

About 90% of the cells inside our body are from non-human micro organisms. Only 10% are human.

About 99.5% of the genetic material of our body stems from our bodies microbiome. Only 0.5% is human.

We have the approximate gene count of a worm.

And yet, we are incredibly complex and intelligent beings. But where does this complexity and intelligence come from, if not from human genes?

There are trillions of bacteria, viruses, fungi and other microorganisms in every part of our body: our cells, our skin, our mouth, our lungs, and digestive system, particularly in our colon.

These microbiota are intelligent and incredibly important to our health.

Without them, we would have no functioning immunity.

Without them, we simply wouldn't exist.

And it isn't quite as simple as to divide the bacteria living in our gut into „good“ and „bad“ bacteria – it is the diversity we need. Most of our microbes – about 100 trillion of them – are beneficial to us. Some seem to be neutral. And some are what we perceive as „bad“. But even the ones that potentially threaten our health, are needed in order to help the microbiome build up defences and immunity – without them, each intruding pathogen would be detrimental to our health.

Even viruses have an important role to play in the bigger picture – being able to give and take genetic information and to change the DNA of a living organism, they are responsible for much of our evolution. When a stress factor disturbs the balance of life, a virus becomes active and changes the DNA of it's host. In this way, much of our human traits as we know them now, have actually been adapted by the action of [viruses](#) in the past.

Without viruses, we would not even be here now.

But whether or not a virus comes into action, depends on the balance and health of

the microbiota around it. If the microbiome as a whole loses its strength and diversity, the virus isn't kept in check anymore and begins to replicate through our own cell's DNA. Only then does it become a threat.

If there is enough of a diversity and a balanced mix of microbes inside our bodies, the virus can live among them, remaining latent, until this balance is disturbed.

It is only when our microbiome weakens – mostly due to some form of stress, diet or lifestyle influences – and becomes imbalanced, that we become vulnerable.

Our microbes are also responsible for much of our nutrient absorption, the production of vitamins, our mood and behaviours and for a well functioning immune system.

There are so many studies available these days on the connections between the make up of our microbiome and [obesity](#), [autism](#), [chronic diseases](#), [cravings](#), and many more that it is beginning to look increasingly obvious that it isn't all about us – it's about biodiversity and community.

The human body really is – just like the planet we live on – a hugely diverse community of different species and it is all about how these species can live peacefully together – the more diverse, the stronger they will be.

So, when we eat or drink, we should think of our tiny friends sometimes.

We should be good hosts to them, offer them foods they can thrive on, rather than the foods we might crave – sugar cravings often are a sign of a microbe imbalance anyway and they will vanish once you've reset your microbial balance.

There is so much that we can do to nourish a healthy microbiome (and it isn't just eating a lot of yoghurt).

What we eat or drink, as well as our genetics, the place we live in, the air we breathe, the activities we choose, and the people who surround us, all have an influence on our microbiome.

Of course, we can't change our genetics and there is often little we can do about the place and climate we live in, or the people we live with. But – and this is by far the most important and influential aspect – we can choose our own actions and decide what we eat and drink.

But it isn't as simple as taking some probiotics or eating some yoghurt. Our bodies

are living, breathing, intelligent and ever changing organisms who need different things.

We have to first look at our individual constitution – what type of microbiome, what kinds of imbalances, what kind of metabolism do we have and how can we eat according to it's needs?

The answer of course is provided by the teachings of Ayurveda.

So many times I've seen almost miraculous changes in the health and mood of a client or friend through dietary and lifestyle changes.

The difference to conventional nutrition is that Ayurveda doesn't just look at the nutrients contained in any given food, it looks at it's effect on the digestive system and the body's overall balance.

It re-balances our microbiome and with it, our health.

Once the internal biome is healthy, many other issues begin to fall into place – when the body's own, innate healing and repair mechanisms are working again.

And what we need in order to achieve our own personal balance is different to each of us, according to our metabolic type, constitution and microbiome.

And how do we read the signs, hear and understand the messages of our own bodies again? Of course by learning the language of Ayurveda.

There is no doubt in my mind that Ayurveda can help us through this challenging time, increase our immunity, decrease chronic diseases and help us deal better with stress, anxiety and the fear of uncertainty.

Ayurveda is giving us the tools, all we have to do is use them.

(For more information on Ayurveda and Ayurvedic consultations have a look [here](#))