



WellnessOne Newsletter

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How the Bacteria in Your Gut is Linked to the Size of Your Waistline...

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Daily supplements with the probiotic *Lactobacillus gasseri* SBT2055 may help weight loss in

people with obese tendencies, according to new research.

After twelve weeks of consuming a fermented milk product containing the *Lactobacillus* strain, study subjects averaged a 4.6 percent reduction in abdominal fat and a 3.3 percent reduction in subcutaneous fat.

NutraIngredients reports:

"Furthermore, body weight dropped by 1.4 percent and waist size decreased by 1.8 percent ... The study extends previous findings ... which showed LG2055 may reduce fat levels (adiposity) and fat cells in animals".

Sources:

[NutraIngredients June 11, 2010](#)

[European Journal of Clinical Nutrition June 2010; 64\(6\):636-43](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

What does the bacteria in your gut have to do with your waistline? A lot more than you might think!

Multiple studies have shown that obese people have different intestinal bacteria than slim people, and regardless of weight most people do not have the optimal balance of good and bad bacteria in their intestines. This imbalance can wreak havoc on your health in many ways, and yes, it may even contribute to overweight and/or difficulty in shedding excess weight.

In the latest study, obese people were able to reduce their abdominal fat by nearly 5 percent, and their subcutaneous fat by over 3 percent, just by drinking a probiotic-rich fermented milk beverage for 12 weeks.



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Given that the control group experienced no significant fat reductions at all during the study period, this is one more gold star for probiotics.

Why is Your Gut Bacteria so Important?

Your body contains about 100 trillion bacteria -- more than 10 TIMES the number of cells you have in your entire body. Ideally, the ratio between the bacteria in your gut is 85 percent "good" and 15 percent "bad."

Ensuring that you're getting a regular supply of good bacteria in your digestive system is so important because an estimated 80 percent of your immune system is located there. So supporting your digestive health is essential to also supporting your immune system, which is your number one defense system against ALL disease.

A healthy ratio of good to bad gut bacteria is also essential for:

- Proper development and function of your immune system
- Protection against over-growth of other microorganisms that could cause disease
- Digestion of food and absorption of nutrients



The probiotics in your gut also play a role in helping numerous bodily functions, such as:

- Digesting and absorbing certain carbohydrates
- Producing vitamins, absorbing minerals and eliminating toxins
- Keeping bad bacteria under control
- Preventing allergies

If you have an excess of unhealthy bacteria in your gut, it can manifest in many ways, such as gas and bloating, fatigue, sugar cravings, nausea, headaches, constipation or diarrhea. You may also find that, despite a healthy diet and exercise, you have difficulty shedding weight.

Healthy Gut Bacteria Can Help You Lose Weight

Certain bacteria may cause low-grade inflammation in your body, contributing to obesity and difficulty in losing weight.

One such study found that the bifidobacteria counts taken from infants at the age of 6 months and 12 months were [twice as high in healthy weight children](#) as in those who became

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overweight, while S. Aureus levels were lower. (Interestingly, this finding may explain why breast-fed babies are at a lower risk of obesity, as bifidobacteria flourish in the guts of breast-fed babies.)

Two other studies found that obese people had about 20 percent more of a family of bacteria known as firmicutes, and almost [90 percent less of a bacteria called bacteroidetes](#) than lean people.

Firmicutes help your body to extract calories from complex sugars and deposit those calories in fat.

When these microbes were transplanted into normal-weight mice, those mice started to gain twice as much fat. So this is one explanation for how the microflora in your gut may play a key role in weight management.

Probiotics have also been found to [benefit metabolic syndrome](#), which often goes hand-in-hand with obesity. This makes sense since both are caused by a diet high in sugars and unhealthy fats, which leads to insulin resistance, fuels the growth of unhealthy bacteria, and packs on excess weight.

Interestingly, probiotics even appear beneficial in helping women [lose weight after childbirth](#) when taken from the first trimester through breastfeeding.



What Interferes With Healthy Gut Bacteria?

Your gut bacteria do not live in a bubble; instead, they are an active and integrated part of your body, and as such are vulnerable to your lifestyle. If you eat a lot of processed foods, for instance, your gut bacteria are going to be compromised because processed foods in general will destroy healthy microflora and feed bad bacteria and yeast.

Your gut bacteria is also very sensitive to:

- Antibiotics
- Chlorinated water
- Antibacterial soap
- Agricultural chemicals
- Pollution

Because of these latter items, to which virtually all of us are exposed at least occasionally, it's generally a good idea to "reseed" the good bacteria in your gut by taking a high-quality probiotic supplement or eating fermented foods.

Tips for Optimizing Your Gut Bacteria

In the past, people used fermented foods like yogurt and sauerkraut to support their digestive health, as these foods are rich in naturally beneficial bacteria.

This is still the best route to optimal digestive health, as long as you eat the traditionally made, unpasteurized versions.

Other healthy choices include:

- Lassi (an Indian yoghurt drink, traditionally enjoyed before dinner)
- Fermented milk, such as [kefir](#)
- Various pickled fermentations of cabbage, turnips, eggplant, cucumbers, onions, squash and carrots
- [Natto](#) (fermented soy)



If you regularly eat fermented foods such as these that, again, have not been pasteurized (pasteurization kills the naturally occurring probiotics), your healthy gut bacteria will thrive.

If these foods do not make a regular appearance in your diet, or you've recently taken antibiotics, a high-quality probiotic supplement will help give your gut bacteria the healthy boost it needs.

Although I'm not a major proponent of taking many supplements (as I believe the majority of your nutrients need to come from food), probiotics are definitely an exception.

I have used many different brands over the past 15 years and there are many good ones out there. I also spent a long time researching and developing my own, called Complete Probiotics, in which I incorporated everything I have learned about this important tool over the years.