



## Help the "Friendlies" help you!



**The 100 trillion friendly microbes that make up your microbiome can do more good for you with a little help from you!**

### Invite in more Friendlies.

You'll find them in fermented foods such as yogurt and kefir, unpasteurized sauerkraut, kimchi (Korean sauerkraut), and miso (Japanese bouillon base). For DIY fermentation tips and recipes, check out: [www.culturesforhealth.com](http://www.culturesforhealth.com).

### Feed them what they need - Fiber.

It's indigestible to us, but delicious to the Friendlies. Low-fiber diets starve beneficial bacteria. Not only does this cause a reduction in the variety of helpful bacteria, it causes the ones that are left to start consuming the protective mucus lining of the intestine, which can then lead to increased inflammation. High fiber foods are things like beans, whole grains, veggies, and fruits. Slowly increase the amounts you eat - this gives your microbiome time to evolve and keep up. Taking smaller bites and chewing well will also help keep the "toots" to a minimum.

### Use antibiotics wisely.

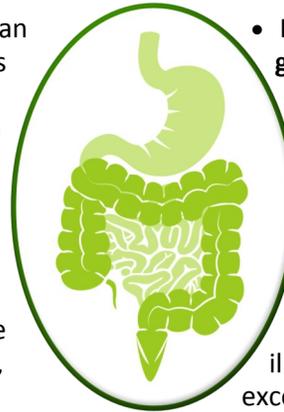
Not all bacteria that take up residence inside us are beneficial, and in those cases, antibiotics can be necessary, or even lifesaving. However, misuse can really knock your microbiome out of whack. Whenever you're prescribed antibiotics for a bacterial infection, make sure to discuss taking probiotic supplements with your provider.



# Gut Check

## You & 100 Trillion of Your Best Friends

Your gut is so much more than just the food tube that runs from your esophagus to your rectum. It's actually home to a complex eco-system of micro-organisms that can affect your immune system and your mood, protect you from disease-causing germs, break down food for digestion, create certain vitamins & amino acids, and much more.



**Here are some important things to know about your gut and the helpful microbes that inhabit it.**

- **In some ways, we're more microbe than human.** There are 10x more microbial cells in, and on, our bodies than there are human cells. That adds up to about 100 trillion microbes from 1,000 different species that weigh from 3 - 5 pounds. Collectively, these microbes are called the "microbiome."
- **Our microbiome begins to be created the minute we're born,** and it's general make-up is established during childhood. We get some microbes from our mother during the birth process, and others from the food we eat, the medications we take, and the environment in which we live as kids.
- **As we grow older, we continue to affect our microbiome** by what we eat and drink, infections to which we're exposed, and the medicines we take. Poor choices can unintentionally weaken, or even destroy, our own bacterial defenders.

- **Friendly bacteria strengthen the gut wall,** which helps keep out potential infectious invaders. They also help keep the level of gut acidity just right, which protects from pathogens, too.

- **Keeping infection out helps suppress inflammation,** which is the body's go-to response to illness and injury. Damping down excessive inflammation can protect from a wide range of issues, from allergies to asthma and beyond.

- **What's going on in your gut could be affecting your brain.** Your gut communicates back and forth with your brain, and gut irritation may send signals to the brain that then triggers negative changes in mood.

- **Keeping our microbiome healthy takes more than just popping probiotics** (products that contain different types of friendly bacteria). It requires taking care of the whole eco-system. Check out the panel to the left for more information.

- **Hungry for more?** Watch [The Invisible Universe of the Human Microbiome](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DTRnDwvVM). [youtube.com/watch?v=5DTRnDwvVM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DTRnDwvVM) or read [The Good Gut](#), by Justin & Erica Sonnenburg.

Taking care of ourselves  
can take a lot of support.  
We're here to help!  
Ask a nurse or provider  
if you'd like to talk.

## Colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable and beatable.

Your gut includes your colon, otherwise known as your large intestine. Colon cancer is currently the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, but we can change that.

1. The same fiber-rich diet that's healthy for your friendly bacteria is also healthy for your colon.
2. Colorectal cancer is one of only a few cancers that can be prevented, because colorectal cancer screening allows doctors to find and remove hidden growths (called "polyps") before they become cancer. In fact, removing polyps can prevent cancer altogether. Researchers believe that half of colorectal cancer deaths could potentially be prevented if everyone age 50 and older received recommended screenings.

### GET EDUCATED. GET SCREENED.

Many patients report no symptoms prior to diagnosis, be aware of any changes in your digestive habits. Colorectal cancer symptoms include:

- Rectal bleeding
- Change in bowel habits
- Blood in your stool
- Abdominal or low back pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- Anemia

There are many screening tests available for colorectal cancer, including several inexpensive options that can be done in the privacy of your own home. Talk to your doctor about the test that is right for you.

- Colonoscopy
- Take home stool testing (DNA, FOBT, FIT)
- Virtual Colonoscopy

[ColonCancerCoalition.org/GetScreened](http://ColonCancerCoalition.org/GetScreened)

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## COLON CANCER SCREENING GUIDE

