

Toddlerhood



ARTICLE

What is Gut Brain Axis?

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**2 mins
to read**

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Did you know that a healthy digestive tract can affect the brain? Various nutrients are required to support the brain's growth and function, and those nutrients cannot be absorbed by the body if there is a disruption in the **digestive tract**. Your child may also feel stressed when the gut feels unhealthy. In reverse, the brain can send signals to the digestive tract which may affect its activity. For example, a stressed child may feel nauseous or **uncomfortable in the gut**. This two-way communication between the brain and the digestive system is known as the Gut-Brain Axis. According to one study in 2008¹ the harmful bacteria in the digestive tract may lead to anxiety. On the other hand if there isn't enough probiotics, the levels of stress hormones in the body may increase. Therefore, it is important to maintain a healthy gut for your child.

One of the ways you can **encourage a healthy gut** is through a balance of microflora in the gut. An intake of beneficial bacteria, or probiotics in the gastrointestinal tract such as *L. Reuteri* may help reduce the risk of various digestive disorders such as constipation. Probiotics can be found in yogurt or fortified milk. You can look for **milk that contain strains of good bacteria** to support your child's digestive system.

References:

¹Goehler LE, Lyte M, Gaykema RP Infection-induced viscerosensory signals from the gut enhance anxiety: implications for psychoneuroimmunology. *Brain Behav Immun.* 2007;21:721-6.