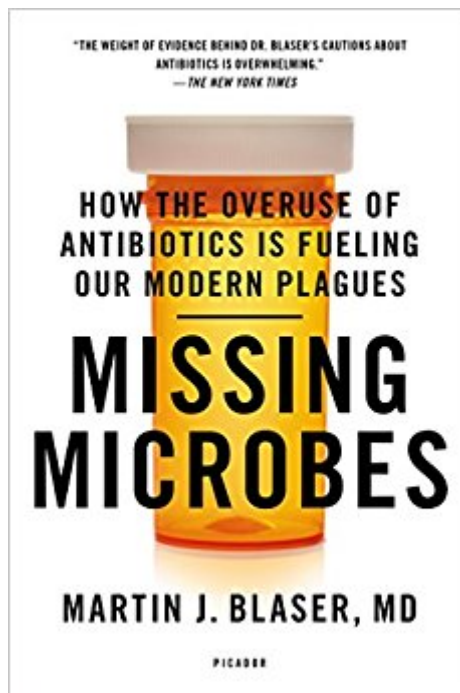




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# Missing Microbes: How The Overuse Of Antibiotics Is Fueling Our Modern Plagues



## Synopsis

"Missing Microbes" presents a surprisingly clear perspective on a complex problem."--"The Philadelphia Inquirer" "In "Missing Microbes," Dr. Martin J. Blaser invites us into the wilds of the human microbiome, where for hundreds of thousands of years bacterial and human cells have existed in a peaceful symbiosis that is responsible for the equilibrium and health of our bodies. Now this invisible Eden is under assault from our overreliance on medical advances including antibiotics and caesarian sections, threatening the extinction of our irreplaceable microbes and leading to severe health consequences. Taking us into the lab to recount his groundbreaking studies, Blaser not only provides elegant support for his theory, he guides us to what we can do to avoid even more catastrophic health problems in the future.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**\*Starred Review\*** You share your body with a vast population of microorganisms. Ten trillion human cells coexist with 100 trillion bacterial cells. The human microbiome "an elaborate ecology of microbes on us and within us" plays a major role in health, especially immunity and metabolism. But this collection of mostly pacifistic and beneficial species of bacteria that coevolved with human beings is increasingly endangered "by excessive use of antibiotics in humans and farm animals, overutilization of antiseptics and sanitizers, and the rising rate of cesarean sections. Blaser, an infectious-disease expert and researcher at NYU, is convinced that the swelling number of people with obesity, asthma, and esophageal reflux is a consequence of disrupting the microbiome. He

warns that even short-term use of unnecessary antibiotics in children can have long-term implications. Antibiotics have been available for almost 70 years and have saved countless lives. Surprisingly, however, around 70 percent of antibiotics in use are allotted to livestock to promote growth and fatten them up. Human  $\hat{\text{A}}$ -microecology is complex, even paradoxical: the bacteria *Helicobacter pylori* can make folks ill (ulcers and stomach cancer) and keep them well (protection against GERD, asthma, and esophageal cancer). Blaser's *Missing Microbes* is a masterful work of preventive health and superb science writing. --Tony Miksanek --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

$\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  The weight of evidence behind Dr. Blaser's cautions about antibiotics is overwhelming.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • The New York Times  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Missing Microbes presents a surprisingly clear perspective on a complex problem.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • The Philadelphia Inquirer  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  In Missing Microbes, Martin Blaser sounds [an] alarm. He patiently and thoroughly builds a compelling case that the threat of antibiotic overuse goes far beyond resistant infections.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • Nature  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Blaser presents a sensible plan for reclaiming our microbial balance and avoiding calamity both as a society . . . and on an individual level.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • Discover  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Why is it that you are fat, your son has asthma, and your 13-year-old daughter is six feet tall? Dr. Blaser says your bodies are missing vital, beneficial bacteria and I guarantee that after reading this book you will agree. Take a pass on the antibiotics and read Missing Microbes.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • Laurie Garrett, Pulitzer Prize winning writer and Senior Fellow for Global Health at the Council on Foreign Relations  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Dr. Blaser's credibility as a world class scientist and physician makes this exploration of our body's microbial world particularly provocative. Missing Microbes will make you rethink some fundamental ideas about infection. Blaser's gift is to write clearly and to take the reader on a fascinating journey through the paradoxes and insights about the teeming world within us.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • Abraham Verghese MD, author of Cutting for Stone  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Unlike some books on medicine and microbes, Dr. Blaser's doesn't stir up fears of exotic diseases or pandemic  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  'superbugs' resistant to all known drugs. He focuses on a simpler but more profound concern: the damage that modern life inflicts on the vast number of microbes that all of us, even healthy people, carry inside us at all times.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • The Wall Street Journal  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Readable and challenging, Missing Microbes provides a stimulus with which to probe existing dogma.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • Science  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Missing Microbes blazes a new trail.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • The Huffington Post  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  An engrossing examination of the relatively unheralded yet dominant form of life on Earth.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • Publishers Weekly (starred review)  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Blaser's Missing Microbes is a masterful work of preventative health and superb science writing.  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  • Booklist (starred review)  $\hat{\text{A}}$   $\hat{\text{A}}$  Credit Blaser for displaying the wonders and importance of a vast underworld

we are jeopardizing but cannot live without.â

• KirkusâMissing Microbes adds a new frontier towards understanding vastly underappreciated key contributions of the human microbiome to health and human disease. As a world leader in defining the microbiome, Dr. Blaser explains how disturbing its natural balance is affecting common conditions such as obesity and diabetes, long thought of as primarily nutrition and lifestyle related problems. Blaser's carefully and convincingly written book outlines new dimensions that need to be considered in fighting a number of common diseases and in promoting health and well-being.â

• Richard Deckelbaum, Director, Institute of Human Nutrition, Columbia UniversityâIn a world that turns to antibiotics for every infection of the ear, sinuses, or skin, Dr. Blaser makes even the most nervous parent think twice about giving her child these ubiquitous drugs. Dr. Blaser contends that the excessive use of antibiotics--especially in children--is at the root of our most serious emerging modern maladies, from asthma and food allergies to obesity and certain cancers. He walks us through the science behind his theories and examines the duality of microbes, both as essential agents of good health and perpetrators of sickness. At a time when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is campaigning for more judicious use of antibiotics, Dr. Blaser delivers a thoughtful, well-written and compelling case for why doctors need to be more cautious about prescribing these medications and why consumers should consider alternatives before taking them.â

• Nirav R. Shah, MD, MPH, Commissioner of Health, New YorkâI have often wondered why kids today seem to have such a high incidence of asthma, ear infections, allergies, reflux esophagitis and so many other conditions that I rarely saw growing up. This mystery has been solved by the pioneering work of Dr. Marty Blaser and is communicated brilliantly in Missing Microbes. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this book to your own health, the health of your children and grandchildren and to the health of our country. Missing Microbes is truly a must read.â

• Arthur Agatston, author of The South Beach DietâWe live today in a world of modern plagues, defined by the alarming rise of asthma, diabetes, obesity, food allergies, and metabolic disorders. This is no accident, argues Dr. Blaser, the renowned medical researcher: the common link being the destruction of vital bacteria through the overuse of broad-spectrum antibiotics. Missing Microbes is science writing at its very best--crisply argued and beautifully written, with stunning insights about the human microbiome and workable solutions to an urgent global crisis.â

• David M. Oshinsky, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Polio: An American Story

This book has good chapters on various aspects of gut biome issues and antibiotics. The author gives clear explanations and has extensive expertise in the field. One thing that is slightly

misleading, though the major issues are covered in a general manner a lot of the specifics are focussed on *Helicobacter Pylori*, which is a stomach centered bacteria rather than something from lower down. I was expecting more coverage of the range of bacteria in the intestinal biome. This in no way detracts from the quality of the book as some of the issues with *H. Pylori* seems to be those of the general intestinal biome also. Overall there is quite a wide and big picture view as well as the focus on *H Pylori* case studies. For example the author mentions work on Caesarian birth inoculation and other clean hypothesis issues. The case studies themselves are presented in a good scientific manner with descriptions of the protocols and evidence for the findings. Also this book made me want to go work with Dr. Blaser on studies like the one he described. Important work.

This is a great book, taking readers into the cool new science of the microbiome. I liked the first-hand accounts Blaser gives of his research, especially how he starts the book with describing *Helicobacter pylori* and other scientists' assumptions that this was always a "bad" microbe. I think he's taken some flak for his hypothesis that antibiotics lies at the root of many chronic and autoimmune conditions, but it's certainly reasonable to think that exterminating the bacterial communities (and others) indigenous to our bodies will have an effect, and probably not a good one. I liked how he explained the basic differences between viruses and bacteria and why an antibiotic effective against bacteria can't do squat to get rid of a virus. The latter half of the book, in which Blaser shares his research on *H. pylori* is particularly intriguing. This bacterium might be good for us early in life, but not so good as we move into adulthood (it puts a person at risk of stomach cancer). A really good overview of the human microbiome well worth your time.

Absolutely one of the most interesting books I have ever read. Would highly recommend to someone looking for a gift for a person with a budding interest in microbiology. Although the core concepts are about a technical subject, the book is written in a way that would be easy for most readers to process with little to no background knowledge of microbiology. Each bit of new information is preceded by, and then told in conjunction with, an anecdotal story by the author, which helps to give context to each new idea. I really enjoyed and admired how he was able to include scientific information with interesting storytelling in a very cohesive manner.

Martin J Blaser has spent his life studying microbiological diseases and the complex ecology of gut bacteria. In this book he explains his concerns about changing the micro flora mostly through the

use and abuse of antibiotics. His humility that we may unnecessarily extinct some bacteria and select for antibiotic resistance in the remaining gut population and the problems this may lead to is deeply striking. The author writes well and comes across as a good person, somebody worth knowing, someone who has made the world a better place (for humans, bacteria, and others). I know little about microbiology but easily understood what he was saying, and found his world interesting, important, and entertaining. My advice is to take the time to read this book.

As more evidenced is collected tying the bacteria that make up 90% of us to our health, more disorders will be treated with selected bacteria. Dr. Blaser's book is a good place to start for anyone wanting to learn more. In it he outlines the roles our resident microbiome play in our well-being and how rampant use of antibiotics have jeopardized this situation. I highly recommend this book for everyone interested in their health.

Dr. Blaser does a fantastic job on the ways we are ruining our microbiomes every day we live and the ways we can correct ourselves. Very interesting read and it's always good to find out how to make our lives better and healthier. He is very funny and makes reading the book enjoyable.

Everyone who has taken antibiotics should read this remarkable book. If only I had know! My grown up children may manage to protect their children as I did not. My son has diabetes which probably could have been avoided if he had not been given antibiotics so often in childhood.

Excellent book on antibiotic overuse and its unknown consequences as well as a very in depth microbiome primer. Blaser presents much of his own data that will likely be new for most readers. If he is not quite sure why a certain outcome is occurring he doesn't try to act like he does or draw conclusions not supported by data. Absolutely eye opening. Health care professionals may find some parts obvious/repetitive in the first few chapters but stick with it.

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