- Coffee / Digestion

Coffee can improve intestinal health

One of the world's most-consumed beverages may also be a treat for the community of microorganisms inhabiting your gut.

HEALTH Inside your stomach and intestines, billions of bacteria, fungi, viruses and other microorganisms work around the clock to keep you balanced, physically as well as mentally.

A study from Washington University in the US reveals the effect of coffee drinking on these microorganisms. And it turns out that coffee seems to boost gut health.

The US researchers analysed stool and blood samples from 22,800 people in the US and UK to compare coffee drinkers with non-coffee drinkers, also including public self-reported data on coffee consumption from an additional 54,200 people from around the world. Coffee drinkers were found to have up to eight times more *Lawsonibacter asaccharolyticus* bacteria, which help balance the gut microbial community by breaking down proteins instead of sugar. This prevents excessive gas and bloating, and lowers the risk of inflammation. The quantity of bacteria was higher the more cups of coffee the person drank.

"It is now clear that coffee can support your health, so if you enjoy a cup, you need not consider it a guilty pleasure," say the researchers.



YURI A/SHUTTERSTOCK

GUT COUNT

- **NUMBERS:** Your gut includes approximately 37 trillion bacteria of around 500 species.
- **STOOL:** 25-50% of your stool weight is made of bacteria.