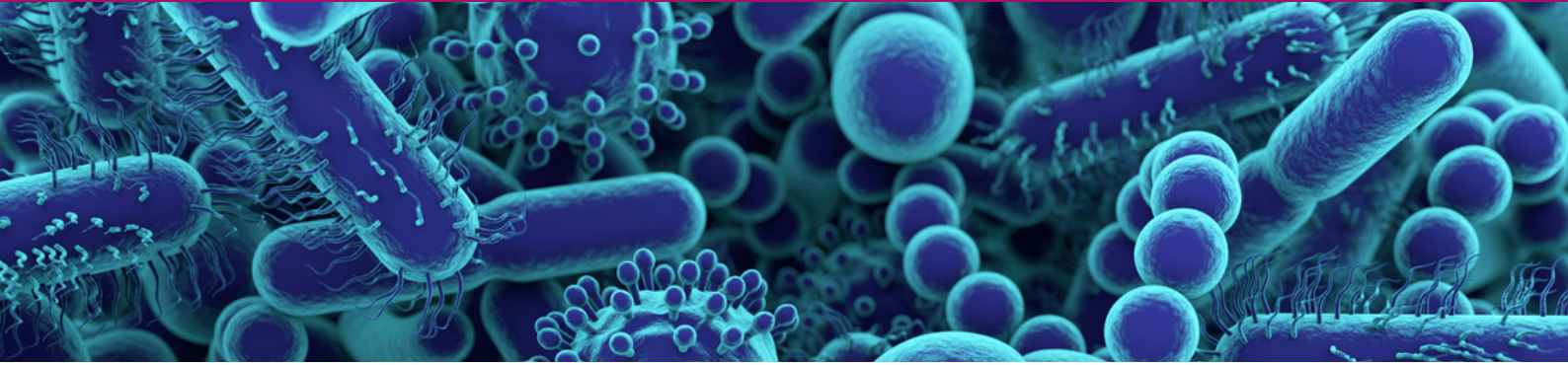


The Gut Microbiome

The gut microbiome is the totality of microorganisms, bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and fungi, and their collective genetic material present in the gastrointestinal tract (GIT)



The gut microbiome is home to trillions of bacteria, viruses and fungi, all of which collectively play an important role in maintaining good health. In very simplistic terms there are two types of bacterial families; symbiotic healthful bacteria and pathogenic harmful bacteria which both reside in the gut. Maintaining a healthy balance of bacteria is important for gastro-intestinal function (digestion and assimilation of nutrients from food) and supporting a strong immune system, as 70-80% of immune cells are present in the gut.

Many symptoms can occur when there is a disruption of gut bacteria, called dysbiosis or if damage occurs to the protective intestinal lining, altering the permeability and causing 'leakage' of food matter and nutrients as they pass through. These are some of the most common issues assessed by BANT nutrition practitioners.

Gut health extends much further and can support symptoms of metabolic health incl. overweight and obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes as well as mental health, autoimmune disorders, cognition and neurodegenerative decline, neurodiversity, fertility, skin health and more. Almost all non-communicable diseases are anchored in gut health and the modifiable risk factors of diet, stress, sleep and physical activity.

Common Gut Symptoms

Gut symptoms vary greatly from one individual to another

The gastrointestinal tract (GI), often called the digestive tract or alimentary canal, is a tube that runs the entire length of the body from your mouth to your anus. Gut symptoms can occur at any stage of the GI tract. Symptoms range from disrupted appetite; loss of / or excessive hunger and altered satiety cues, to nausea, vomiting, indigestion, belching, bloating, acid reflux, cramps, abdominal pain, flatulence, infrequent bowel action, constipation, diarrhoea, blood or mucus in stool, anal irritation and many other. Individuals may suffer from one or more symptom, and may also notice correlations between their gut activity and wider symptoms such as migraine, skin flare ups, joint pain, brain fog, energy levels, and fatigue.

Diet & Nutrition

The foods we eat play an important role in supporting gut health and related conditions. BANT nutrition practitioners can support GPs and gastroenterologists to identify the underlying cause of gut symptoms. These can vary from stress/anxiety, dysbiosis, travel bugs, parasites, and food intolerances to onset of digestive diseases. Dietary and lifestyle recommendations can help to eliminate or manage frequency and severity of symptoms.

