

KIDS Factsheet: THE GOOD BUG, BAD BUG GAME

What are gut bugs?

You have around 200 grams of bacteria in and on your body, and most of this is in your gut.

What can gut bugs do?

Your 'friendly' bacteria form a protective barrier and prevent harmful bacteria from causing you to become unwell. They can also provide nutrients to our gut cells, produce vitamins, and interact with our immune system.

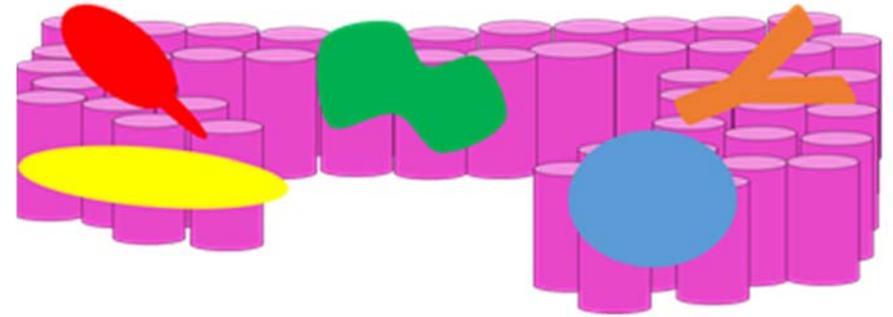
Why does diet matter?

The type of food you eat affects the number and type of bacteria you have in your gut – for example vegetarians have different patterns of gut bacteria compared to people who eat meat. You can also eat foods which contain friendly bacteria like probiotic yoghurts or fibres which are an ideal food for your friendly bacteria called prebiotics.

How sure are we?

We know that taking probiotics reduces the chance of you getting diarrhoea after taking antibiotics or after travelling to countries where you are at risk of getting food poisoning.

Our lab is researching the effect of probiotics and prebiotics on the immune system – watch this space!



GROWN-UPS Factsheet: THE GOOD BUG, BAD BUG GAME

Your gut bugs are also known as the human gut microbiome. There is a great deal of interest from scientists and those who wish to stay healthy in the bacteria colonising our gut – and so you might read news stories and diet books which mention the effect of diet upon your gut bacteria.

We know that the foods you eat will affect the types of bacteria in your gut – for example, there are difference in the microbiome of vegetarians compared to meat eaters and between healthy weight and obese people.

As nutritionists, we are interested in foods which can alter the microbiome with benefits to health. Probiotics are foods containing live bacteria, such as yogurt drinks. Prebiotics are carbohydrates which are indigestible to us, but provide a targeted food source for beneficial gut bacteria.

Reviews of available human studies have identified clearly that taking probiotics could more than halve the risk of antibiotic-associated diarrhoea. Probiotics also have benefits beyond the gut, with people taking probiotics found to have a lower number of episodes of cold and flu like illnesses. Taking probiotics during pregnancy or while breastfeeding also reduces the risk of eczema in young infants.

Our lab is currently doing researching on the effect of probiotics and prebiotics on the immune system. If you have any questions we'd love to hear from you – find us on twitter [@DrCEChilds](#) or [@uosIDS](#)