

# Gut Check: How Healthy Is Your Digestive Environment?



## Could the cause — and maybe even the cure — for common ailments come from the bacteria in your gut?

Inside your digestive system are trillions of bacteria and other native organisms. Every person's mix, called their "microbiome," is unique. Research points to the makeup of our microbiomes as being linked to our likelihood of developing various conditions.

While it may be easy to write off various ailments as the result of "bad bacteria," there are steps you can take to improve the health of your gut:

- **Eat right:** A nutritious diet high in fiber-rich foods, like fruits, vegetables and whole grains can support bacterial diversity.
- **Exercise:** Regular physical activity can encourage growth within your microbiome.

- **Get preventive care:** One in three adults between 50 and 75 years old do not receive recommended colorectal screenings. If you are in this age range, speak with your doctor to ensure you are up to date with preventive care services.
- **Talk to your doctor about probiotics:** Probiotics, also called "good bacteria," mimic naturally occurring digestive-tract organisms. While the Food and Drug Administration has not endorsed any specific probiotic-related health claim, certain probiotics have been linked to positive outcomes for health conditions.

Source: WebMD®

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Three Penn Plaza East, Newark,  
New Jersey 07105.

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