



Go with Your Gut - The Future of Medicine

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Have you ever had a “gut feeling” about something and it turned out to be true? What if we told you that your gut has a mind of its own?

Hundreds of years ago, a wise man named Hippocrates said, “All disease begins in the gut.”

Did you know that the cells in your body are not entirely human? In fact, your entire body is only 1-10 percent human and 90-99 percent bacteria!

Your body contains tiny organisms called microbiota, or bacteria, which create your unique “microbiome.” Despite the unsettling name, these little bugs are essential for life! There are 300 times more bacteria in your body than stars in the Milky Way Galaxy! And before you blame your parents for your red-hair gene, each of the 1,000+ species of bacteria has its own genome, outnumbering human genes 150:1. Straight from birth, your lifestyle determines the diversity of species in your microbiome, each with its own function and manipulating your unique DNA – including your predisposition to diseases, weight, personality and more.

So, why gut health? Your gut houses up to 95 percent of your total bacteria. Inside, your friendly gut bugs produce vitamins and hormones and consume the nutrients from foods you eat. The gut holds 80 percent of your immune system and up to 70 percent of your brain’s neurotransmitters. Incredibly, the gut is referred to as the “second brain,” containing over 100 million neurons. It can control everything from memory and learning to even how you think, feel, eat and behave!

The wellness of your brain and body depends on your gut health. There are good and bad bacteria, and you need a balance of both. Dysbiosis describes an imbalance in which the bad bacteria outnumber the good, and the symptoms can mimic other conditions. Research shows that up to 90 percent of all health conditions are linked to the gut microbiome, including diabetes, mood instability, heart disease, chronic inflammation and obesity.

How do you know if you have dysbiosis?

Do you have:

- * **Mood instability or anxiousness?** Up to 95 percent of your serotonin and other mood-stabilizing neurotransmitters are made from your gut bugs.
- * **Sugar or carbohydrate cravings?** They are food for harmful bacteria. To survive, they produce chemicals that cause your brain to crave carbohydrates.
- * **Trouble sleeping?** Your microbiome has a circadian rhythm, too. When you are stressed or have irregular bed times, it produces imbalanced hormones like melatonin and cortisol at the wrong times of day.
- * **Food sensitivities, gas or bloating?** Your microbiome determines how well you digest certain foods. Likewise, harmful bacteria can destroy the lining of your intestines, leading to conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome and leaky gut.
- * **Diabetes or heart disease?** Certain harmful bacteria produce inflammatory markers that increase heart disease risk and blood sugar imbalances.
- * **Headaches, joint pain or autoimmune diseases like arthritis or hypothyroid?** Good bacteria that are dying or bad bacteria that are thriving all produce inflammatory chemicals that increase risk of these conditions.

* **Weight issues or obesity?** It may not be all your fault. Lack of good bacteria, and presence of certain types of harmful bacteria, wreak havoc on your metabolism, causing you to store excess body fat.

So, what do you do? Hippocrates also said, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." You truly are what you eat! The key is simply to shift from a diet based on processed foods, meat and dairy to one that is based on a wide variety of colorful plants. The most crucial component of gut health is dietary fiber. Fiber, an indigestible carbohydrate from plants, scrubs the gut of harmful bacteria and feeds your good bacteria. It fuels your gut bugs to produce neurotransmitters, hormones and anti-inflammatory chemicals that protect against a slew of diseases. The American Dietetic Association recommends a minimum of 30-40 grams of fiber daily. From these foods, you can also consume powerful, living microorganisms called probiotics, which restore healthy bacteria and heal the gut. They can be found in fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kombucha and yogurts or taken as a supplement. In fact, they are so powerful that psychiatry is now recognizing a new line of treatment called "psychobiotics."

So, next time you have a gut feeling, listen. Listen to how your body responds to food, drink, sleep, exercise or stress and design your unique gut health protocol. Giving your gut what it needs means a healthier weight, immune system, brain, and state of mind. Your microbiome is your 24/7 personal medical team when you treat it right! So, that funny "gut instinct" you have really means something!

