

# Microbiome Trivia:

## *150 Astonishing Facts About Your Gut – Your Second Brain*

By

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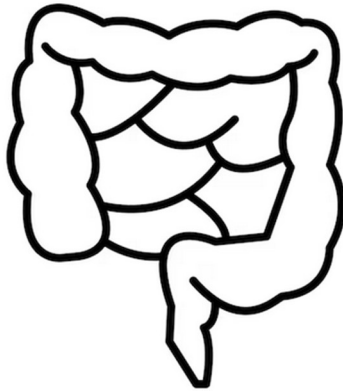
**First edition**

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	5
Chapter 1: Meet Your Microbial Self – Microbiome Basics .....	6
Chapter 2: Your Inner Defenders – Microbiome and Immunity .....	19
Chapter 3: Gut-Brain Axis – Microbes and Mood (The “Second Brain”).....	30
Chapter 4: Microbes at Work – Digestion and Nutrition.....	43
Chapter 5: Microbiome Through Life – From Cradle to Old Age .....	56
Chapter 6: You Are What You Eat – Diet, Nutrition, and the Microbiome .....	70
Chapter 7: Lifestyle and the Microbiome – Beyond Diet.....	84
Chapter 8: Microbiome and Disease – The Gut Connection .....	98
Chapter 9: Healing and Boosting Your Microbiome – Practical Tips .....	114
Chapter 10: The Future of Microbiome Health – Frontiers and Fun Facts .....	130

## Introduction

Welcome to an engaging journey through the hidden world inside you — your **gut microbiome**! This ebook is packed with 150 jaw-dropping pieces of science-backed trivia about the trillions of microbes that call you home, blending scientific insights with fun facts. Get ready to be amazed by how these tiny creatures influence everything from your digestion to your mood. Dive in and discover just how incredible your inner ecosystem truly is!



# Chapter 1: Meet Your Microbial Self – Microbiome Basics

1. **Did you know your body is teeming with trillions of bacteria?**

**Answer:** Yes – your gut alone harbors around 100 *trillion* microbial cells. For years, people believed bacteria outnumbered human cells 10-to-1, but newer research shows the ratio is closer to 1-to-1 (about 38 trillion bacteria vs 30 trillion human cells)<sup>1</sup>. Because bacteria are so tiny, they collectively weigh only about 0.2 kg in a 70-kg person— that’s less than half a pound!

**Interesting Thought:** You’re essentially *half human, half microbe* by cell count – a walking “super-organism” of human and microbial cells.

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<sup>1</sup> Sender R, Fuchs S, Milo R. Revised Estimates for the Number of Human and Bacteria Cells in the Body. PLoS Biol. 2016 Aug 19;14(8):e1002533. doi: 10.1371/journal.pbio.1002533. PMID: 27541692; PMCID: PMC4991899.

2. **True or False: Your gut microbiome is considered a “forgotten organ” of the body.**

**Answer: True!** Scientists now regard the gut microbiome as an organ system in its own right. Like your heart or liver, this community of microbes performs vital functions – from helping digest food to shaping your immunity and metabolism. It’s sometimes called the “forgotten organ” or “hidden organ” because of its crucial role in health.

**Interesting Thought:** Your gut microbes even have their own genome; collectively, they have **hundreds of times more genes than you do** – over 2 million genes vs about 20,000 human genes !<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> The Human Microbiome Project (HMP) in 2012 estimated that the human microbiome contains approximately 8 million protein-coding genes, which is about 360 times more than the roughly 22,000 genes found in the human genome.

3. **Did you know no two people have the same gut microbiome?**

**Fact:** Every individual's microbiome is unique, almost like a microbial fingerprint. Studies show even identical twins share only roughly 50% of the same bacterial groups in their guts<sup>3</sup>. Your microbiome is shaped by your genes, diet, environment, and lifestyle, making it one-of-a-kind for each person.

**Interesting Thought:** You are unique both inside and out – your microbial lineup is exclusive to **you!**



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<sup>3</sup> Hyunmin Koo , et. al Sharing of gut microbial strains between selected individual sets of twins cohabitating for decades, Published: December 5, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0226111>



4. **True or False: Thousands of different species of microbes live in your gut.**

**Answer: True.** The human gut is astonishingly diverse – it may contain **over 1,000** microbial species, and collectively scientists have identified more than 10,000 microbial species across human populations. A single person's gut typically hosts **hundreds** of species at any given time. This rich diversity forms a balanced ecosystem in your intestines.

**Interesting Thought:** Your gut microbiome is like a dense jungle or coral reef of microbes – incredibly **biodiverse** and bustling with life.

5. **Did you know most of your gut bacteria aren't in your stomach at all?**

**Answer:** That's right – **95% or more** of your gut microbes live in your intestines (especially the colon), not the stomach. The stomach's environment is extremely acidic, which few microbes can survive for long. As you move down the digestive tract, microbe populations

explode in the mild conditions of the small and large intestines.

**Interesting Thought:** The term “gut” often brings the stomach to mind, but your **colon is the true microbial HQ** where billions upon billions of bacteria thrive.



6. **Did you know your gut has both “good” and “bad” bacteria – and that’s normal?**

**Fact:** A healthy gut isn’t sterile; it contains some potentially harmful microbes alongside beneficial ones. For example, even *E. coli* – often thought of as “bad” – is usually a normal resident in healthy intestines. The key is balance: generally about 85% beneficial vs 15%

less desirable bacteria is considered healthy. As long as the friendly microbes keep the troublemakers in check, your gut stays in harmony.

**Interesting Thought:** In the ecosystem of **your gut**, even reputed villains can coexist peacefully – it's all about a balanced microbial community.

7. **True or False: We have already identified all the microbes in the human gut.**

**Answer: False.** We're still discovering new species. The Human Microbiome Project revealed that we had only *scratched the surface* – **more than 10,000 microbial species** were found in healthy humans, including hundreds never described before. In fact, scientists estimate we have identified 81–99% of bacterial genera in adults so far, but rare and unknown microbes are continually being uncovered.

**Interesting Thought:** Your gut microbiome is a frontier of exploration – think of it as an

inner wilderness where **mystery species** still lurk!

8. **Did you know your gut microbiome helps define who “you” are from birth?**

**Fact:** Babies begin acquiring gut microbes during birth (and possibly even before). By age 3, a child’s gut microbiome stabilizes and starts to resemble an adult-like community). From that point, your microbiome remains relatively stable but will still shift with major life events, diet changes, or illnesses. In essence, your microbial partners grow up with you, becoming part of your identity.



**Interesting Thought:** You’ve had microbial sidekicks since day one – they’re truly lifelong companions in your health journey.

9. **Did you know the gut microbiome has been called our “second genome”?**

**Answer:** The collection of genes in your microbes (the microbiome) far outnumbers your human genes. One study showed the gut microbiome contains about **150 times more genes** than the human genome. These microbial genes expand our biochemical capabilities – for example, enabling the digestion of dietary fibers that human genes alone couldn’t handle. It’s like carrying a second set of genetic blueprints that complement our own DNA.

**Interesting Thought:** You’re not just **double-stranded** (human DNA); you’re also **double-genomed** – part human, part microbial in genetic terms!

10. **True or False: Your gut microbiome plays no role outside the intestines.**

**Answer: False!** Gut microbes influence the entire body. They produce vitamins and chemicals that enter the bloodstream and affect distant organs. For instance, gut bacteria

synthesize B vitamins and vitamin K,<sup>4</sup> which are essential for metabolism and blood clotting. They also interact with the immune system and even communicate with the brain (as we'll see later). In short, their impact extends well beyond the gut itself.

**Interesting Thought:** What happens in the gut **doesn't stay in the gut** – your microscopic roommates send out signals that can tweak your immunity, metabolism, and more.

#### 11. **Did you know the gut microbiome is a hot research frontier?**

**Fact:** The study of our internal microbes has exploded in the last decade. Scientists are mapping out which bacteria reside in our guts and what functions they serve. We've learned that we still have *a lot* to learn – for example, which exact microbial balance defines a “healthy” vs “unhealthy” microbiome remains an open question. As DNA sequencing technology advances, researchers are rapidly

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<sup>4</sup> Hill MJ. Intestinal flora and endogenous vitamin synthesis. Eur J Cancer Prev. 1997 Mar;6 Suppl 1:S43-5. doi: 10.1097/00008469-199703001-00009. PMID: 9167138.

uncovering new connections between gut bugs and health.

**Interesting Thought:** Microbiome research is like the **Wild West of science** – full of uncharted territory and exciting discoveries that could revolutionize medicine.



12. **True or False: All microbes in your gut are bacteria.**

**Answer: False.** While bacteria are the majority, your gut microbiome also includes **viruses, fungi, and even archaea** (ancient single-celled organisms). For example, bacteriophages (viruses that infect bacteria) abound in the intestines, and yeasts like *Candida* can live there too. Collectively, these tiny inhabitants form a complex community. So “microbiome” refers to **all** the microbes and their genes, not just bacteria alone.

**Interesting Thought:** Your gut is basically an entire **micro-ecosystem**, hosting members from every kingdom of microbial life – a biodiversity hotspot within you!

13. **Did you know your gut bacteria outnumber all the stars in our galaxy?**

**Answer:** It's often said that the human gut contains more microbes than there are stars in the Milky Way (which has about 100–400 billion stars). With roughly 100 trillion microbial cells in the gut, this comparison isn't far-fetched. It gives perspective on just how *crowded* and active your intestinal world is. These teeming microbes are busily interacting, dividing, and producing compounds every second.

**Interesting Thought:** Next time you gaze up at the night sky, remember you carry a **cosmic-scale population** of microbes inside – more numerous than the stars above!





14. **True or False: Poop is mostly leftover food.**

**Answer: False (mostly).** Feces do contain undigested food and fiber, but a huge portion is actually microbial biomass. In fact, **about 25–54% of the dry weight of poop is made up of bacteria** (alive or dead). Only roughly 30% of the solid matter is undigested food residues. So when you go to the bathroom, you're shedding a lot of microbes! This highlights how densely microbes populate your gut.

**Interesting Thought:** Your stool is less a food graveyard and more a **microbial metropolis** – flush with billions of bacteria completing their life cycle.

15. **Did you know your gut microbiome is constantly talking to your body?**

**Answer:** Gut microbes produce a multitude of chemicals and metabolites that communicate with our cells. They send signals that can influence hunger, inflammation, and even mood. For example, gut bacteria ferment fiber into short-chain fatty acids that signal to the

immune system and help maintain gut health.<sup>5</sup> Think of the microbiome as an internal chemical factory, continuously sending messages that keep our bodies running smoothly.

**Interesting Thought:** You're never truly alone – your gut microbes are **chatting with your cells 24/7**, keeping your body informed and finely tuned.



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<sup>5</sup> Seedorf, H.; Fricke, W. F.; Veith, B.; Bruggemann, H.; Liesegang, H.; Strittmatter, A.; Miethke, M.; Buckel, W.; Hinderberger, J.; Li, F.; Hagemeier, C.; Thauer, R. K.; Gottschalk, G. (2008). "The Genome of *Clostridium kluyveri*, a Strict Anaerobe with Unique Metabolic Features". *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 105 (6): 2128–2133.

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