What is a microbiome?

A microbe is a tiny living organism, such as a bacteria, fungus, or virus, found inside the human body. Microbes can be good or bad. The communities of microbes that live on and in the body are collectively referred to as the microbiome. Microbes influence the way the body works, from digestion and metabolism to cognition and behavior.

The Microbiome and You

There are millions of microbes per square inch on your body, with thousands of different species on the skin alone! Wherever the body is exposed to the outside world, there is a microbial community, including:

- Nasal
- Oral
- Skin
- Gastro-intestinal
- Urogenital
How does the microbiome impact you and your baby?

From the moment you are born, your microbiome is forming and is influenced by the environment. A mother’s microbiome is transferred to her baby during delivery. Type of delivery and early feeding practices influence the development of the gut microbiome.

What can you do to improve your microbiome and the microbiome of your baby?

- Minimize use of antimicrobial products (such as hand sanitizer).
- Take antibiotics only when medically necessary.
- If possible, breastfeed. Breastfeeding for at least six months will help infants develop a healthy gut microbiome.
- Eat a diverse and colorful range of foods, like beans and fruit.
- Eat foods rich in prebiotics, which act as long-term nourishment for the healthy bacteria in your gut, like bananas, whole wheat, and dark chocolate.
- Take a probiotic supplement to replenish the good bacteria in your gut.

The microbiome affects your physical and mental health:

Diversity of healthy bacteria in the microbiome can improve heart health, help with maintaining a normal weight, and boost gut health.

Drops in diversity of the microbiome have been linked to the onset of diabetes and asthma.

The microbiome impacts brain health because the gut is physically connected to the brain through millions of nerves.

#smallchangesBIGdifference
#cchem2 #knowbetterlivebetter
#protectKidsHealth

This work was made possible by the support of NIEHS: P50ES026071 and EPA: 83615301, as well as PEHSU: DW-75-95877701