

## Do gut bacteria play role in eating disorders?

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

Our guts are home to trillions of microbes that help us digest our food and keep harmful pathogens from taking over. A host of studies in recent years have shown that changes in diet rapidly shift the populations of microbes living in our guts, and eating disorders, according to a [recent study in the \*International Journal of Eating Disorders\*](#), are likely no different. Knowing that there's a difference is one thing, but knowing what that difference means is quite another.

UNC eating disorders researcher Cynthia Bulik is spearheading two different studies looking at the microbiome in eating disorders. One of them, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, will track the microbiomes of 100 people with anorexia from the time they're first admitted to the hospital until they are discharged at a healthier weight, and even beyond. The other study has paired with biotech startup uBiome to gather microbiome samples from people with anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder from around the U.S. to gain a more comprehensive picture of eating disorders and the microbiome.

Part of the problem with explaining the biology of [eating disorders](#) to people, Bulik says, is that we really don't know very much. We know, for example, that eating disorders are the most lethal of all psychiatric illnesses, but we don't really know why a small subset of the population can essentially starve itself to death while so many others struggle to lose even five pounds, or why other people can repeatedly overeat far past the point of fullness.

**Read full, original post:** [Could the Microbiome Cure Eating Disorders?](#)