



THE WIDER VARIETY OF plants in your diet, the happier your microbiome. I aim to eat 30 varieties a week; I go out of my way to find odd-coloured vegetables like purple carrots, pink apples and Jerusalem artichokes. Mushrooms are such a great source of protein, fibre, polyphenols and vitamin D that they have become a regular feature in my diet.



MY FOOD PHILOSOPHY

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Professor Tim Spector on coffee, chocolate and his healthiest breakfast

Meet Tim

Professor Tim Spector, 64, is the co-founder of ZOE, a personalised nutrition company, and a pioneering expert on gut bacteria. His latest book, *Food for Life* (Jonathan Cape, £22) is out now.

IN 2011, I HAD A MINI STROKE ON A SKIING TRIP TO ITALY and my approach to food changed completely. I fully recovered, but the frightening incident prompted me to start exploring my own nutrition.

FOR 25 YEARS I ATE A SANDWICH AT LUNCH. I still find warm, fresh bread almost impossible to resist, but it sends my blood sugar levels skyrocketing. So, I choose breads packed with seeds or made with rye, which I combine with some fats such as cheese or avocado to reduce the blood sugar peak.

IT WAS CRAVINGS FOR CHEESE that led me to abandon a vegan diet after just a month! These days I eat a small amount of high-quality, grass-fed organic meat once or twice a month, which keeps my B12 levels steady, helped by occasional organic free-range eggs.



A LITTLE ALCOHOL gives me pleasure, and it could be helping my gut microbes as long as I stick to polyphenol-rich red wine, with a bit of artisan beer or cider.

I ENJOY COFFEE and dark chocolate so much more now that I know they both count as fermented foods, are packed with polyphenols and are also a surprising source of fibre – two cups of coffee have more fibre than a banana.

I USED TO START THE DAY with orange juice, muesli and tea with sweetener – far too much sugar! Now I have a full-fat yogurt with kefir, nuts, seeds and fruit. I've returned to a healthier weight and reduced my blood pressure.



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