

The tiny tenants in your gut.

Why the microbiome matters — how trillions of microbes shape mood, motility and pain, and what genuinely helps.

The Executive Frame™ · Stability > Clarity > Agency

What is the microbiome?

Your microbiome is a vast ecosystem of bacteria, viruses, fungi and other microorganisms living in your gastrointestinal tract — trillions of microbes in relative balance. Dysbiosis, or microbial imbalance, occurs when beneficial bacteria decrease and less helpful bacteria increase — which can trigger inflammatory cascades, alter nutrient absorption, and dysregulate the gut–brain axis.

How the microbiome affects the gut–brain axis

Vagus nerve signalling

Microbial metabolites signal directly to the vagus nerve, influencing mood, pain and motility.

Immune pathways

Dysbiotic bacteria trigger low-grade intestinal inflammation, activating immune cells that communicate with the brain.

Visceral sensitivity

Dysbiosis increases intestinal permeability, allowing bacterial endotoxins to amplify pain signalling.

Motility & mood

Altered microbial neurotransmitter production can slow or accelerate the gut, and is associated with changes in serotonin synthesis linked to low mood and anxiety.

What can help?

- A nutrient-dense, whole-food diet with diverse plants to feed beneficial bacteria.
- Specific probiotics targeted to your pattern — work with a provider on strain selection.
- Prebiotics and varied dietary fibre to promote butyrate production.
- Stress management and sleep — microbial stability tracks with nervous system stability.
- Movement and exercise, which enhance microbial diversity.

Your microbiome is an ecosystem, not a collection of individual bacteria. The goal isn't good bacteria versus bad bacteria — it is balance, diversity and function.

Microstep — one small action to start today

Eat — add one new plant-based food today; your microbiome thrives on diversity. **Move** — a ten-minute walk increases microbial diversity. **Track** — notice energy, bloating and mood today; changes take weeks to show, but you are building awareness of your baseline. Microbiome repair is a marathon, not a sprint — small, consistent changes compound.

NEED SUPPORT?

Questions? consultant@sarahanticich.co.nz · executiveframe.co.nz — and bring this sheet to your next appointment if you would like to talk it through.

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