

Amazing facts about your gut



What is the gut?

When you think of “gut,” do you think of your belly or your bowels? Those are both part of your gut, but not all of it. The gut (gastrointestinal or GI tract) is actually the long tube that starts at the mouth and ends at your bottom. The gut processes food from the moment it enters the mouth until it is either absorbed by the body or passed out as waste (bowel movements or stools).

Every day, it seems that science is discovering new ways the GI tract protects us. Although more research is needed, here are some of the benefits that may be associated with a healthy gut:^{1,2}

- Improves digestion, immune system, central nervous system and other bodily processes
- Regulates metabolism and weight management³
- Improves skin, reduces stress levels and balances energy³
- Improves sleep³

Get to know your belly

The more you know about the role your gut plays in your health, the more we hope you will be motivated to take care of it. Here are some other amazing facts about the GI tract:

1. The human intestine is much longer than the length of the body. It's about 15 feet or more in length.³
2. The gut harbors a dynamic network of trillions of bacteria that impact the body in a myriad of ways.⁴
3. Diversity is key to gut health. Gut microbiota, also called gut flora or gut microbiome, are the legions of simple creatures — bacteria, fungi, viruses, archaea and protozoa that live in the gut.⁴
4. Laid end to end, our body's bacteria would circle the earth several times.
5. At least 1,000 unique species of bacteria can be found in the human gut.²
6. In terms of genes, humans are more than 95 percent microbial.⁵
7. About 90 percent of food absorption happens in the small intestine.³
8. The Enteric Nervous System (ENS) lining the gut contains between 200 and 600 million neurons — more than the human spinal column or central nervous system.^{4,6}
9. In adults, the ENS can be about 30 feet long because it extends all the way through the abdomen from the esophagus to the rectum.^{4,6}
10. The ENS is located in the gut and is called “the second brain.” Furthermore, the brain in your head and your gut are constantly communicating back and forth.^{4,6}
11. About 90 percent the body's serotonin, which is associated with regulating appetite, a sense of well-being and sleep, is found in the bowels.⁷

Sources:

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