

# How Does Your Gut Affect Your Skin?

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**David Stouder:** Welcome to the Humanized podcast. It's all about personalizing your health. I'm your guest host today, Dave Stouder. Rebekah Kelley will be back with us next week. Now, today we're talking with nurse practitioner, Julie Davey. We've been having a lot of good podcasts. We've really been digging in to the gut. You know, people will say, oh, well, all health and probably all negative conditions begin in the gut. Well, we've been doing a lot of podcasts with Julie to really explore the connection so that's a real thing for you, and not just a statement somebody says. So our topic today is, How Does the Gut Affect Your Skin? Now, before I introduce Julie, I want to remind you, you can subscribe to all of our podcasts. We've got videos, audios, even transcripts. And I'd like to thank our lead sponsor, Village Green Apothecary, who makes all this possible.

Now, Julie Davey is a nurse practitioner with over 25 years of experience. She is passionate about educating others on the power of food and natural medicine to heal the body. Her clinical practice focuses primarily on GI health, where she utilizes specialty lab testing to help clients get to the root of their symptoms. She creates tailored protocols and empowers individuals with the necessary tools to live a healthy and vibrant life.

Julie, welcome back to Humanized Health.

**Julie Davey:** Thank you so much for having me. I always enjoy these conversations. I'm excited about this topic today because it is a big one that a lot of people really struggle with.

**David Stouder:** Well, yes. When people come in with different skin issues, whether it's psoriasis, eczema, acne, things like that, they're pretty much always looking for topical. You know, what can I rub on it to make it feel better? And that's fine. But I find when I start to tell people, well, we might want to look at your gut, your liver, your microbiome, things like that, they're kind of looking at me like, well, what does that have to do with it?

So is there a link between the gut and your skin health? And, and I know you're going to say yes, because that's the topic of our podcast, but can you dig in and explain it a little bit?

**Julie Davey:** Yeah, absolutely. One thing that came to mind as you were just introducing the topic is, everybody wants their skin to look good, right? I mean, that's like one of the first things that people see about us. And so you can become very self-conscious sometimes, if your skin maybe doesn't look good, or maybe if you have skin rashes or breakouts or things like that.

So, you are absolutely right. What we mostly, usually what people are looking for, and also what they get if they're going the conventional route is some type of topical. And that is sort of our conventional medicine approach, a band-aid approach because we're treating the symptoms, really, not the underlying root cause of the condition.

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And sometimes some of the topicals that we get, I mean, they can be harmful, especially long term. So, anytime we can get to the root of the problem and address that, that's where we're going to get the best results, and especially long-term results.

So, there is something called the gut-skin axis. You may be somewhat familiar with this type of concept if you've heard of the gut-brain axis. And this is just basically saying that the gut and the skin, and the gut and the brain, are highly connected. So this concept of the gut-skin axis is that relationship between gut health and the skin. So when our gut is out of balance, the skin can become really irritated. So why does that happen? Well, you maybe have also heard that a huge majority, up to 80 percent of your immune system, is sort of housed or lives in your gut lining. So, because of that, when our gut becomes irritated, it starts to release these things called pro-inflammatory cytokines, and they are released throughout the whole body. So that turns on this massive inflammation in the body. And one of the first and biggest ways that we often see that is through our skin. So think about it like this. Our skin is our largest organ, and when things are going on inside the body, and our body is always trying to bring things into balance and detox and get rid of these things that are irritating our gut and our overall system, it shows up in the skin.

So basically, all that's to say, anything that irritates the lining of the gut can cause your skin to become inflamed, really your whole body, but it will manifest often in the skin. So what would be some of those things? This would be things like food sensitivities, alcohol, certain medications like antibiotics. Our modern or Standard American Diet that has a lot of additives and artificial coloring, chemicals, pesticides. Diets that are high in sugar, which is Standard American Diet, inflammatory oils. So all of those things are very irritating to the gut lining and can turn on this massive inflammation in the body.

And then we also have to consider things like pathogens, like bad pathogens that are overgrown, specific bacteria or parasites or candida. So any of those things that are creating this inflammatory response will often manifest first in the skin.

**David Stouder:** So, I have a couple questions. I think one of the things that fools people... like you mentioned food sensitivities. And yeah, there's things like you eat an orange and you break out in hives, and you go, oh, I can't eat oranges. But when it comes to some of these things like gluten and maybe dairy, is it true that these reactions are sort of later, like you can eat a lot of bread and then you have sinus issues days later. Or your skin's always irritated, so it's not like you eat bread and break out in eczema. So is that the case to where we may be thinking, oh, gluten doesn't bother me. But, it may be.

**Julie Davey:** Yes. I love that you brought that up. So, I'll just quickly break down the difference between food allergies, food sensitivities, and food intolerances, because that's really what you're referring to.

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So, a food allergy is, if you have a true allergic response to a food, it's typically immediate. So that's like people who, a lot of times it's an anaphylactic reaction. People who have to carry EpiPens who are like, highly allergic to peanuts, let's say. Okay, so that's pretty easy to figure out, right? It's an immediate reaction.

So, then there are food sensitivities. This is where it becomes more tricky because a food sensitivity can actually occur up to 3 days after ingesting that food. So how hard is it to connect? I mean, it's almost impossible to connect the dots. If you, to your example, David, if you ingested some gluten and it caused you to have some sinus congestion, but that didn't occur until 2 or 3 days later, you're not going to think it was the gluten. I mean, nobody's really going to, most of the time, be able to put that little puzzle together. So that's what food sensitivities look like. It still is an antibody reaction, but it can be delayed.

And then there are food intolerances. And food intolerances are things like, the one you'd be most familiar with is probably lactose intolerance. You eat some type of dairy and you develop, let's say, immediate stomach cramping or pains or things like that. It's not an allergy in the sense of, you're breaking out in hives, or you have an anaphylactic reaction. It's more of, usually, like a discomfort in the GI system because your body's not processing it well. So that would be more of a food intolerance.

So those are kind of the three categories of reactions to foods.

**David Stouder:** And I just thought of something too, for those people that have had their guts degrade to where they have like constant reflux and things, well, they would be, to me, candidates for skin problems. Not everybody, but that would almost guarantee that your gut is not working properly.

**Julie Davey:** Yeah, especially if you do have frequent or regular gastrointestinal symptoms. We're not talking about, oh, I get bloated after I eat some beans and that's the only time. Well, that's kind of like a normal reaction that can happen. We're talking like, you're getting bloated after every meal, or reflux, or you're constipated on a regular basis. Anything like that going on in the digestive system that is regular or reoccurring, then yes, there is something off balance, and you really just need to investigate further.

**David Stouder:** Okay. Before I ask you to give us some tips on what we might do if we suspect our skin issue is related to gut issues, would we be talking about, I'll just put it this way, things that itch like psoriasis, eczema, rashes, and also things like boils or acne or that kind of thing? So it could be any kind of skin inflammation. Is that correct?

**Julie Davey:** Yes, you're correct. So the things that we would most commonly see, it could be just a skin rash or breakout, we see a lot of acne, eczema, psoriasis, also rosacea is another one. And actually, that's one that people don't think about a lot, but I've worked with several clients

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who, that's what they came to me for is, they had rosacea that, they'd been to multiple dermatologists, can't really get it under control. And there was actually a research study, fairly recent, that showed a good connection between rosacea and small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, or SIBO. So they found that these patients with rosacea were 10 times more likely to have SIBO compared to those who didn't have rosacea. And when their SIBO was treated, there was in almost everyone, complete regression of the rosacea. So that's a really good example.

There were also similar findings in other studies around inflammatory bowel disease. So things like Crohn's or ulcerative colitis, those patients are up to 30 percent more likely to have skin conditions.

Also celiac patients. Actually people who have celiac disease... So celiac disease is, if you're not familiar with that, is basically an autoimmune disease. It's an immune reaction to eating gluten. It's basically like an allergy to gluten, so to speak. But they can develop a specific skin condition called dermatitis herpetiformis. And that is just basically, they develop this rash that itches very intensely, and it's just due to the body's over-response, their immune system sort of just going into overdrive as it's reacting to the gluten.

So those are just some examples. But really, it could be anywhere across the board from acne, rash, eczema, psoriasis, rosacea, any of those things.

**David Stouder:** All right. Now, when it comes down to what we can do, it's probably a great idea, and you've talked in previous podcasts about different kinds of gut tests you can do. And I would just say this – this is not something your conventional physician does. So, they say, oh, your liver numbers are okay, or this and that. That's fine to check those things, but we're talking about some really deep dives into your microbiome and things like that. So sometimes testing is necessary. Other times you can, I bet you can look at somebody and sort of figure out that this is probably the problem.

But what about, now what are some of the tools? Obviously, maybe eliminating some things from our diet that are the common triggers, like gluten and dairy and things like that. But what are some of the nutritional tools that people would want to think about using to help restore gut integrity?

**Julie Davey:** Yeah, so I think that's a great question. So if you are having any of these skin issues that we mentioned, first and foremost, you need to really look at your overall what I call foundational habits. So, diet being a big one. So, what does your diet look like? I mean, are you going through the drive-thru every day or multiple times a week? Are you eating a lot of highly inflammatory foods that have a lot of sugar and processed oils and chemicals and toxins in them? Well, that's one way that you can clean that up, you know, work to clean that up. Even if



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it means you only go through a drive-thru once this week instead of five times. You know, that's so much better.

So taking those small baby steps, don't think that you have to, just all of a sudden, okay, I have to change all these things. That's too overwhelming. You have to work one step at a time, really, I think to maintain good, healthy habits and to really build on those habits, so that it doesn't seem so overwhelming.

But yes. Gluten would be one that I would certainly recommend eliminating because that does cause a lot of skin issues for people. Dairy would be another one, sugar for sure, and I mean, just processed foods in general. So just eating more whole, \*real\* foods, meat, fruits, vegetables, good complex carbs, like that type of thing.

So, diet is a huge one. Drinking plenty of water. Our skin needs hydration. So that's another big one, and that's going to help you really detox. So again, some of these things can be just signs of your body trying to get these toxins out, basically. And so drinking plenty of water, at least half your body weight in ounces per day, will be great. So if you drink a lot of sodas, start to just cut out one each day and add a glass of water. And then you'll see that you feel so much better. You have more energy. You can think clearer, your skin will start to look better. If you are taking, perhaps, some prescription medications, maybe take a look at those and see, because they could be irritating the gut lining. Now you would want to talk with your medical provider on that. If that speaks to you, maybe you're on a lot of medications you need to talk to them about possibly coming off of.

And then, I would say for sure, I'm glad that you mentioned testing because, if you're doing these foundational things, especially, and you're still having issues, then you're kind of just shooting in the dark and probably taking a band-aid approach if you're just getting topicals. Getting tested, I know it can be expensive. Trust me, I was there myself 5 or 6 years ago. And it was the best thing that I ever did. Because otherwise you're just spending money on all of these other things, trying to figure out or trying to put band-aids on the problem and you're not getting to the root of the problem. So you'll get there a lot faster and you'll heal your body for good if you can get that information that you really need.

**David Stouder:** All right. Well, I like what you said. In general, you could clean up your diet, you could drink water, do some of these basic things and just see if that takes care of it. And then if it isn't, you might have a deeper issue where testing would be well worth it. I mean, I think it's always worth it to test, but sometimes you can, as you said...

And I'll close with just your opinion on this question. I've had a couple people say that, besides diet, as far as supplements, the kind of anchors to a good digestion is enzymatic strength and a good microbiome. So generally, I say typically a good probiotic and digestive enzymes would typically help most people. Would that be...?

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**Julie Davey:** Yes, absolutely. I mean, you aren't going to cause any harm by doing those things and they can be very helpful. So, yes.

**David Stouder:** All right. Well, good. I hope those of you out there that are maybe suffering a little bit from skin issues... And you know, I used to make a joke. I said I've just become a skin doctor and blah, blah, blah, blah, -itis, blah, blah, blah, blah, cortisol. And I'm being a little silly, but my point is, just using sort of knock your immune system in the skin down a little bit, and it can get rid of the itch, but it's not a solution. As Julie Davey has said, it's a band-aid. And so that's fine, get rid of your itch any way you can. But in the meantime, why not address the underlying issues?

Well, that was great, Julie. Thank you for being on the program. And we want you to know now, Julie's got a great website and I'm going to tell you what it is. Julie Ann Wellness, and that's J-U-L-I-E-A-N-N without the "e" [wellness.com](http://wellness.com). And I'll remind you to subscribe and get access to all the Humanized videos and audios and podcasts and transcriptions, with a lot of good thought leaders, on Humanized Health. So Julie, thanks again for being on the program. We look forward to having you back shortly, and we'll keep digging into these skin issues.

**Julie Davey:** Thank you so much.