

New Study: Why You Need to Avoid Fad Diets & What to Do Instead

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Diversify your diet in order to increase the quality and quantity of your gut bacteria.

Want to stay healthy? A new study says it's time to stop worrying about the foods you need to eliminate from your diet and start considering the foods you should include. Diversifying your diet may be the key to improving your health.

The study, which was conducted by researchers at MicroBiome Therapeutics, a U.S.-based biotechnology company, looked at gut bacteria and how its composition is influenced by the foods we eat. Researchers found that over the last 50 or so years, the global diet as a whole has become less diverse, and

this lack of dietary diversity could reduce the [quality and quantity of gut bacteria](#) that we need to stay healthy.

Thanks to modern agriculture, about 75 percent of the world's population consumes only five animal species and 12 plant species. Of those 12, rice, maize and wheat contribute 60 percent of all the calories consumed worldwide.

That means that the vast majority of us are not exposing our bodies to a wide variety of foods, and that may be setting the stage for illness to take hold. Mark Heiman, vice president and chief scientific officer at MicroBiome Therapeutics spoke at a [recent food technology expo](#) in Chicago about how the [lack of diversity in our diets could be a contributing factor in illnesses such as obesity](#), Type 2 diabetes, gastrointestinal diseases and other health issues.

In his research, Heiman found that patients with prediabetes and Type 2 diabetes had a different makeup of gut bacteria than those who did not have those diseases. Heiman created a formula of inulin, beta glucan and antioxidants that he hoped would repopulate the gut with a wider variety of bacteria and he tested it on 30 diabetic volunteers – half received the formula twice a day while the remaining half received a placebo. Heiman found that the patients who received the formula had a greater variety of gut bacteria over time. These participants also had better glucose control and reported increased satiety and relief from constipation.

Heiman's advice: [Avoid fad diets](#) that eliminate foods and look at ways we can diversify the foods that we eat in order to increase our gut bacteria.

Maybe the key to better health is not decreasing the amount of food that we eat, but increasing its variety.

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