

## Why microbiome tests may be promising more than they can deliver

Microbiome testing companies have become a thing, offering consumers a chance to see a snapshot of the billions of microbes that reside in their bodies. Some promise even more from a swab: personalized advice on how to improve your health.

“Take control of your gut bacteria to help with weight management, fitness, skin health and more!” says [Thryve's website](#). Meanwhile, [Viome](#), launched with \$21 million in startup funding last year, promises to help people “discover what’s happening inside your gut and get a personalized action plan to fix it,” using technology “developed for National Security.” Their competitor [uBiome](#) has a vaguer sales pitch, saying customers will “learn” and “discover” more about their microbiome — and it may have good reason to keep it simple.

There’s no doubt that the microbiome, the community of trillions of bacteria and viruses that live in a person’s body, has a profound impact on human health. But our understanding of the microbiome isn’t advanced enough, nor are the commercial tests precise enough, to guide customized health recommendations,

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The problem is, researchers have yet to define what a “healthy” gut includes, or if one person’s healthy gut data can apply to another person. And, for the companies hawking probiotics, it is also unknown if and how those beneficial bacteria can even take root in a person’s turbulent digestive system.

**Read full, original post:** [As microbiome testing firms proliferate, so do questions about their claims](#)