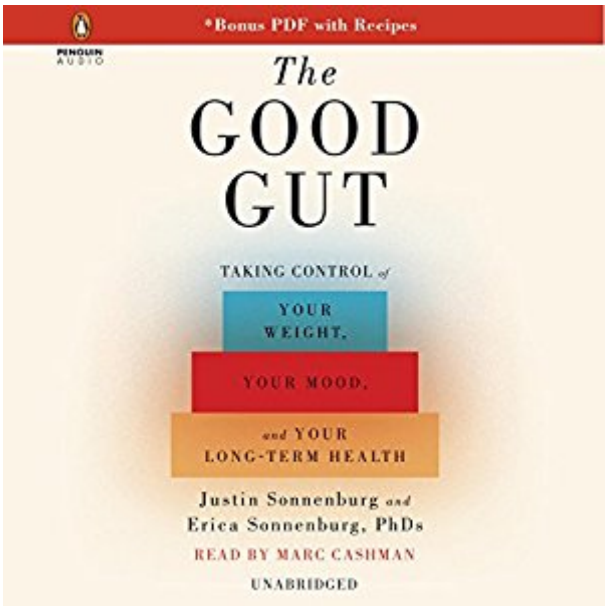
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The Good Gut: Taking Control Of Your Weight, Your Mood, And Your Long Term Health



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Synopsis

A groundbreaking guide to the surprising source of good health Genetics and lifestyle are thought to be the two most important determinants of good health. But that is not the whole story. We have a second genome, our gut bacteria, that sets the dial on our bodies. Unlike our DNA, we can influence the gut bacteria, or microbiota, to optimize all aspects of our health. In The Good Gut, noted Stanford researchers Justin and Erica Sonnenburg, who are doing cutting-edge research on the microbiota, investigate how the trillions of microbes that reside in our gastrointestinal tract help define us, affecting everything from our immune response to our weight, allergic reactions, aging and emotions; how they are under threat from the Western diet, our antibiotics, and our sterilized environment; and how we can nurture our individual microbiota. This is urgent news. The recent change in our gut microbiota is linked to the alarming increase in obesity and autoimmune diseases. Our intestinal microbiota play an important role in the prevalence of predominantly Western afflictions, such as cancer, diabetes, allergies, asthma, autism, and inflammatory bowel diseases. These gut bacteria are facing a mass extinction, and the health consequences are dire. How can we keep our microbiota off the endangered species list? How can we strengthen the community that inhabits our gut and thereby improve our own health? Your prescription for gut health is unique to you, and it changes as you age. The Good Gut offers a new plan for health that focuses on how to nourish your microbiota, including recipes and a menu plan. Drs. Sonnenburg look at safe alternatives to antibiotics; dietary and lifestyle choices to encourage microbial health; the management of the aging microbiota; and the nourishment of your own individual microbiome. Includes a bonus PDF with recipes.

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Customer Reviews

As middle aged, active adults, we try to exercise, eat right and take good care of our health but unfortunately, we both have long-term chronic conditions from childhood - one that landed the spouse in the hospital with a very serious illness including pneumonia. After being put on 7 (yes seven!) IV antibiotics going 24/7 via a drip, the doctors said to expect some serious gasto symptoms. As soon as he was able to eat/drink, we also started him on probiotics 3x per day and continued for 6 months after. He never once got the dreaded gastro symptoms but we were under no illusion that he was back to his pre-illness level.In order to reduce the risk of long term damage - we set out on a very deliberate routine to rebuild gut health. I researched everything I could get my hands on and we upped the amount of home fermentation products we consume - we've switched to several store bought varieties years ago but also made our own bread, wine and other items from time to time. We added even more products both in variety and type - including store bought and homemade. Kimchi, krout, pickles, wine, bread, kumbuchi tea and even fermented black beans, olives and other harder to find items became standard in our diet. We also eliminated most non-natural sugar (raw honey and maple syrup being the exception) and eat fresh fruits, veggies and roots regularly. Additionally we added good gut growth items like sunchokes simply for their ability to help rebuild flora.Why do I mention all this? Because I literally spent days - maybe weeks - trying to locate all the information needed to make those changes. Trying to find out the true impact of antibiotics on gut flora, what repeated doses meant for long term health, what items helped the most, which things actually hurt or hindered? What foods promote and which foods kill off? These and many many other questions took so much time and effort to locate - and they are all in this book (or nearly all...there were a few questions like the impact of oral antibiotics versus IV antibiotics that were not mentioned but since spouse also went home with oral antibiotics for several weeks after the initial 7 different IV antibiotics it was just a matter of "how bad"). So, first of all, I would consider this book time and money well spent for the simple fact that it puts everything into one place in an easy to understand manner. No hunting through academic journals, no trying to compare this study to that study...just plain information in an easy to read and engaging style.Next, the addition of the resources and index were also a great touch - once again, something I really wish were available 18 months ago.The readability is great - the author assumes the reader has minimal background and makes this entirely accessible to non-academic readers.Limitations, Irritations & Other Problems

with the BookIt’s entirely reader friendly but at times, perhaps overly so...there were a few areas which I personally would love to have seen more science and less description but that is personal preference. There was also one glaring deficiency that could give the wrong idea entirely - the author takes great pains to make sure readers consult with their physician...but from our experience, physicians know next to nothing about this and some are openly hostile to it. Another glaring problem was the emphasis on things like hand washing with chemicals but next to zero about the IMMENSE amount of antibiotics fed to livestock - considered by many to be one of the prime reasons and sources for antibiotic super bugs. Indeed, placing all the blame at the hands of average consumers without taking the diet and practices of agriculture into account does little to nothing to dispel one of the most common sources.All in all, a well written book - interesting, informative and useful especially for those attempting to take control or regain control of their health

I have had some significant health issues the last few years and I have been reading everything I can about the various theories on health, diet and exercise and how those things can effect us. There are so many different points of view - go gluten free? Paleo? Grains are bad for our brains? What to do?This book starts out with a foreword by Andrew Weil and he talks about this very issue. He mentions the fact that allergies, asthma and autoimmune diseases have proliferated in many developed parts of the world and that in his opinion, this is not due to gluten sensitivity problems or our consuming grains and/or wheat. Instead, we should be looking at our microorganisms and gut flora in our bodies and see what benefits and effects they have on our health.The authors of this book are both professors of Immunology at Stanford University. In this book they discuss the importance of the microbes and bacteria in our bodies and how they can affect our overall well-being and health. One of the things first discussed is that there is too much concern with keeping our environment and our food too sanitized and sterile and that we (especially young kids and infants) need more exposure to these microbes. The widespread use of sanitizers is not a good thing and they even tell us why it’s a good idea to have a dog or family pet.They go on to explain that gut microbes are the puppeteers of the immune system and they warn your system (i.e. sending out T-cells and B-cells) about something harmful that you’ve eaten. They’re belief is is that if your microbiota is compromised, then the you can get an under-response or an over-response (autoimmune problems.)"The rise of autoimmune diseases appear to be more tightly tied to our increase in cleanliness, not to decreased infection."Hence the importance of keeping our regular interactions with microbes that live in us or around us to keep up mild mini-immune responses. Too much or too little can cause the occurrence of such bowel inflammatory diseases as Crohn’s and

IBD.So what about our using probiotics? There are so many on market shelves - which ones to pick? The authors do a great job educating us about this. We learn that we each might have personal needs and we might want to try different probiotics to see how they affect us. (i.e. too much bloat or discomfort, try another.) These probiotics are not regulated and the authors explain the problems that come with that. The authors point out that if you do take them, they should be consumed regularly and consistently because they don't stay in our bodies for very long.So what about prebiotics? They are not living organisms like probiotics but their goal is to increase the good bacteria in our gut. Fruit and veggies are a good source for them, as well as fermented foods which contain a diverse assortment of microorganisms.What about the current anti-wheat, anti-gluten stance we've read about lately? The authors do not agree with that and instead talk about the importance of our eating lots of dietary fiber - the good kind - not refined carbohydrates. They are called "microbiota accessible carbohydrates." MACs" are what gut microbes feed on. Eating more results in weight loss, lower inflammation and decreased risk of some Western diseases. So it's good to eat your good fruit and veggies and whole grains. The authors say we focus too much on lowering fat in terms of weight loss instead of increasing these MACs.Later on there is a discussion about the connection between our gut and our brains and how these microbes can effect such things as behavior, personality, mood, memory and even happiness and how microbiota is important to keeping a youthful vigor.There is a lot of discussion about the problems with antibiotics, especially broad-spectrum ones like Cipro, and how they negatively impact us.These antibiotics can leave your body open to various ailments and infections (like C. difficile) that previously would have been taken care of by the good bacteria. We also find out there is strength in numbers with microbiota.We read about the benefits of fecal microbiota transplant (FMT)- read for yourself how that is done. In the future hopefully there will be more ways to have success with FMTs as well as microbiota-based therapies.In conclusion, the authors say we need more studies done and they talk about the exciting possibility in the future for the genetic engineering of bacteria - bacteria that could sense where there is inflammation and then send anti-inflammatory molecules there. Plus, once we learn more we can use microbes to help us improve age-related health decline and help us in the war against various diseases, including cancer. The treatments would be very personalized and individualized since our microbes differ so the idea of the one-size-fits-all-probiotic or treatment will vary.The end of the book has a quite a few pages of recommended recipes and menus.I feel like I have written a separate book here talking about this one, but it really is full of good information and it gave me a lot of think about. I like the fact that the authors talk a few times about the chicken-and-the-egg problem with so many theories and studies - i.e. are certain foods or therapies

bad for people or are the group studied more likely to have problems/bad outcomes?Recommended. I wish there had been some discussion about things like probiotics for people who don't have a colon or have already compromised intestines, but that wasn't their purpose. Personally, I am still conflicted about such diets as the FODMAP diet - which seems to be in conflict with this eating plan. I guess there's still more work and studies to be done until we know the answers to all of our questions.

I understand more than most that writing a book is a huge undertaking. I only wish that this book were more comprehensive. I admit to being shocked that there was no mention of SIBO (small intestine bacterial overgrowth) in it, nor any mention of genetics and the role they might play in gut health. In that regard, it seems ambitious to say (as it does in the title) that this book will offer a plan to take control of one's weight, mood, and long-term health. Rather it appears to provide a very general overview of gut/health issues -- which may still be helpful to many.

Just the information that I needed to link many of the issues I experience. HIGHLY RECOMMEND!

I felt like an expert after reading The Sonnenburgs' book "The Good Gut." They took an extremely complicated and relatively unexplored topic and made it relevant to a lay person like me who has been searching for some keys to better health and nutrition. There was enough science to help me understand the interactions of microbes, and plenty of practical applications of how good microbe health improves overall health. I also found it interesting to think ahead about the unknown territories of microbe interaction with cancers and other mostly unexplored connections. And the recipes are excellent, too. I have recommended this book to everyone in my immediate family as a must read. Hats off to the Sonnenburgs for making this topic accessible.

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