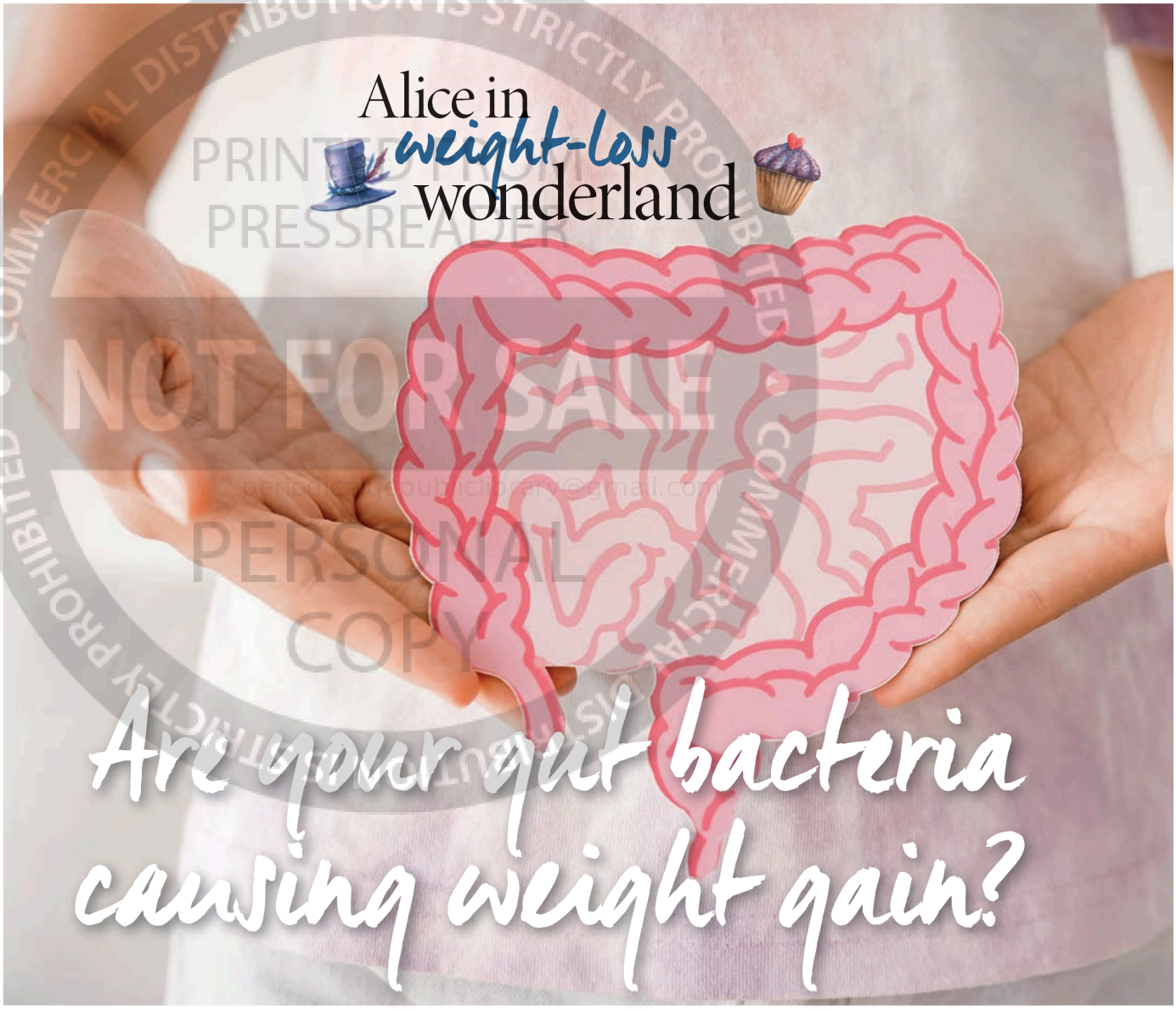
- Digestion / Body weight



Alice in weight-loss wonderland

Are your gut bacteria causing weight gain?

Weight loss columnist and type 1 diabetic Alice Dogruyol looks at the link between gut bacteria and weight, with a particular focus on a bacterium called akkermansia.

ON A RECENT TRIP TO DUBAI, I found myself in an unexpected yet thoroughly fascinating conversation about gut health. While attending the WHX Dubai health show, I struck up a conversation with renowned Australian cardiologist and chairman of the Australian Gut Foundation Dr Ross Walker, who was there representing Theronomic, a cutting-edge probiotic brand. What began as a friendly exchange quickly turned into a masterclass on the gut microbiome, weight management and – most intriguingly – akkermansia muciniphila, a next-generation probiotic that plays a pivotal role in metabolism, fat storage, and overall gut health. My curiosity was piqued. If there's a secret weapon for maintaining a healthy weight naturally, I wanted in.

'Without a healthy gut it is difficult to have a healthy body'

'More than 90 per cent of modern diseases have a strong link to gut dysbiosis,' explained Dr Walker (drrosswalker.com). 'Without a healthy gut it is difficult to have a healthy body. Tragically, only five per cent of modern society consumes 2-3 pieces of fruit and 3-5 servings of vegetables per day, which is the most important step to good gut health.' However, while diet plays a role,

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FOOD TO HELP YOUR GUT

To naturally boost your levels of akkermansia, incorporate these foods into your diet:

- Foods rich in prebiotic fibres such as asparagus, leeks, onions and garlic.
- Omega-3-rich foods including salmon, walnuts and flaxseeds.
- Polyphenol-rich foods such as berries, pomegranates, green tea and dark chocolate.

it's often not enough, especially if your gut is already compromised.

So, what exactly is akkermansia muciniphila? This unique beneficial bacterium resides in the mucous lining of your gut. It has been extensively studied for its role in strengthening the gut barrier, reducing inflammation and regulating metabolism. Research suggests that individuals with higher levels of akkermansia tend to have better insulin sensitivity and better blood sugar balance, as well as lower visceral fat and a healthier body weight. This powerhouse microbe essentially fine-tunes the gut environment, ensuring optimal digestion, energy balance, and metabolic function.

If your gut is lacking in akkermansia, you may experience weight gain, insulin resistance and increased inflammation. A depleted gut barrier, often referred to as "leaky gut" allows toxins to enter the bloodstream, triggering immune responses that contribute to obesity, metabolic disorders, and even chronic disease.

Modern lifestyles, processed foods, antibiotics, and stress all deplete akkermansia levels, making it harder for your body to regulate weight effectively. In one clinical trial, overweight participants who took akkermansia supplements experienced reduced body fat, improved insulin sensitivity and enhanced gut health, all without making any changes to their diet. Now that's my kind of health hack!

FEED THE GOOD GUYS

If you've ever taken a probiotic and thought, "I don't feel any different," you're not alone. Many probiotics don't survive the harsh journey through the digestive tract so they never reach the place where they're needed. This is where Theronomic Flora Reshape (theronomic.com) comes in. Unlike conventional probiotics, this is a "tribiotic" as it combines prebiotics, probiotics and postbiotics, which each play a role in helping akkermansia to thrive.

The supplement features a patented, next-generation akkermansia strain clinically studied for its impact on metabolism, fat storage and gut health. Research published in *Frontiers in Microbiology* highlights its ability to enhance energy metabolism and support weight loss by improving the gut environment.

So, after deep-diving into the science and speaking with top experts, akkermansia has officially earned a spot in my daily routine. While I'll still be sipping on my morning green tea and sprinkling pomegranate seeds over my breakfast bowl, I know that diet alone isn't always enough. In the ever-evolving world of health and wellness, akkermansia might just be the missing piece in the weight-management puzzle. If it means better gut health, enhanced metabolic function, and helping keep the weight from creeping back on, count me in. I'll report back...



Connect with Alice at instagram.com/Alice_Dogruyol.



Theronomic Akkermansia, £77, theronomic.com.

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