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The Gut: Human Microbiome Explained

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There's a lot going on around us in the world today. We have to pay attention to social media, multiple international wars, climate change, politics, and water on Mars. However, the hard truth is that most of us really aren't paying much attention to something that is much more important and something we take with us everywhere we go—our gut. Even those who are aware of the importance of gut health probably don't know as much as they should about the sensitive balance of their microbiome.

The microbiome of the human gastrointestinal (GI) tract can best be described as a bacterial ecosystem. While there are a variety of ecosystems in the human body with their own microbiomes, the GI tract houses the highest bacterial cell densities of them all. The GI tract, otherwise known as the small and large intestine, is home to several species of microbial bacteria not found anywhere else in the human body.

The health of the human gut microbiome is primarily influenced by three things: what you consume, what you do for physical activity, and your genetics. Poor eating habits, medications, low amounts of exercise and certain genetic uniqueness's may contribute to an imbalanced digestive tract, ultimately leading to increased gut inflammation and even increased gut permeability, also known as "leaky gut."



A leaky gut refers to the process of bacterial antigens permeating the intestinal wall and leaking into the bloodstream, along with other unwanted proteins. This can result in life-altering, long-term conditions such as food-related disorders, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory joint disease, chronic skin conditions, brain fog, and even autoimmune diseases. Leaky gut can also have negative implications on your overall health due to an increase of inflammation from the toxic antigens that would otherwise not be leaking into your system.

Failure to maintain a healthy GI tract can have detrimental effects. Chronic autoimmune diseases, such as Hashimoto's thyroiditis, which results in the body's immune system attacking healthy tissue, can destroy the function of the thyroid gland, throw off hormonal balance, make weight loss nearly impossible, and cause constipation and brain fog. Testing is highly encouraged if an individual is suffering from any of the following:

- Symptoms in multiple organ systems
- Food sensitivity and intolerance
- Unexplained fatigue

While you have no control over your genetics, the power is in your hands to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle, as these habits can positively impact your gut and ultimately, the overall

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health of your immune system. Symptoms of autoimmune disease can be reversed when the underlying cause of immune dysfunction is proactively tested and treated, like leaky gut.

There are easy, non-invasive tests available on the market today that can help you determine if the foods you're eating may be impacting your gut permeability. I recommend asking your healthcare professional about Cyrex Laboratories, a clinical laboratory specializing in functional immunology and autoimmunity, as they offer the only enhanced intestinal permeability test on the market, the Array 2 – Intestinal Antigenic Permeability Screen™. This screening tests the permeability of large molecules in the small intestine and helps identify the route of intestinal damage as a result of immune reactivity from environmental or dietary triggers. Knowing the route of damage helps direct your healthcare professional to the trigger causing your symptoms.

As always, the best thing you can do is to communicate with your healthcare professional. Self-awareness, a healthy lifestyle and proactive testing can keep you one step ahead in the prevention of any illness.

About the Author

By Dr. Chad Larson, NMD, DC, CCN, CSCS, Advisor and Consultant on Clinical Consulting Team for **Cyrex Laboratories**.



Dr. Larson holds a Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine degree from Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine and a Doctor of Chiropractic degree from Southern California University of Health Sciences. He is a Certified Clinical Nutritionist and a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist. He particularly pursues advanced developments in the fields of endocrinology, orthopedics, sports medicine, and environmentally-induced chronic disease.

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