



# Can Healthy Gut Bacteria Reduce the Severity of Covid-19?

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Researchers from the UAE have discovered that the presence of certain bacteria in the gut may lessen the severity of Covid-19 symptoms in sufferers. Carried out as part of a collaboration between the Khalifa University of Science and Technology in Abu Dhabi and the University of Sharjah, the study builds upon previous work linking the composition of the gut microbiome and coronavirus intensity.

Although the research team did find higher levels of disease-causing and inflammatory bacteria in subjects who had contracted Covid-19, they also found other bacteria responsible for creating a fatty acid which can strengthen the response of the body's natural immune system.

## Good bacteria vs bad bacteria

When most people hear the word bacteria, they instantly think of undesirable elements in food, the natural environment and the human body responsible for spreading disease. It may surprise you to learn, then, that there are [certain types of good bacteria](#) which are actually integral to the normal functioning of our internal organs and systems.

It is these types of good bacteria which the researchers concerned themselves with, since there is already a growing body of evidence to suggest that they may affect how a patient experiences coronavirus. Given that these bacteria are primarily produced in the food we consume, the research also indicates a link between diet and Covid-19 symptom intensity.

## Butyrate bacteria

In particular, the scientists were interested in learning more about the presence of bacteria capable of producing butyrate in the bodies of those suffering from the disease. Their research encompassed 87 individuals who had tested positively for Covid-19 and a further 57 who were free from the disease.

Their analysis found that among the group of infected patients, there were higher levels of butyrate-producing bacteria and anti-inflammatory bacteria. This is interesting, since butyrate is a fatty acid that has been known to reinforce the body's



natural immune system response. As such, its heightened presence could explain why certain people experience less harsh effects after contracting Covid-19.

## **A better diet is advisable**

Even though coronavirus is primarily a respiratory disease, the gut does have a role to play in determining how the body responds to it. As such, encouraging levels of beneficial bacteria could be one way to counter the onset of the disease. This could be achieved either through a dedicated course of probiotics (as prescribed by a qualified doctor) or by pursuing a healthier lifestyle and diet.

“You don’t have to go vegan, but getting more diverse plants on your plate is a great way to boost the health of your gut microbiome, improve your immunity and overall health, and potentially reduce your risk from Covid-19,” [explained Professor Tim Spector](#), who teaches genetic epidemiology at King’s College London and was involved in a separate study that produced similar findings.