

MICROBES

HELP MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFE



A GOLDEN DOOR Publication



A LOOK INSIDE OUR HEALTH



As we move through the world, we constantly come into contact with microbes that set up housekeeping in our bodies. Rather than being unwelcome guests, most instead prove essential to our physical and mental wellbeing. What are these hitchhikers and how do they affect our health?

At Golden Door spa in Southern California, we empower guests to reposition themselves at the center of their own lives by tending to their bodies, minds and spirits. That focus includes nutritious food, beneficial exercise, ways to reduce stress and insights into our bodies.



WHAT ARE MICROBES?

Microbes are tiny living things found in water, soil and air. The most common types are bacteria, viruses and fungi. The human body is home to an estimated 100 trillion bacterial cells, which outnumber the body's regular cells by ten to one. In 1997, researchers throughout the world began studying the more than 10,000 microbial species and their genes, together called the microbiome. As part of the Human Microbiome Project, it was discovered that microbes help digest food; bolster the immune system; affect sleep; play a role in mental wellbeing; factor into weight, metabolism and inflammation; likely protect against some diseases; and more.

HOW DO THEY AFFECT OUR HEALTH?

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) finds that “Microbiomes support and maintain your health but also, when the microbiome is disturbed in some fashion, have been linked to hundreds of ailments such as cancers, and autoimmune and cardiovascular diseases.”

Researchers have noted a decline in the diversity of human microbial populations during the past 50 years. Also noted has been an increase in diabetes, digestive disorders, obesity, allergies and mood disorders. Are these two developments related? Ongoing research is looking at diet, medications, environmental toxins, stress and other factors for possible correlations.



HELP YOUR MICROBIOME HELP YOU

Researchers find that encouraging bacterial diversity and nurturing good bacteria already in residence are keys to a healthy microbiome.

Some tips to tend your microbiome follow.



- **Drink 64 ounces of water daily** to benefit your digestive tract and skin.
- **Incorporate fermented foods into your diet;** the enzymes convert sugars into proteins for efficient nutrient breakdown and absorption. Fermented foods encompass yogurt, miso, pickles, kimchi, tempeh, sauerkraut, sourdough and others.
- **Eat a wide range of fruits and vegetables** and vary your meals to increase microbial diversity. Add 25–35 grams of fiber daily as a food source for microbes. Fiber can include green and cruciferous vegetables, legumes, nuts, whole grains and more.



- **Reduce refined sugars** that are likely hard for your body to digest and offer scant nutrients.
- **Bring the outdoors—and its vast and diverse bacteria—into your life** to strengthen your microbiome. Benefits accrue from outdoor walks and gardening and even from tending indoor houseplants and opening a window.
- **Time spent with pets** introduces some of their microorganisms to help diversify yours.
- **Consider that overuse of antibacterial products** to sterilize your environment may kill “good” microbes that actually help prevent “bad” bacteria from prolonging skin infections.
- **Reduce stress.** Research into ongoing stress from jobs or fight-or-flight situations finds links to inflammation in the digestive tract, infections and imbalance in stomach acids.



The NIH finds that microbial populations in the human body change over a person's lifetime and are affected by diet, stress and other environmental factors. You have an opportunity to give these microbes a boost so that they can help keep you healthy.



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, stands in an orchard. She is holding two ripe, bright orange oranges, one in each hand. The background is filled with green leaves and branches of orange trees, with some white blossoms visible. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

“Our gut microbiome is a direct extension
of the nature that we touch”



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