

Could 'friendly' gut bacteria help fight heart disease?

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(Medical Xpress) -- Scientists at the University of Reading are looking at ways of tackling heart disease and diabetes - through our guts. "Our research answers show real potential."

Provided by University of Reading

Experts in gut [microbes](#) at the Department of Food and Nutritional Science at Reading believe that altering the mix of bacteria in our guts could have a significant effect on cutting risks of the [metabolic syndrome](#) - a condition that frequently includes obesity and puts people at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes and [heart disease](#).

They are currently working on human trials to explore how prebiotics - [dietary supplements](#) that stimulate the growth of 'good' bacteria in the gut - can prevent at-risk patients from gaining weight and increasing their risk of heart disease, stroke or diabetes.

Evidence has already indicated that gut microbes can play an important role in weight gain, with some types of bacteria helping to prevent molecules thought to play a role in weight gain from entering the blood stream.

One such molecule is the microbial cell component lipopolysaccharide, which has been observed to be elevated in cases of [type 2 diabetes](#).

Dr Gemma Walton, one of the researchers working on the project, said: "To find alternative ways to reduce risk factors for these conditions involving the gut would be great.

"Evidence shows that gut microbes may play an important role in the metabolic syndrome, so through altering the gut bacteria we could potentially reduce people's risks of developing associated diseases - heart attacks, strokes and diabetes - currently the most lethal conditions in Europe.

"When we consider that each one of us has more bacteria cells than human cells, gut implicated

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