Hippocrates was a Greek physician who lived between 460 – 370 BC and is now widely regarded as the father of modern medicine. He was the first man to separate the discipline of medicine from religion, arguing that disease was the result of environmental factors, diet, and living habits.

He also believed that all diseases originate in our gut. While some of his beliefs and theories have been found to be based on incorrect anatomy and physiology – most have stood the test of time and are recognized for their wisdom over 2,000 years later.

Now another of his beliefs – that all diseases begin in the gut is proving to be remarkably insightful as we start to discover more about our gut and our microbiome.

While contrary to Hippocrates’s belief, not all diseases originate in the gut – an increasing number of conditions appear to have origins in or a link with the health of our gut.

Scientists and medical professionals have recently linked a huge number of diseases to the makeup of our gut microbiome – the trillions of bacteria and microbes that live in our gut and elsewhere in and on our bodies.

What Is the Gut Microbiome?

Our gut microbiome is the ecosystem of microscopic organisms or microbes that live in our gut. Made up of nearly 100 trillion organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi and other microbes this ecosystem contains more biodiversity that can be found in a rainforest – and many of these microbes are essential for our bodies to function effectively.

As well as aiding our digestion, they help regulate our immune system, our metabolism and even communicate with our brain to influence everything from our appetite, our instincts to our mood.

Diseases Linked to an Unhealthy Gut

There are a huge number of chronic diseases now linked to the health and makeup of our gut microbiota. These range from digestive disorders such as IBS, IBD, Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis – to metabolic disorders such as obesity, diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

However, scientists are now linking many unlikely conditions such as depression, anxiety and mental health disorders, some cancers and a host of auto-immune conditions ranging from asthma, allergies, rheumatoid arthritis, Alzheimer’s and multiple sclerosis – and even autism with an unhealthy makeup of bacteria and microbes in our gut microbiome.

There is still much to understand in how each of these bacteria and microbes affects us both individually and collectively – and many scientists involved in this research claim to be years away from developing a meaningful understanding.

However, most scientists and physicians are in agreement that we can maintain and improve the health of our gut microbiome through diet, exercise and lifestyle – just as Hippocrates identified.