

### ***Here are this week's health care news highlights from AskaPatient:***

- Higher levels of vitamin D are linked to a lower risk of breast cancer. Is it time for new recommendations? <http://ow.ly/ovN230kxo5d> (06-18-18)
- Newly discovered compound is just as effective as current antibiotics and is less susceptible to bacterial resistance. <http://ow.ly/fcdc30kxobW> (06-18-18)
- Muscular strength is a strong predictor of mortality, which makes it an important modifiable risk factor. <http://ow.ly/kLGy30kxoje> (06-18-18)
- WHO classifies gaming addiction as a disease, though an official diagnosis may take a year to make. <http://ow.ly/13AC30kyD0w> (06-19-18)
- Introducing a certain species of fish to bodies of water could control mosquito populations more effectively than using pesticides. <http://ow.ly/hOYp30kyD1K> (06-19-18)
- Results from the first birth cohort of childhood HPV vaccination show that the vaccine works. <http://ow.ly/zqAI30kyD28> (06-19-18)
- Nearly half of diabetics are skipping treatments because of skyrocketing costs of insulin. <http://ow.ly/wuQW30kzHxc> (06-20-18)
- Stress disorders such as PTSD greatly increase the risk of autoimmune disorders. <http://ow.ly/uvGf30kzHEN> (06-20-18)
- New study suggests not being married should be listed as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease and stroke. <http://ow.ly/Emgm30kzHKH> (06-20-18)
- Chemical in hand washing soap and toothpaste is largely contributing to antibiotic resistance. <http://ow.ly/LY0l30kzKfc> (06-21-18)
- Several sessions of psychotherapy assisted by ecstasy relieve PTSD symptoms in phase 2 trial. <http://ow.ly/PzXq30kzKC9> (06-21-18)
- Joint healthcare venture between Amazon, J.P. Morgan, and Berkshire Hathaway announces its CEO. <http://ow.ly/zVk730kALNH> (06-21-18)
- Just one session of binge drinking can alter the expression of a gene that regulates sleep. <http://ow.ly/OiKB30kBOVL> (06-22-18)
- Ohio man finds out the hard way that spitting on someone can land you in jail if you have hepatitis C. <http://ow.ly/OKiD30kBOZV> (06-22-18)
- Aerobic exercise reduces symptoms of schizophrenia that standard medications may not be able to treat. <http://ow.ly/EvVD30kBPfd> (06-22-18)
- Discovery that bacteria in humans can transfer their resistances to us may aid in chemotherapy development. <http://ow.ly/2C5K30kCXMh> (06-23-18)
- Caffeine equivalent of four cups of coffee may protect and even repair heart muscle. <http://ow.ly/3A7E30kCXML> (06-23-18)
- Herpes virus is much more abundant in the brains of Alzheimer's patients, though it is unclear whether this is a trigger or a symptom. <http://ow.ly/5R7P30kCXY6> (06-23-18)

### ***From AskaPatient: What's in your gut affects what's happening in your brain: a growing field of research***

#### **Brain connection**

There is a growing body of evidence that the bacteria in our intestines have much more to do with our health than just digestion. Our brain may not be anywhere near our intestines, but many studies are showing that what we eat can have a huge impact on our mental health. The bacterial environment in our gut starts changing at birth and is affected by many factors including vaginal vs. c-section birth, breastfeeding vs. formula, and how we are introduced to solid foods. More changes take place continuously throughout our lives, but generally, the more diverse our bacteria, the healthier our intestines are. Low bacterial diversity is associated with inflammatory markers which travel systemically to the brain and can cause anxiety, depression, and memory loss.

Further, researchers found evidence that a high-fat diet can encourage the growth of bacteria that aid in the production of metabolites which ultimately disrupt chemical signaling in the brain. Mice that were fed a 60 percent fat diet began exhibiting symptoms of anxiety. Importantly, when the mice were treated with antibiotics designed to kill certain bacteria, these symptoms were reversed.

Our intestinal bacteria can affect the development of other common diseases as well. Parkinson's disease (PD), the second most common neurodegenerative disease, causes a decline in motor function, and a recent study found it may be regulated by gut microbiota. Mice that

had fecal transplants from humans with PD started developing symptoms right away, while those that had transplants from healthy humans remained healthy. Researchers are now trying to narrow down which microbes are responsible.

### Do probiotics work?

Probiotics are becoming huge money makers for food and supplement companies, but are we just throwing money away trying to improve our gut environment with their products? It turns out there are very few studies that show any benefits for people who are already healthy. First, manufacturers pack capsules full of bacteria that are easy to grow in large quantities, not because they are beneficial to us. Second, assuming some of the bacteria survive the trip through our acidic stomach, they aren't going to greatly influence the overall bacterial composition, as the microbes in our gut would outnumber those in a pill by several magnitudes.

That being said, probiotics have been shown to provide benefits for some patients with specific bowel-related conditions. For example, they can reduce common side effects from antibiotics. They can also help protect preterm infants from a potentially deadly gut disease. Probiotics also may relieve symptoms associated with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). The problem in these cases is that there is no one probiotic that will help **all people** since internal ecosystems differ from person to person. Creating custom-made probiotics that will benefit individual patients is the newest challenge for researchers. Read the *Scientific American* article referenced below for more on the "hype" as well as the potential of probiotics for improved health.

### Foods for a healthy gut

If you feel healthy already, is there a way to maintain a healthy bacterial environment in your intestines? Eating the right food can encourage healthy bacteria to flourish and protect us from bad bacteria. Here is a list of 10 healthy foods (in alphabetical order) that promote a healthy gut:

#### 10 Foods for a Healthy Gut

	Food	Other Benefits
1	Apple Cider Vinegar	<a href="#">relieves acid reflux</a>
2	Bananas	<a href="#">may help reduce inflammation</a>
3	Beans	<a href="#">help with weight loss; feeds good gut bacteria</a>
4	Bone Broth	<a href="#">help heal the intestinal lining</a>
5	Cruciferous Vegetables	<a href="#">reduce risk of several cancers</a>
6	Garlic	<a href="#">prevents gastrointestinal illnesses</a>
7	Mangoes	<a href="#">may help control blood pressure</a>
8	Miso (fermented soy bean paste)	<a href="#">prevention of cancer tumors and radiation injury</a>
9	Kimchi (Korean fermented vegetables)	<a href="#">may reduce social anxiety</a>
10	Yogurt	<a href="#">improves digestion</a>

### Sources and Additional Reading:

Effect of probiotics and prebiotics on depression. [Clinical Nutrition Journal](#)

Early stress and low bacterial diversity and their effect on depression. From IFL Science: <http://ow.ly/KzPs30kwOA4>

How our gut microbes recover after a round of antibiotics. Summary of a recent Duke University study: <http://ow.ly/sHbw30kAOHl>

Probiotics can protect bones in older women. From University of Gothenburg: <http://ow.ly/Hrrr30kBSPT>

Do probiotics really work? *Scientific American* article explains the hype as well as the potential: <http://ow.ly/Rdk030kANHd>

How to choose a probiotic supplement: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/best-probiotic-supplement>

Possible link between Parkinson's and gut health: <https://www.cureparkinsons.org.uk/News/parkinsons-starts-in-gut>

Fatty foods can trigger anxiety and depression: <https://www.inverse.com/article/46087-microbiome-high-fat-diet-depression>

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