

Your housemate may be altering your immune system

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

Our veins are swimming with immune cells of many different kinds. Some bear the memory of previous infections, in case we should encounter them again; some are actively fighting invaders; others are merely on the look-out. Counting all of the varieties of cells and what molecules they are producing gives researchers a profile of someone's immune system. In a study of more than 600 people, [published recently in *Nature Immunology*](#), just such an analysis revealed that people's immune systems are incredibly stable over time—even getting a vaccine or a stomach upset changed things only briefly, before the immune cells returned to normal. It also showed that almost the only thing that will change a given person's normal seems to be living with a partner.

Looking to see how much variation there was between individuals, the researchers compared pairs of people to each other, and they found something interesting: Each co-habiting parent in the group was clearly more similar to their mate than they were to any other person. The team didn't take samples before the couple began living together or before their children were born, so the researchers didn't actually see the process of adaptation take place. But each pair of parents was so much more similar than any two random people—with 50 percent less variation between them than strangers—that the researchers believe something about their shared lives caused this mutual accommodation.

Read full, original post: [Your Roommate Is Changing Your Immune System](#)