



# Wellness Update March 2018

## by Susan Hanly - Naturopath

### Don't Let Your Gut Weight You Down

#### Gut Bacteria and Their Skinny Secret

While exercise, a healthy diet and adequate sleep are all imperative for maintaining a healthy weight, evidence has now revealed a new player in the weight game – your gut bacteria! This collection of 37 trillion organisms (mainly bacteria) within your digestive tract is known as your microbiome, and strongly dictates how your body regulates and maintains its weight. A healthy microbiome for a happy waistline? Fascinating!

#### Your Microbiome: Fat Burning or Storing?

While each person's microbiome is unique, clear trends show the gut bacteria in a lean person is different to that in an overweight person. A healthy microbiome in a lean individual is defined by having a diverse range of beneficial bugs, and containing very few 'bad' microbes that disrupt the health of the gut. Once the microbiome is in this healthy state, these good bacteria send messages to the body to maintain its weight within a healthy range, hence helping to prevent weight gain. Alternatively, the gut bacteria in an overweight person often shows a decline in these good bacteria and a rise in the bad bacteria. This imbalance within the gut is a condition known as "dysbiosis". In a state of dysbiosis, bacteria begin to act differently: extracting more calories from food, storing more energy as fat and triggering inflammation within the gut itself. All of these factors result in the body storing more fat, especially around the waist (known as visceral fat).

#### Increase Your Fat Burning Bugs

Therefore, supporting your microbiome to be as healthy, diverse and free from bad bacteria as possible may be a crucial step in maintaining a healthy weight. Probiotics are a potent way to positively influence the health of your microbiome, as they work by promoting the growth of beneficial bacteria while reducing the growth of unwanted microbes. However, it is very important to select the right probiotic strain for your needs, as different strains have different actions and health benefits. A specific probiotic strain displaying benefit for the microbiome and body weight is *Bifidobacterium animalis ssp lactis*(B-420™). Evidence shows it improves the health and diversity of the

microbiome, decreases the inflammation caused by dysbiosis and reduces energy uptake from food, which together results in overall reductions in weight gain – helping to keep your waist trim.

#### Your Trim and Terrific Toolkit

Beyond probiotics, employing key diet and lifestyle strategies is also imperative to maintaining ideal body composition:

- 1. Regular exercise:** such as walking, yoga, swimming and weights. This helps to burn fat for energy and can reduce high levels of hormones (such as adrenaline) that promote weight gain.
- 2. Eat a wholefood diet:** filling up on fruits, vegetables, lean meats, legumes and healthy fats helps to naturally regulate your appetite and curb cravings. As a bonus, high fibre foods are the favourite fuel source of your good bacteria!
- 3. Avoid processed sugar and processed fats:** Excess calories from these sources are stored as fat, especially around your waistline. They also encourage dysbiosis within your digestive tract.
- 4. Hydration:** plenty of water actually increases your energy levels and metabolism, and is vital for proper waste elimination.
- 5. Adequate sleep:** eight hours per night is needed for a reason! It resets and balances your hormones required for a healthy metabolism and reduces weight-promoting inflammation.

In addition to a healthy microbiome, if weight loss is your goal talk to me about the Shake It Weight Management Program. This is a holistic and sustainable diet and lifestyle protocol that helps you reduce cravings, lose fat, maintain muscle mass and increase your metabolism.

#### Make Your Microbiome Worth its Weight

With the best approach to weight management being a holistic one, consider your microbiome alongside your diet, exercise and sleep to comprehensively prevent gaining unwanted fat. Improving the health of your microbiome will turn your gut into a weight management machine and help to keep your waistline Healthy.

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