

Gut Health

Why Do We Ask?

You've possibly already heard about how gut health (specifically your intestinal microbiome) can impact on other areas of your health. Here's how it appears to affect eyes:



Our large intestine is home to trillions of bacteria. Most of them are essential to our health, and we call them commensals. They extract nutrients from our food. They produce vitamins and essential amino acids. In the language of the TV ads, they're the “good” bacteria. They help to keep us healthy.

Importantly, they crowd out the pathological (“bad”) bacteria, like salmonella, that can also find their way in. We all have some pathological bacteria on board, but our good bacteria compete with them for food resources, and also actively kill them off. If you have enough good bacteria, and lots of different species of them, they'll usually stop the bad bacteria from causing disease.

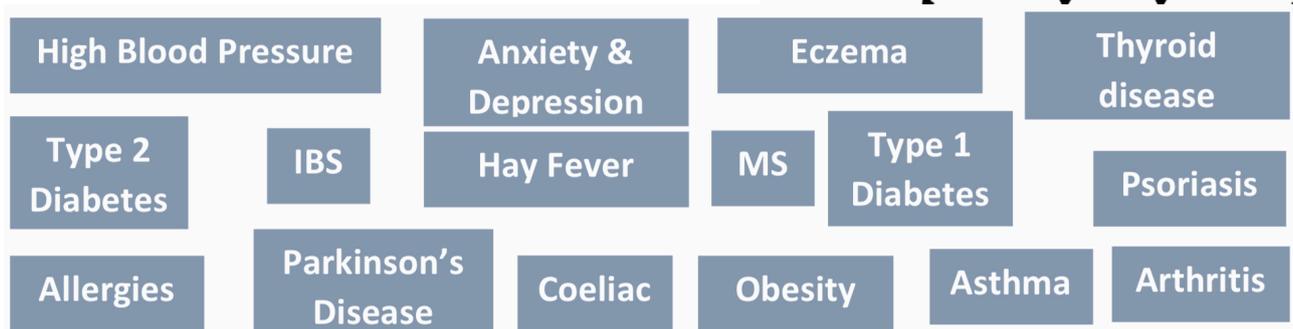
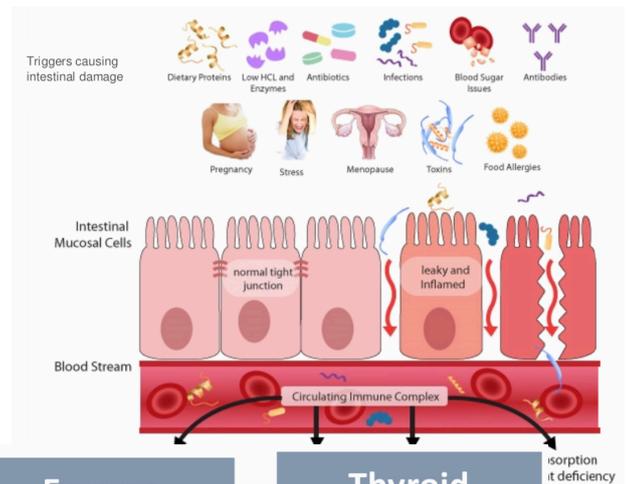
Under certain circumstances (eg stress, antibiotic use, dietary changes, disease states) the balance can start to tip. The number and diversity of our good bacteria can lessen, and that gives the bad bacteria a chance to thrive. This is called dysbiosis, and it can cause our immune systems to flare up in their attempts to keep us healthy.

Immune systems can be pretty poor at putting the brakes on themselves. When they're too active, inflammation results. Inflammation can cause swelling, heat, pain, and poor functioning of tissues.

When this happens in the large intestine, gaps can appear between the cells lining the gut. Inflammatory chemicals, bacterial toxins and bacteria themselves then have direct access to your blood supply, which is a highway to the rest of your body.

These parts of the body are commonly affected by gut inflammation: lungs, skin, joints and eyes. And of course, the intestine itself – pain, gas, toilet problems.

Dysbiosis now has clear links to all of these conditions:

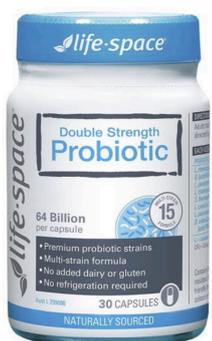


Most of these diseases have the potential to cause eye problems.

Scientific research is exploding in this field. If you have a health issue and you're wondering if it might be linked to dysbiosis, simply put a Google search in your computer with 2 words: dysbiosis & your condition.

Ignore the dodgy sounding websites and just pay attention to the ones from NCBI, Google Scholar and other reputable sources.

Dysbiosis has been linked to macular degeneration and dry eyes. Glaucoma can be better controlled through gut health. So...what should you do if you suspect there might be a link between any condition you have (or any condition you'd like to avoid), which might be linked to dysbiosis?



- 1) Ask us for our information sheet on lifestyle tweaks that can help re-balance your intestinal bacteria. We have printouts, and/or we can email a pdf to you.
- Our “go-to” suggestion is usually to add a probiotic (1 capsule of Life Space Double Strength) capsule to your daily routine, AND 2 teaspoons of Benefiber or

Metamucil.

2) Consider having your intestinal microbiome DNA sequenced. This gives you personalised information through extremely detailed reports, which are easy to read and understand. Two University of Queensland researchers (Prof. Phil Hugenholtz and Prof. Gene Tyson) have teamed up with Prof. Ian Frazer (of cervical cancer vaccine fame, on the management board) to launch Microba (www.microba.com) in Brisbane. The test is \$349 and is easy to do, and the team provides personalised dietary and lifestyle recommendations.

