

# how to heal your gut microbiome

The gut is home to a complex and microscopic community of bacteria, fungi, viruses, and more within our intestines. It all works together, as any ecosystem would, to create what is known as a **microbiome**. There are several microbiomes throughout our bodies — including our skin, and oral and nasal cavities — and they work to protect us against pathogens, aid in the development of our immune system, and help us digest food to produce energy.

We share a symbiotic relationship with our gut; we offer food and protection, which in turn provides our body with necessary support. However, if we don't care for our gut, it can upset the entire ecosystem of our bodies. Disruption in our gut's microbiome can result in a compromised immune system and even lead to conditions such as diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular and neurological diseases, allergies, and **inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)**.

Symptoms of a problematic gut can include all kinds of things like gas or gas pain, bloating, poor digestion, lower abdominal pain, diarrhea, and constipation. Each person's microbiome is unique and may need healing solutions that differ from others. For a more definitive look at the health of your gut, testing kits are an option through many commercial labs (be warned though, as that requires a poop sample).



## To work toward a healthier gut, here are some general options you can try:

- Eat more diverse and whole foods, such as whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. Begin adding them to every meal to increase your fiber intake gradually.
- Try **probiotics** and **prebiotics**. Probiotics provide beneficial microbes, and prebiotics help to feed the good bacteria in your gut.
- Use antibiotics only when necessary. Using them too often when not medically necessary can lead to antibiotic resistance. While it kills bad bacteria, it kills the good bacteria your gut needs and can disrupt the microbiome's balance.



Your gut houses up to **1,000** different species of **bacteria**. By nourishing different types of bacteria, you can keep your **microbiome** in balance.

— Mayo Clinic

