The Good Gut: Taking Control of Your Weight, Your Mood, and Your Long-term Health

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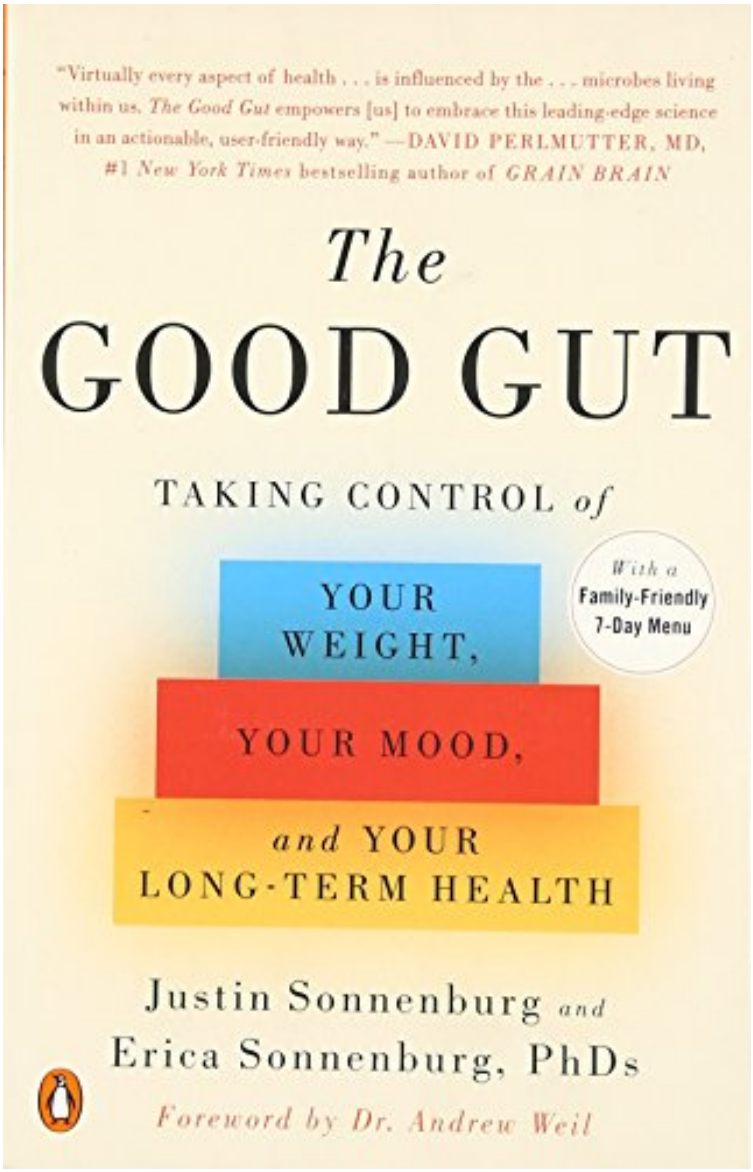

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Justin Sonnenburg, Erica Sonnenburg : The Good Gut: Taking Control of Your Weight, Your Mood, and Your Long-term Health before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Good Gut: Taking Control of Your Weight, Your Mood, and Your Long-term Health:

342 of 362 people found the following review helpful. A well written book - interesting, informative and usefulBy AnCustomerAs 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 health169 of 178 people found the following review helpful. Very informative and well-written.By sb-lynnI 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.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent human Microbiome book!By BobHuman Microbiome is where real healing and sickness come from! It's up to you to eat well and heal you from the inside out by feeding the little critters in you that make you who you are! Give them the fiber they need and you will be blessed ! Food is the best medicine! Eat Food, Not too Much, Mostly Plants:)

The groundbreaking science behind the surprising source of good health Stanford Universitys Justin and Erica Sonnenburg are pioneers in the most exciting and potentially transformative field of human health and wellness, the study of the relationship between our bodies and the trillions of organisms representing thousands of species to which our bodies play host, the microbes we call the microbiota. The Sonnenburgs argue that the microbiota determines in no small part whether were sick or healthy, fit or obese, sunny or moodyand that the microbiota has always been with us, coevolving with humans and entwining its functions with ours. They show us that humans are really composite organisms with microbial and human parts. But now, because of changes to diet, antibiotic over-use, and over-sterilization, our gut microbiota is facing a mass extinction event, which may explain the mysterious spike in some of our most troubling modern afflictions, from food allergies to autism, cancer to depression. It doesnt have to be this way. The Good Gut is a groundbreaking work that offers a new plan for health that focuses on how to nourish your microbiota, including recipes and a menu plan. The Sonnenburgs show how we can keep our microbiota off the endangered species list and strengthen the community that inhabits our gut and thereby improve our own health. In this important and timely investigation, they 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. Caring for our gut microbes may be the most important health choice we can make.

David Perlmutter, MD and author, #1 New York Times Bestseller, Grain Brain: The Surprising Truth About Wheat, Carbs, and Sugar - Your Brain's Silent Killers:"Virtually every aspect of health and vitality is influenced by the collection of microbes living within us. The Good Gut empowers the reader with the opportunity to embrace this leading edge science in an actionable, user-friendly way."Mark Hyman, MD, Director, Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine, and author, #1 New York Times bestseller, The Blood Sugar Solution:"We are facing a mass genocide threatening the lives of billions of people across the globe. It is the killing and harming of our own inner garden, our gut bacteria, by our processed diet, antibiotics, acid blockers and other gut busting drugs. The Good Gut for the first time connects the dots between the health of our gut flora or microbiome and our health. A bad gut causes heart disease, obesity, diabetes, cancer, autoimmune disease and more, while a good gut can prevent and heal most of what ails us in the 21st century. If you want to learn how to cultivate your own inner garden and create abundant good

health, read The Good Gut!"David S. Ludwig, MD, PhD, Professor, Harvard Medical School and author, Ending the Food Fight:"Microbes in our gut outnumber the cells in our body by more than 3 to 1. Wed better make peace with them. The Sonnenburgs show us how in their fascinating book, The Good Gut. I recommend it to everyone who eats."Daphne Miller, MD author ofFarmacology: Total health from the Ground Up and The Jungle Effect:"Sonnenburg are two rising stars in the field of microbiology and immunology research. Lucky for us, they are willing and able to put scientific jargon aside and offer us a fascinating, funny, and easy-to-read book about the latest human microbiome discoveries andhow these discoveries might help us tend to our inner microbes so as to optimize our overall health."Mark Liponis, MD, corporate medical director, Canyon Ranch:"In The Good Gut, Stanford researchers and authors Justin and Erica Sonnenburg explain some of the mysteries of the invisible world inside us. Thanks to their insight and research, the rest of us can now benefit from understanding how to improve our health by taking care of the microbes living within us."Adam Perlman, MD, executive director, Duke Integrative Medicine at Duke University:"The 100 trillion bacteria that make up our gut microbiota represent the next great frontier in medicine and our understanding of how to obtain and maintain health. The Good Gut is a must read for anyone who struggles with health issues, from obesity to depression, and anyone looking to truly optimize theirhealth and well-being."From the Hardcover edition.About the AuthorJustin Sonnenburg, PhD, is an associate professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the Stanford University School of Medicine. In 2009, he was the recipient of an NIH Directors New Innovator Award. Erica Sonnenburg, PhD, is a senior research scientist at the Stanford University School of Medicine in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, where she studies the role of diet on the human intestinal microbiota.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.We all know that much of our health is predetermined by our genes. We also know that we can generally improve our health if we eat right, exercise, and manage our stress. But how to do those things is a matter of great debate. Many well-meaning health programs are focused solely on weight loss or heart health, but what if there was a second genome, one that held the key to much of our overall health, but one that we could influence by very specific (and often surprising) lifestyle choices? Well, this second genome exists. It belongs to the bacteria that inhabit our gut and is vital to our overall well-being, in countless ways. The details of how these intestinal bacteria, known as the microbiota, are hard-wired into health and disease are starting to come to light and they are reshaping what it means to be human.As scientists try to unravel the causes behind the prevalence of predominantly Western afflictions such as cancer, diabetes, allergies, asthma, autism, and inflammatory bowel diseases, it is becoming increasingly clear that the microbiota plays an important role in the development of each of these conditions and potentially many others. Our bacterial inhabitants touch all aspects of our biology in some way, directly or indirectly. But the modern world has changed the way we eat and how we live, and as a result, our intestinal microbiota is facing challenges that it has not experienced in the entirety of human evolution.Our digestive system is much more than a collection of human cells that surround our last few mealsit also contains a dense colony of bacteria and other microorganisms. In fact, for every one human cell in our body, we house an additional ten bacterial cells that amount to a filibusterproof majority that legislates much of our biology. But before you start thinking of yourself as a human being with bacterial cells inside, it may be more accurate to consider yourself as a bacterial being with a human cell coating.More than we ever expected, the gut microbiota sets the dial on our immune system. If the gut bacteria are healthy, its likely that the immune system is running well. Much is being learned about how the microbiota impacts our brains. The brain-gut axis impacts our well-being profoundly, far more than just letting us know when its time to eat. Gut bacteria can affect moods and behavior and may influence the progression of some neurological conditions.