

'Life-threatening' unregulated at-home treatments sparked by research linking autism to gut bacteria

A growing number are experimenting with specialized diets, probiotics, stool transplants and parasites, trying to game the gut to address core autism traits. About 19 percent of physicians surveyed in 2009 said they [recommend probiotics](#) to the autistic people they treat. An unpublished survey of 100 people found 2 adults trying stool transplants at home for autism.

These unregulated therapies can be costly and unpredictable — and they pose [significant, even life-threatening, risks](#).

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The interest in the microbiome's role in autism is justified: Children on the spectrum are at least twice as likely as their typical peers to [have digestive problems](#); they are also more prone to a range of stomach complaints, including diarrhea and constipation, which may result from eating a restricted diet. Multiple studies show that autistic children have [an altered microbiome](#) compared with typical children. However, the studies are mostly small and uncontrolled — and it's not clear what they mean, given that researchers are still trying to establish the [ingredients of a healthy microbiome](#).

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If these lines of research pan out, doctors may one day be able to treat autism with a combination of drugs, some targeting the microbiome.

Read full, original post: [Supplements, worms and stool: How families are trying to game the gut to treat autism traits](#)