



Baylor Researcher Awarded \$5.6 Million NIH Grant to Advance Personalized IBS Treatments  
By Stephy Mahoney | Reporter

[Dr. Aaron Wright](#), the James R. Schofield Endowed Chair of Biomedical Sciences at Baylor University, has been awarded a 5.6 million dollar Transformative Research Award by the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH) to develop personalized treatments for gastrointestinal diseases such as irritable bowel syndrome [IBS].

Wright and his team in the [Wright Lab](#) aim to address the root causes of IBS by targeting the bacterial composition of a patient's gut microbiome.

Over the past 15 years, Dr. Wright's NIH-funded research has focused on carbohydrate and drug metabolism in the gut microbiome. Unlike conventional IBS treatments that focus on reducing inflammation, his approach seeks to tackle the underlying causes of the disease, which he believes are likely a combination of biological and environmental factors.

"They don't treat the cause (of the disease), only the symptoms...We don't know a lot about how the bacteria in our intestines contribute and promote the disease in our bodies," Wright said.

According to Wright, current [inflammatory bowel disease](#) (IBD) treatments are centered on alleviating inflammation in intestinal cells without addressing the broader role of gut bacteria.

“There is an aspect of using chemistry and biology, that my group uses here at Baylor, to better understand how the bacteria play a specific role in the pathology of irritable bowel disease,” Wright said.

For patients like Gina Wilson, a Baylor parent who was diagnosed with IBS more than a decade ago, Wright’s research offers hope.

“The positive impact of IBS research medicine and treatment plans could change everything for patients,” Wilson said. “As a mother, IBS restrains everyday activities for me and challenges my ability to be active.”

Wright’s research aligns with Baylor University’s commitment to advancing health sciences and addressing complex medical challenges through innovative approaches.

“If we understand these aspects, then we can also find ways to develop personalized therapies,” Wright said. “We can create specific groups of bacteria that would be used in fecal microbiota transportation and try to create a new community in someone’s gut that would be beneficial to their health.”

By exploring the intertwined relationship of gut bacteria and disease, Wright and his team plan to revolutionize the way gastrointestinal patients and conditions are treated, offering long-term relief and improved quality of life.