

Vantage Pharmacy

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Opening Times

Monday - Friday 8.30am to 7pm

Saturday, and Sunday Closed

Bank Holidays Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for April 2021

1. What is your microbiome?
2. Where do they come from?
3. What do they do?
4. What do you need to improve your biome?
5. How does that affect us?
6. How can you improve your microbiome?
7. Are there other ways to improve your microbiome?
8. What foods are good for your microbiome?
9. What foods are bad for your microbiome?
10. How can you find out if you have a diverse biome?



Do you know what's good and bad for your gut?

Answers on the bottom of page two

What is your microbiome?

Your microbiome is the name given to the huge number of different bacteria, viruses and protozoa that live in your large intestine, some of whom are good (old friends) and others that are bad. Before you were born, you had very few microbes in your gut but if you were born vaginally, you swallowed vaginal fluid and faeces from your mother to create your microbiome.

However, if you were born by Caesarean section, you absorbed the bacteria from the operating theatre and the skin from the people that first handled you. This can have far-reaching consequences for you in the future.

Research has shown that babies born by Caesarean



section are far more likely to become obese children and overweight adults.

What does your microbiome do?

Your biome helps determine how much energy you extract from food and influences how much your blood sugar levels respond to particular foods.

Microbes influence your immune system. The "good" bacteria are especially important when it comes to teaching your immune system how to behave. A lack of these bacteria leads to an overactive immune system and an increased risk of allergies.

They also take the bits of food you can't digest and convert them to hormones and other chemicals like

butyrate - a powerful anti-inflammatory. Without "good bacteria" you are more susceptible to allergies, autoimmune diseases - like diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis and obesity.

Why is your microbiome diversity decreasing?

A diverse biome will allow your gut to recover much more quickly from a bout of diarrhoea. Unfortunately, like animals in the wild, your gut microbes are in decline and have been for decades. This is partly because we eat such a narrow range of foods.

Despite there being 250,000 known edible species, we use less than 200. 75% of the world's food comes from just 12 plants and 5 animal species. This is one reason you should branch out and try things like fermented foods. Another reason for the decline is the widespread use of antibiotics, not only to treat ourselves but also to help the animals we eat to put on weight. This practise is banned in Europe but is common in other parts of the world like the US. So best to stick to home grown meat.

Finally, there are emulsifiers that are added to processed foods to extend their shelf life. They have been shown to reduce microbial richness and may directly contribute to colitis and diabetes.

How can we improve your microbiome?

There are a variety of foods that nourish your gut microbes:

- Olive oil - this is the healthiest fat you can eat because it is rich in polyphenols and anti-oxidants which are good at damping down inflammation.
- Oily fish - the key ingredient is omega-3.
- Eggs - they only have 90 calories, and they will keep you feeling fuller for longer so stopping you snacking between meals.
- Fruit and vegetables - make sure you increase the range you eat.

- Fibre - we generally eat less than half of the recommended amount which is 25g a day so eating vegetables, nuts and seeds is good.

As well as improving your diet:

- ♦ Try to avoid using antibiotics unless it is really necessary as these will kill off all the microbes in your gut - good and bad.
- ♦ Open a window as this lets microbes into your house.
- ♦ Get your hands dirty - doing gardening is really good as you get exposed to the trillions of microbes in the soil and it helps with exercise.
- ♦ Take pre- and pro-biotics.
- ♦ Try intermittent fasting - this means only eating for 8 hours of the day (16:8 diet) or restricting your calorie in-take on 2 days of the week (5:2 diet).
- ♦ Doing more exercise
- ♦ Using mindfulness to become more relaxed.
- ♦ Improving your sleep.

What foods are bad for you?

The foods that are bad for you are anything with sugar in and all processed foods because they contain sugar and emulsifiers which means biscuits, sweets, cakes and cereals are all off the menu plus bacon, ham, pizzas etc.

How can I find out how diverse my biome is?

There are a number of commercial companies that for a small fee of about £100 will test your faeces and report back to you how diverse your microbiome is like UBiome, British Gut or American Gut.

If you would like to know more about this or any other health related subject, speak to a member of our team today.

Answers: Q1, A vast array of different bacteria live in your large intestine, some good and some bad. Q2, They are formed in your first couple of years of life and heavily influenced by how you are born. Q3, They regulate your body weight and your entire immune system and take the food you can't digest and convert it into hormones and other chemicals. Q4, Because we have such restricted diets these days many of our friendly bacteria are dying out. Q5, We become much more susceptible to autoimmune diseases like type 2 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis etc. Q6, By avoiding antibiotics, opening a window, eating more plants, getting our hands dirty, taking pre- and pro-biotics. Q7, Intermittent fasting, exercise, reducing stress and improving our sleep. Q8, Olive oil, oily fish, meat, eggs, fruit, vegetables and nuts. Q9, Sugar and processed foods. Q10, You can send off a poo sample to a number of commercial companies who will analyse it for you.