

# Words on Wellness

## How's Your Microbiome?



When we talk about a microbiome, we are talking about the gut and its important role in overall health. The gut is home to many microbes and bacteria, both good and bad. What we choose to eat determines the amount and type of bacteria residing in our large and small intestines.

Eating foods containing prebiotics and probiotics promotes a favorable environment for a healthy microbiome. Prebiotics are complex carbohydrates, like fiber in fruits, beans, and whole grains. They act as fertilizer for the good bacteria to multiply in the gut. This fiber is broken down by the good bacteria in your gut through fermentation. This fermentation process limits the number of bad bacteria and supports a healthy gut.

Probiotics are the good bacteria in your gut and are dependent on prebiotics as their main food source. Common probiotic foods are yogurt, sauerkraut, kefir, and other fermented foods. Other ways to improve your gut microbiome are to eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables, add fiber foods to your diet, reduce stress, and maintain a regular eating schedule.

## Pizza Boats

Serving Size: 1 pizza boat | Serves: 4



### Ingredients:

- 4 hot dog buns or English muffins
- 1/2 cup pizza sauce
- 5–6 ounces cooked ham, beef, turkey, or Canadian bacon, sliced
- 1 cup vegetables, chopped (mushrooms, onions, peppers, olives)
- 1 cup cheese, shredded

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Open buns or split muffins and lay cut side up on baking sheet. For a crispier crust, bake for 3 minutes. For a softer crust, skip to step 3.
3. Spread 1 tablespoon pizza sauce on each half of bun or muffin.
4. Layer meat and vegetables on top of sauce.
5. Sprinkle cheese on top of meat and vegetables.
6. Bake for 8–10 minutes or until heated through.

### Nutrition information per serving:

270 calories, 9g total fat, 4g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 35mg cholesterol, 870mg sodium, 29g total carbohydrates, 0g fiber, 7g sugars, 18g protein. This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit [spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu)

## Food Bank or Food Pantry?

What is the difference between a food bank and a food pantry? That's a great question. Both play a role in ensuring people have access to food. The main cause of hunger is not the lack of food but the lack of access to food.

Food banks typically store food in large warehouses and distribute to local food programs, like food pantries. Food banks serve a specific geographic area.

Food pantries are an emergency food program and the distribution center where people can get food. Supplied with food from a food bank, pantries feed hundreds of people every week.

If you need more information on food assistance, contact an [ISU WIN manager](#), [www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/win](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/win), or contact your [local food pantry](#), [www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank](http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank).



## Let's Play Pickleball!

Pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in America and can be lots of fun. Why is it so popular? It is easy to learn, has a low impact, and can be great exercise for all ages.

It is like tennis; however, here are some key differences:

- The pickleball court is approximately one-fourth the size of a tennis court. That means it is less court space to cover.
- Whether playing singles or doubles, both are played on the same size of court.
- Pickleball serves are underhand rather than overhand, as in tennis.
- The pickleball resembles a whiffle ball with holes and has less bounce, allowing players more reaction time.
- Pickleball uses a paddle instead of a strung racquet.

Before you invest in pickleball equipment, check with your local parks and recreation center or community center to see if they have equipment to use or a regular league to join. Or you can attend a match and find out for yourself why pickleball is trending.

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PM 2099 July 2024

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*If you or someone you know is skipping meals, going hungry, or choosing between food and medicine, call 1-855-944-3663 to apply for assistance today.*

*Call Iowa 2-1-1 or Iowa Lifelong Links, 1-866-468-7887, for additional resources.*

