

GUT GAZETTE

GUT HEALTH NEWS



| Feature Story

Choosing Health in a World That Makes It Hard

Once upon a time, eating together was simple. You met at a restaurant, ordered from the menu, shared a meal, and enjoyed the moment.

Today, for millions of people navigating gut issues, food sensitivities, inflammation, or chronic illness... it's anything but simple.

Eating out has quietly become one of the most complex—and emotionally loaded—parts of modern life.

The New Reality of Eating Together
For many, a simple invitation triggers a cascade of questions:

- Will there be anything I can actually eat?
- Will I have to explain myself again?
- Do I just “cheat” this once?
- Is it worth feeling sick tomorrow?

So people compromise. They eat the “safe option.” They pick at food. Or they give in completely—just to avoid being “difficult.”

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| Platinum Member Spotlight

Meet the Changemakers

This month, we spotlight Rene Franke founder of Femina Wellness. Rene teaches women how the gut microbiome influences their menopause journey.

See page 02 & 03



| Quick Updates

 **Our Initiative:** Preschool Gut Health Campaign

 **Special Promo:** Bio Resonance Scan for only R350 until 30 May 26

 **Events:** 2 May Banting Market @Village Mall Irene



GHASA Founder

I started GHASA because I believe we deserve better — better food, better health, and better information. Too many people are struggling with gut issues without clear guidance. This platform is here to educate, connect, and support a movement towards true wellness in South Africa. #protectthemicrobiome

| Feature Story continues...

Cheating on Yourself Has Consequences

Now eating out become an opportunity to betray yourself? The majority of the mainstream eating establishments are not catering for the ever growing food sensitive community.

As the consumer we've normalized something that shouldn't be normal:

- Eating food we know harms us
- To keep the peace & to fit in
- Complacency and acceptance of commercial kitchens not seeing the need for change.
- Clean label safe food is not available in many establishments, so we cheat and hurt ourselves or starve instead of pushing for change.

But the body keeps the score.

The consequences for many are real:

- bloating brain fog, fatigue, skin flare-ups, digestive pain

- causing long-term inflammation

“It Feels Like We’re Being Poisoned”

That may sound dramatic—but it’s a feeling many people share.

And it’s not coming from nowhere.

As highlighted in last month’s feature on pesticides and microbiome disruption, modern food systems are increasingly linked to gut imbalance and inflammation

Emerging research shows:

- Up to 70% of the immune system is linked to the gut
- 1 in 3 people globally report digestive discomfort weekly
- Ultra-processed foods now make up more than 50% of energy intake in many modern diets

For those already sensitive, the margin for error is small.

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“Eating hot chips every time I go out is just not cool and half the time they aren’t even real potato chips, they’re those processed ones,” says Hayley, a lifelong vegetarian. “We want real food, not processed junk.”

Our Blog

- What is Kefir ? A beginners Guide to kefir, how to use and enjoy this ancient super beverage [Read more](#)
- Understanding Strong Reactions to Fermented Foods [Read more](#)
- Your Gut Is What You Eat: How the Microbes Inside You Respond to Every Meal [Read more](#)
- IBS in South Africa: Symptoms, Triggers, and Evidence-Based Strategies to Finally Get Relief [Read more](#)

| Changemakers Spotlight

Balancing the Change: Why Menopause Wellness Starts in the Gut

The transition through menopause is often framed solely as a decline in estrogen, but at Femina Wellness, we recognize it as a profound systemic shift where the gut microbiome plays a leading role.

Emerging research into the "estrobolome"—a unique collection of bacteria in the gut dedicated to metabolizing and recirculating estrogen—highlights why digestive health is the secret

weapon for managing menopausal symptoms.

The Gut-Hormone Connection

When the microbiome is balanced, the estrobolome efficiently regulates estrogen levels. However, a disrupted gut can lead to "leaky gut" and systemic inflammation, which significantly intensifies common symptoms: continue

| Changemakers continue ...

Balancing the Change: Why Menopause Wellness Starts in the Gut

Mood & Cognitive Clarity: The "gut-brain axis" is responsible for producing critical neurotransmitters like serotonin. A healthy gut helps stabilize the mood swings and "brain fog" often associated with this life stage.

Hormonal Regulation: Dysbiosis in the gut can hinder the body's ability to clear excess hormones, leading to more severe hot flashes and night sweats.

Physical Vitality: Targeted microbiome support has shown remarkable results in reversing stress-related hair loss and combating the adrenal fatigue that many women experience during menopause.

Our Integrated Approach

At Femina Wellness, we focus on providing women with the biological foundation needed to thrive. Our programs emphasize precision wellness—

moving away from "one-size-fits-all" solutions to focus on unrefined whole foods, fibers, and fermented supports like water kefir.

For more information on our Menopause Wellness Program, visit our website or join us at the next GHASA community event.

www.femina-wellness.com



| In The News

Civil society declares war on diabetes in South Africa

Twenty-four civil society organisations have joined forces to demand urgent, coordinated action on a disease that is now the country's leading cause of natural death, and to hold themselves accountable, too.

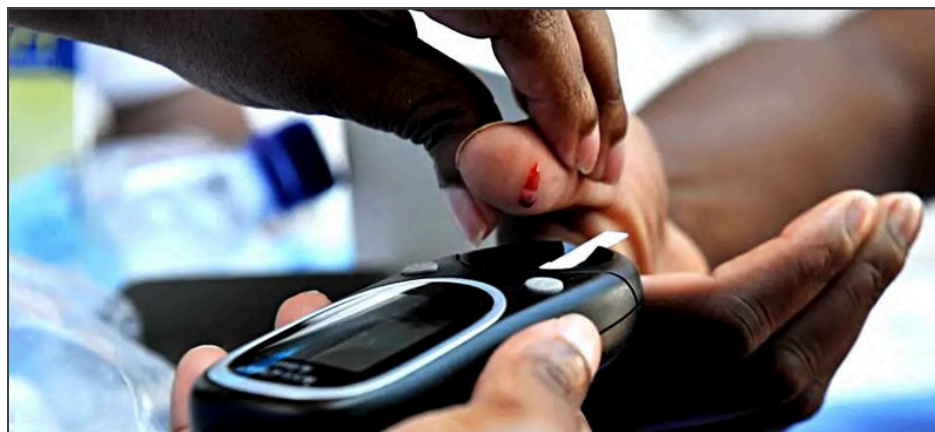
Joint action: 24 civil society organisations, including Heala and Doctors Without Borders, unite to combat diabetes, now South Africa's leading cause of natural death.

A national crisis: More than 27 daily deaths and rising costs threaten the healthcare system, as diabetes overtakes tuberculosis as a fatal condition.

Johannesburg declaration: New initiatives urge government accountability, including a national diabetes registry and reallocating healthcare funding to prioritise diabetes management.

Community responsibility: Civil society commits to tracking progress, advocating for change and fostering education around diabetes amid societal stigma.

Read the full Daily Maverick article [here](#)



| Highlights - April 2026

Organic & Natural Products Expo Africa

The 2026 Cape Town Organic & Natural Expo, held at the CTICC this past April, served as a vibrant hub for industry professionals and enthusiasts alike. The event offered a diverse program focused on the intersection of natural health, sustainable agriculture, and entrepreneurship.

Attendees were treated to a range of thought-provoking sessions.

The morning sessions dived deep into the growing mushroom industry, with Dr. Adriaan Smit exploring the positioning of South African mushroom products in a rapidly evolving international market, followed by Simon Hazell's crucial discussion on the rise of Lion's Mane and the essential need for quality control.

The conference also tackled critical wellness and industry topics, including:

Mental Health Innovation: Tony Budden provided an insightful look at the history, research, and evolving perspectives on psilocybin in mental health care.

Business Growth & Support: A practical Q&A session with representatives from SEDFA, Wesgro, and the dtic empowered small businesses with guidance on funding and achieving export readiness.

Holistic Health: Experts like Joan van Wyngaard shared knowledge on managing common health concerns, such as hair loss and premature ageing.

Economic Development: Masibonge Silevu highlighted opportunities in agri-processing, with a specific focus on the Eastern Cape.

The event wasn't just about lectures; it also featured engaging sessions like Nicholas Mclean's "Sensory Feast Experience," which provided a unique celebration of local bounty.

With sponsorship from Standard Bank and guided by MC Babalwa Hopa, the expo underscored the dynamic growth of South Africa's organic and natural sector.

We look forward to seeing how the insights shared at this event will continue to drive innovation in our industry throughout the year.

Next event: Johannesburg Organic & Natural Expo - 7 - 9 August 2026

www.organicandnaturalportal.com



Jaciana Foods

Jaciana Foods have been fermenting since 2016. Jaco and Liana Drost are passionate about seeing ancient foods, whole foods, and food as medicine as part of our everyday lifestyle.

Jaco makes small batches of traditional fermented vegetables, water kefir and kombucha. Jaciana's range is unique and their products are loved by many.

You can find them every Saturday at the Boere Mark in Pretoria.



PRODUCT OF THE WEEK - ATHLETES MIX

Water Kefir infused with ingredients that provides **SUBSTANTIAL NUTRITIONAL ENERGY** with a variety of **VITAMINS, MINERALS** and **ELECTROLYTES**.

Ingredients: Purified Water, Water Kefir Culture, Beetroot, Cranberries, Blue Berries, Goji Berries, Ginko Biloba, Syberian Ginseng, Ginger, Moringa, Green Tea, Papaya, Barrenworth, Spirulina.

visit our [Website](#)

Organic Focus

Umgibe: Organic Farming Training Institute

As we continue our work through the Preschool Gut Health Campaign to improve long-term cognitive and physical development in our little ones, the importance of nutrient-dense, chemical-free produce has never been clearer. This month, we are thrilled to spotlight Umgibe Farming Organics, an organization whose mission perfectly aligns with our vision for a healthier, more resilient South Africa.

Known as the "rope of hope," Umgibe is doing extraordinary work in the organic training space. Founded by Nonhlanhla Joye, this initiative goes beyond traditional farming—it is a movement focused on food security, sustainable entrepreneurship, and community empowerment.

Why Umgibe Matters to Our Mission

At the heart of Umgibe's success is the patented "Umgibe System," a frugal, innovative approach that allows individuals -

even those with limited space—to engage in productive, organic agriculture. Their commitment to transforming underutilized township and rural spaces into thriving agricultural hubs provides a scalable model for how we can bring fresh, local organic produce into more school kitchens.

Umgibe's Training Institute is particularly noteworthy. By empowering smallholder and women farmers with the skills to meet high-quality agricultural standards, they are creating the very supply chains we need to ensure that our preschool children have consistent access to the building blocks of gut health.

A Shared Vision for Sustainability

Like the Gut Health Association of South Africa (GHASA), Umgibe operates on a foundation of superior business ethics and a deep commitment to environmental impact. Their focus on reducing carbon footprints and conserving natural resources ensures that the food grown today supports a healthier planet for the children of tomorrow.

We encourage our members and partners to explore the incredible training programs and impact initiatives offered by Umgibe.

www.umgibe.org



GIVEAWAY

Healthy sweets? YES

Win a delicious hamper from Ms Sweethearts — made with Medjool dates + sugar-free dark chocolate

Enter by signing up to the GHASA newsletter

[Sign up here](#)

Gut-friendly inspo

Real products

A community that gets it

Tag a friend for a bonus entry



GIVEAWAY TIME

Subscribe to the GHASA newsletter and **win this amazing hamper.**

Sweethearts date chocolate bars are a delicious and healthy treat satisfy your sweet cravings without compromising your wellness.

[visit our website](#)

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So What Are the Options?

Right now, most people fall into three categories:

1. Stay home

Control everything. Feel better. But become isolated.

2. Go out and “manage”

Order the safest thing. Hope for the best.

3. Cheat and deal with it later

The most common—and the most damaging.

None of these are ideal.

Join the Movement

Help us build South Africa’s first Gut-Friendly Venue Guide

- Submit your favourite places
- Discover where you can eat safely
- Be part of the shift

Visit: www.guthealthsa.co.za

Or follow link to Contribute to the database. We will share the link to the information soon.

A New Way Forward: Community-Driven Solutions

This is where GHASA wants to step in. Instead of leaving individuals to struggle alone, we are inviting our community to help build something practical, powerful, and long overdue:

A GHASA “Gut-Friendly Venues” Guide

A living, growing resource created by people who understand.

We want to map:

- Restaurants and cafés
- What they offer (gluten-free, dairy-free, fermented foods, whole foods, etc.)
- Areas and accessibility
- Real experiences from the community

Because right now, finding a place to eat that supports your health shouldn’t feel like guesswork.

Let’s Build It Together

If you’ve found a place where you can eat and feel good after...

- We want to hear from you. If you run a venue that prioritises real, gut-friendly food...
- We want to include you. If you’ve struggled...
- You are not alone.


Use this [link](#) to share.



Stay in Touch

 www.guthealthsa.co.za

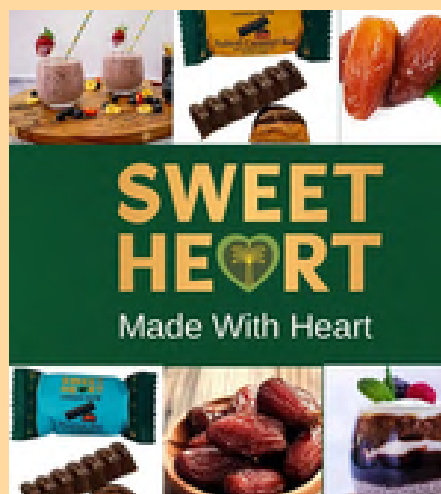
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“GHASA all about gut health”

 [Join the Movement Now!](#)



PRODUCT FOCUS

Sweethearts date chocolate bars are a delicious and healthy treat satisfy your sweet cravings without compromising your wellness.

Made with wholesome dates and coated in sugar-free, maltitol-free, couverture dark chocolate, these bars offer a flavour while keeping your health in mind.