

Gut-Skin Axis

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What is the gut-skin axis?

The gut-skin axis refers to the interaction between the gut and the skin. Both the gut and the skin are exposed to things, like germs, from the outside world. They both also serve as a barrier and help protect you from bad germs.

But, not all germs are bad. Some germs that live on your skin and gut are good. The good germs on your skin and gut often do not cause problems. Instead, they take up space on your skin and gut, which keeps bad germs from growing and dividing. On your skin, they may also help repair sun damage. In your gut, they can also help break down things like food. The germs that live on your skin and gut is known as your microbiome.

When there is a shift in the number of good germs and the bad germs, this can lead to problems. There are many reasons why this may be. The shift can make your body's white blood cells become active. White blood cells are cells that kill bad germs. This can cause inflammation, which can affect your whole body.

What diseases can a shift in the number of good germs and bad germs lead to?

The shift in the number of good germs and bad germs in your gut may been linked with certain skin diseases. These diseases are:

- Psoriasis. Psoriasis is a common skin disease that leads to red areas that are raised and have silver scale.
- Alopecia areata. This is a skin disease that causes hair loss. It often presents as coin-shaped areas of hair loss on your scalp. But, it can sometimes progress and cause hair loss on your whole scalp, eyebrows, and eyelashes.
- Rosacea. This is a skin disease that affects your face. There are two types. The first can cause your cheeks and nose to become red. You may see blood vessels under your skin. The second type can cause bumps on your cheeks and nose.
- Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). This is a condition that can affect many parts of your body. It can cause a skin rash. It can cause low numbers of red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. It can also affect your heart, lungs, kidneys, and joints.
- Acne vulgaris. This is known as acne.

- Hidradenitis suppurativa. This is a skin disease that affects your hair follicles. It can lead to large bumps that drain. It is most often found under your armpits, in your groin, and under the breasts of women. But, it can affect other parts of your body.

Oral probiotics may help improve your skin condition. This is based on a growing body of research. You should talk with your doctor to see if you should take probiotics.

This piece was based on a webinar hosted by Skin Cancer Champions.