

# Frequently Asked Questions

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About Gut Microbiome Test

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Q: What is the gut microbiome?**

A: The gut microbiome refers to the community of trillions of microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, viruses) living in your digestive tract. These microbes play key roles in digestion, immunity, metabolism, and even mental health.

**Q: Why should I test my gut microbiome?**

A: Testing helps uncover:

- Imbalances in gut bacteria
- Causes of bloating, constipation, or IBS
- Links to fatigue, skin issues, or mood swings
- Food intolerances, poor immunity, or nutrient deficiencies

It helps personalize nutrition and lifestyle interventions.

**Q: How is the test performed?**

A: The test is a non-invasive stool sample collected at home using a provided kit. The sample is then sent to a lab for DNA-based microbial analysis.

**Q: Is the test painful or risky?**

A: No. It is completely safe and non-invasive. You only collect a small amount of stool using a sterile swab.

**Q: What does the test measure?**

A: It analyzes:

- Bacterial diversity and balance
- Presence of good vs. harmful bacteria
- Inflammatory markers
- Digestion capacity for fiber, fat, protein, carbs
- Functions like immunity, vitamin production, and metabolism

**Q: How accurate is the gut microbiome test?**

A: DNA sequencing (often 16S rRNA or NGS) offers high-resolution and accurate identification of bacteria down to the genus or species level.

**Q: Who should consider this test?**

A: Anyone with:

- Digestive discomfort (bloating, IBS, constipation)
- Autoimmune or inflammatory conditions
- Food sensitivities or intolerances
- Chronic fatigue, brain fog, or skin problems
- Interest in improving guts and overall health

**Q: How often should I take this test?**

A: Generally, once every 6–12 months is sufficient, unless under a therapeutic plan that requires close tracking.

**Q: Can I take probiotics or antibiotics before the test?**

A: Avoid probiotics for at least **2–5 days** before testing. Avoid antibiotics for **2–4 weeks**, as they may affect the accuracy of your results. Follow the specific instructions provided in your test kit for best results.

**Q: Can the results help me choose the right diet?**

A: Yes. Your report will include:

- Food recommendations
  - Prebiotic and probiotic suggestions
  - Diet guidance based on your microbiome composition
- It supports personalization of your nutrition and lifestyle

**Q: Can this test detect parasites or infections?**

A: Not usually. This test is focused on bacterial DNA. For detecting parasites or acute infections, consult your doctor for clinical stool tests.

**Q: How long do results take?**

A: Results are typically delivered within 3 to 4 weeks, depending on the laboratory and logistics.

**Q: What does the test involve?**

A: We offer an analysis that covers nearly the entire spectrum of bacteria that live in the gut. Given that our work is DNA-based, the resulting analysis is very deep and precise. The areas we analyse and interpret include the following: The diversity of intestinal bacteria, proteobacteria, immune strength, immune regulation, the body's ability to digest foods (with regard to proteins, fats, carbohydrates), microbe-associated intolerances and allergies, indicators of inflammation and constipation, as well as sleep and general emotional state. Furthermore, we analyse the bacterial ratio responsible for calorie utilisation (here, the ratio of Firmicutes to Bacteroidetes). This allows us to determine whether you are more inclined to gain or lose weight. In addition to all these results of analysis, you'll also receive individual recommendations on how you can improve certain areas and help any missing bacteria to (re)colonise in your gut.

**Q: Can viruses, parasites, fungi and other substances also be detected?**

A: First of all, it is important to understand that INTEST.pro cannot (yet) be classified as a medical product but rather falls into the category of lifestyle product. This means that we do not provide our customers with suggestions for therapy, but rather recommendations for action. According to German law, only authorised medical devices and medical practitioners are allowed to offer diagnosis and treatment. For this reason, we are not allowed to detect any parasites or viruses in our assessments to date. Fungi (which, as with bacteria, come in both harmful and beneficial forms) will be integrated into the analysis at a later stage. INTEST.pro strictly involves microbiome analysis, during which substances are not detected.

**Q: Can I use the test on my young child?**

A: INTEST.pro is designed for people aged 15 and over. From this age onwards, the human microbiota is considered fully grown. For younger ages, the interpretation must be different, i.e. other reference values must be applied. BIOMES is due to launch an intestinal flora analysis specifically for children in the near future.

**Q: When should I send in my stool sample – when I’m experiencing symptoms or when I’m symptom-free?**

A: Profiling your intestinal microbiota makes sense, especially when there are complaints. But even if there aren’t any complaints, it’s a good way to understand yourself and your state of health. It offers a snapshot and says a lot about the current health of your guts and your general well-being. In the long term, a sub-optimal lifestyle and nutrition can lead to intestinal complaints, immune deficiencies, intolerances and even more serious issues, such as allergies and chronic intestinal diseases. It is advisable to perform one or more follow-up tests to really detect any change.

**Q: Will medications or food supplements affect my results?**

A: Yes. Please always state which medicines, antibiotics and probiotics you are taking when you want to carry out an analysis. This plays an important role in the assessment, as it influences your microbiome.

**Q: I have been taking antibiotics recently. Will an analysis then be useful or meaningful at all?**

A: INTEST.pro always has the same informative value and can be applied at any time. The microbiota, i.e. the composition of all the microorganisms in our guts, is constantly changing, just not to such an extent that we notice it immediately. We can see which bacteria are present in your gut and in what ratio. This allows us to draw conclusions about your intestinal health. It is correct that antibiotics have quite an effect on your intestinal flora. They cannot be trained to target specific bacteria and end up killing even the good ones. After a course in antibiotics, we, therefore, recommend enjoying a probiotic and fibre-rich diet, or if you need things to work faster, a probiotic food

supplement such as from our range of analytics-based food supplements. The high-quality bacterial cultures, vitamins and minerals were carefully compiled by BIOMES scientists and are produced in Germany in strict adherence to the highest quality standards. They can be purchased under the BIOM.uniq brand and are recommended on the basis of the INTEST.pro intestinal flora analysis. Working with such a stool analysis only ever provides a snapshot. Therefore, after each analysis, it is a good idea to do a follow-up test to see what progress has been made. We recommend doing this after a period of 4-6 months. An active, varied lifestyle and good nutrition can keep the intestinal flora in balance (which means that there is a sufficient number of beneficial bacteria in the gut).

**Q: How do I take my stool sample?**

A: The INTEST.pro self-test kit contains everything you need, in order to take a stool sample: Using the cotton swab provided, simply dab some stool from the toilet paper and stir it into the solution in the tube provided. There is a white granulate found at the bottom of the tube. A pin-sized amount is quite sufficient. If the amount of stool on the toilet paper is not enough, simply try to collect the stool another way and take a swab. Please ensure that the cotton swab does not come into contact with toilet water or other utensils. Once this is done, simply put the tube into the enclosed stamped envelope, which you then send to our laboratory.

**Q: My stool is quite firm. I can't wipe anything off the piece of toilet paper. How should I take my sample?**

A: If you can't wipe a sample off the toilet paper, try to catch the stool in another way, such as by using a chamber pot or a sheet of plastic over the toilet. Make sure that the stool and the cotton swab do not come into contact with anything else, in order to ensure that the result is not falsified.

**Q: How long can my sample be used after being taken / transport?**

A: Thanks to the use of a DNA-stabilising solution, the DNA in your intestinal bacteria remains preserved and can be assessed for up to approx. 2 years, even with slight temperature fluctuations. The tube containing the sample is also sturdy and should survive shipping unscathed.

**Q: Can I also save the unused kit and use it at a later date?**

A: The all-important DNA-stabilising solution found in sample tubes can be used for up to 2 years. This means that the kit can be stored for this maximum amount of time after receiving receipt. You can also take the sample at a later date and then send it in to our laboratory.

**Q: What happens to my stool sample in the laboratory?**

A: In our laboratory, your sample is analysed for any microorganisms using state-of-the-art, high-throughput sequencing. By tapping into our knowledge base and applying a deep learning algorithm, we interpret your individual intestinal profile and determine how close you are to the healthy comparison group. You'll get information about every bacterium living in your gut and its exact influence on your quality of life.

**Q: Can I also receive my assessment by email or post?**

A: In your assessment area (your dashboard), there is a "PDF report" button located in the bottom-left hand corner. You have the option of creating and printing a short or long version of your report. If you can't find the button, it could be because the zoom setting in your view is too low. For data protection reasons, we are not allowed to send you your report by email as a PDF document. Alternatively, we can send you a hard copy of your report by post.

**Q: When will I receive my results on the dashboard?**

A: The complete analysis process – consisting of several sub-steps – takes 2-4 weeks depending on the sample. As soon as your results are made available in your personal dashboard, we'll notify you by email.

**Q: Can I also combine several probiotics? (NGS probiotics)**

A: A combination of two or more probiotic food supplements from BIOMES is possible. However, in order for the desired microbes to develop in an optimal way, we recommend not taking more than one probiotic at a time. The recommended maximum number of capsules is 2 per day. Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a balanced and varied diet.

**Q: Is it problematic to take medication in addition to probiotics?**

A: There are no known side effects when taken with medication. The recommended daily intake amount should not be exceeded. Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a balanced and varied diet.

**Q: How long do I have to take a probiotic, in order to feel improvement?**

A: Maintaining a healthy intestinal flora is a long-term endeavour. Probiotic nutrition (and potentially the use of food supplements) can lead to noticeable improvements in some people after just a few weeks, while in others this may only be after several weeks or months. It is important to continuously maintain a healthy lifestyle and diet, in order to create the best conditions for beneficial bacteria in the gut. The optimal prerequisite for stable intestinal flora is a varied, balanced probiotic diet in combination with a healthy lifestyle that includes plenty of exercise, sufficient regeneration phases and limited stress.