

Key to treating autism could be hiding in the gut

Autism affects people's social behaviour and communication, and may impair their ability to learn things. All this is well known. Less familiar to most, though, are the gastrointestinal problems associated with the condition. The intestines of children with autism often harbour bacteria different from those in the guts of the neurotypical.

...

Unfortunate though this is, the upset gut floras of autistic people are seen by some investigators as the key to the condition—and to treating it.

...

A study just published in *Neuron* suggests that it is. In it, Mauro Costa-Mattioli of Baylor College of Medicine, in Texas, and his colleagues demonstrate that introducing a particular bacterium into the guts of mice that display autistic symptoms can abolish some of those symptoms. The bug in question is *Lactobacillus reuteri*. It is commonly found in healthy digestive systems and helps regulate acidity levels. And it is also easily obtainable for use as a probiotic from health-food shops.

...

The general availability of *L. reuteri* does, however, bring with it another possibility—that people will conduct their own, “off label” trials, either on themselves or on their children. Dr [Sarkis] Mazmanian is cautious about that idea. “I don’t know if there is a barrier to people buying and using this stuff now. It may be strain-specific and the paper does not state which strain or strains were used,” he says.

Read full, original post: [Gut bacteria may offer a treatment for autism](#)