)
- Anal Fistulas
- Ascites
- Barrett's Oesophagus (Updated)
- Belching Disorders
- Bile Acid Diarrhoea (BAD)
- Bile Duct Cancer
- Biliary Sphincter Disorders (Sphincter of Oddi Dysfunction)
- Bowel Cancer (Updated)
- Chronic Intestinal Pseudo-Obstruction
- Chronic Pancreatitis
- Coeliac Disease
- Crohn's Disease
- Diverticular Disease (Updated)
- Dumping Syndrome
- Eosinophilic Diseases
- Faecal Incontinence
- Functional Dyspepsia
- Gallstones
- Gastritis
- Gastroparesis
- Gilbert's Syndrome
- Helicobacter Pylori (Updated)
- Hirschprung's Disease (New)
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Liver Cancer
- Microscopic Colitis
- Oesophageal Cancer (Updated)
- Pancreatic Exocrine Insufficiency and PERT (Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy)
- Pelvic Radiation Disease
- Perianal Disease (Updated)

- Polyps in the Bowel
- Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis
- Rumination Syndrome
- Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO)
- Stomach Cancer
- Ulcerative Colitis

Symptoms

- Bloating & Distension
- Constipation
- Diarrhoea
- Heartburn & Reflux (Updated)
- Indigestion (Updated)
- Painkillers Causing Constipation & Digestive Symptoms
- Wind

Information

- Alcohol & The Digestive System
- Fibre
- Faecal Microbiota Transplantation
- Food Intolerance Testing
- Gut Microbiome (Poo Testing)
- The Gut Microbiome in Health and Disease (Updated)
- Healthy Eating
- Introduction to Gut Bacteria
- Our Personal Plumbing System
- Prebiotics and Probiotics
- Surveillance For Gastric Atrophy and Gastric Intestinal Metaplasia

More information on digestive symptoms, conditions, lifestyle and more can be found at gutscharity.org.uk/information.

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No. 1137029



Donation Form **I'm getting to grips with guts!**

Please return this form to:
Freepost GUTS-UK-CHARITY

MAKE A ONE-OFF DONATION

I would like to support Guts UK with a donation of

£10 £25 £50 £100 Other £

YOUR DETAILS

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel

Email

Please tick here if you have enclosed a cheque.

Cheques should be made payable to Guts UK Charity.

If you would like to make your donation by phone, call our fundraising team on **020 7486 0341**. Our lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

YOUR CARD DETAILS FOR A ONE-OFF DONATION

Name

Card No.

Expiry / Security Code

Address
(if different from above)

To acknowledge your donation and thank you for your support, we will usually send a letter in the post. If you do not wish to receive this, please tick here.

If you would like to add Gift Aid to your donation, please fill in the details overleaf.

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If you would like to make your donation a regular gift, please tick here:

Frequency of regular gift (please tick one):

Monthly Quarterly Annually

Please indicate your preferred month to start:

Commencing on (please tick one): 1st of the month or 15th of the month

YOUR BANK DETAILS FOR A REGULAR DONATION



Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Bank/Building Society Acc No. Sort Code

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Guts UK Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Guts UK and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature

Date

Direct Debit guarantee:

A full Direct Debit guarantee will be sent you once your order has been processed. Please ensure you have included your postal address earlier on the form.

Boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate with Gift Aid.

I want to Gift Aid this donation (please tick)

giftaid it

I am happy for all gifts of money that I have made to Guts UK charity in the last four years and all future gifts of money that I make to be Gift Aid donations. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Tax & Capital Gains Tax in that tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations across all charities, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Guts UK charity claims 25p for every £1 you donate from the tax you pay for the current tax year. If your circumstances, name or address change, please do let us know.

Signature

Date

Staying in touch

We would love to send you the latest updates on our information, research, campaigns, fundraising and more, highlighting the important impact your support is having on our work. We may contact you by phone or post, unless you select 'no' below.

Email: Yes/No SMS: Yes/No Post: No Telephone: No

Please tick here if you would like to hear from Guts UK about legacy giving and gifts in Wills.

To make any changes to your preferences at any time, email us at info@gutscharity.org.uk or call us on **020 7486 0341**.