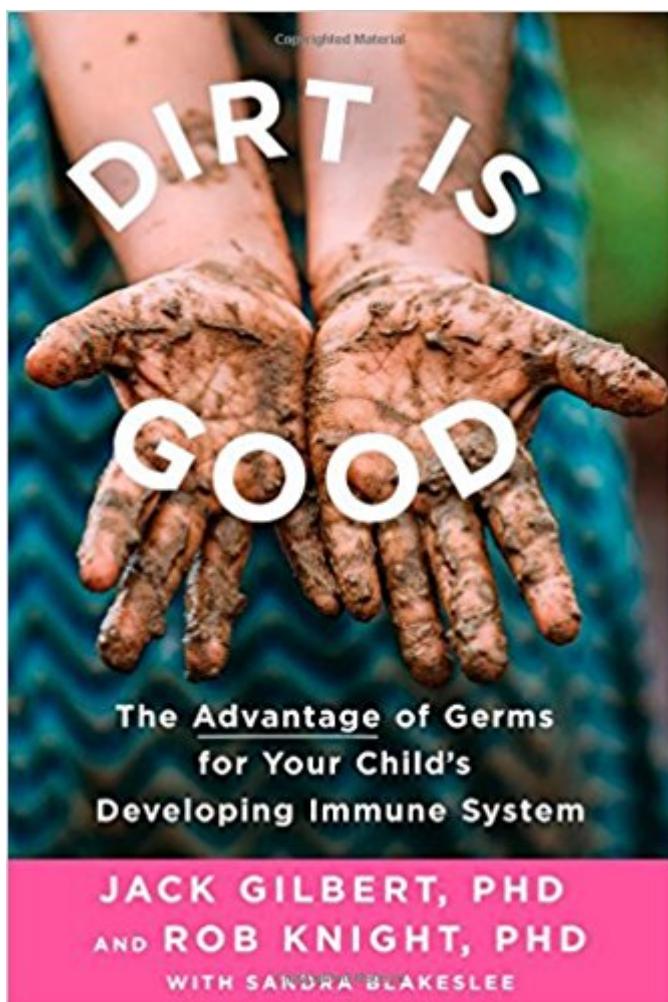


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# Dirt Is Good: The Advantage Of Germs For Your Child's Developing Immune System



## Synopsis

From two of the world's top scientists and one of the world's top science writers (all parents), *Dirt Is Good* is a q&a-based guide to everything you need to know about kids & germs. "Is it OK for my child to eat dirt?" That's just one of the many questions authors Jack Gilbert and Rob Knight are bombarded with every week from parents all over the world. They've heard everything from "My two-year-old gets constant ear infections. Should I give her antibiotics? Or probiotics?" to "I heard that my son's asthma was caused by a lack of microbial exposure. Is this true, and if so what can I do about it now?" Google these questions, and you'll be overwhelmed with answers. The internet is rife with speculation and misinformation about the risks and benefits of what most parents think of as simply germs, but which scientists now call the microbiome: the combined activity of all the tiny organisms inside our bodies and the surrounding environment that have an enormous impact on our health and well-being. Who better to turn to for answers than Drs. Gilbert and Knight, two of the top scientists leading the investigation into the microbiome—an investigation that is producing fascinating discoveries and bringing answers to parents who want to do the best for their young children. *Dirt Is Good* is a comprehensive, authoritative, accessible guide you've been searching for.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A deeply informed, fascinating and fun guide for parents, healthcare professionals and anyone else interested in the latest microbiome research, from two of the nation's leading

researchers. • Ted Anton, Professor of English at DePaul University and author of *Planet of Microbes: The Perils and Potential of Earth's Essential Life Forms*.

JACK GILBERT, PhD is a Professor of Surgery at the University of Chicago and Director of the Microbiome Institute. ROB KNIGHT, PhD is Professor of Pediatrics and Computer Science & Engineering and Director of the Center for Microbiome Innovation at the University of California, San Diego. He is co-founder of the Earth Microbiome Project and American Gut. Rob is the coauthor of *Follow Your Gut* and *Dirt is Good*. SANDRA BLAKESLEE has worked for the New York Times for nearly 45 years, winning multiple journalism awards.

This book describes the microbiome and how it plays a role in your life. Its Q&A style is perfect for helping parents raise their children. It gives a lot of advice but also will let you know the areas in which a lot more experiments need to be done. Fantastic book.

If you have kids or if you just plan to have them, it's a must read for a better understanding on how we can raise a healthier generation via basic knowledge about our microbiome! Love this book and its simple way explaining complex things. Bravo!!!

After reading this book, I feel like Grandma had it right all along and my generation worries too much; I feel like it's ok for my kids to be kids. This book explains and answers so many questions about cleanliness and bacteria. It's also very well layed-out and an easy read.

Good info

I love the format of this book! Instead of long, dry chapters on germs, it is written in question and answer format. Here you will find all the questions that moms, especially new moms, want the answers to regarding germs and diseases caused by germs. Examples include, "Should I give my child probiotics if he has diarrhea?" "Am I keeping my house too clean? Too dirty? How often should I clean the bathroom?" "Should I use antibacterial soaps? Hand sanitizers?" As a kindergarten teacher, I am always concerned about germs. One of my student's parents told me a few years ago that she didn't worry about her younger child like she did the older one because she knew more now. As a cancer doctor at a major cancer hospital, she said she had learned that the more germs little kids encounter now, the lower their chances of getting childhood leukemia. As a result of

reading this book I have changed one thing in my classroom routine . . . I now make time for my students to wash their hands before lunch instead of using hand sanitizer (see page 175).

While the authors are much more gentle in making the point, the fact of the matter is that there has been (and continues to be) a hysterical movement permeating the social fabric that we need to be protected from everything. This has resulted in the dynamic where we are essentially shamed into wrapping our kids and ourselves in bubble wrap in a sanitary, sterile bubble because the world is such a horrific place. Perhaps this is no more evident in the social media shrill regarding germs. According to this hysterical line of thinking, "ALL GERMS ARE BAD!" Well, this is, in fact, not true. In fact, it is quite the opposite and the "war against germs" may result in humanity being less healthy and less safe in the long term (that this is both a medical "thing" as well as a political/social phenomenon is clear; C.S. Lewis did a marvelous job of describing the political/social angle in *The Abolition of Man*, but I digress...). Anyway, this book joins a growing number of books trying to get us better focused, oriented, and sensible (such as another I really liked, *The Good Gut: Taking Control of Your Weight, Your Mood, and Your Long-term Health*, or one that I'm looking forward to reading next, *Let Them Eat Dirt: Saving Your Child from an Oversanitized World*). I get it; no one wants to see their child find in danger and we reflexively try to protect our kids (and ourselves) even if it means long-term problems. In other words, by winning the tactical fight we lose the strategic victory (in my opinion, this is kind of what happened with chicken pox; turns out childhood exposure to chicken pox also conferred "re-immunization" on the adults taking care of them. No surprise then that the suppression of a relatively benign childhood illness (chicken pox) has resulted in the "emergence" of a more serious problem, shingles. But again, I digress..., back to the book). I'm not a huge fan of the format (the book reads more like an extended info pamphlet). But it certainly makes the info very accessible. The best thing I can do in this review is encourage the prospective reader to take a look at the book's Table of Contents using 's "Look Inside" feature and see if the questions the authors answer interest. In the end, I must emphasize that any dislike I have for the presentation format in no way lessened the intellectual and emotional impact the book had on me. In a word, FANTASTIC. Turns out your grandmother was more or less correct: everybody needs to eat a peck of dirt before they die (especially if one wants to die later than earlier!). So help others to live longer; help turn the tide against "germ hysteria" by getting this book, reading this book, buying another copy or two to lend out, and then sharing this book. It's that good. 5 stars. P.S. It was more than a bit ironic that on the day I started reading this book the local news station was trumpeting a "news alert" that it was unsafe for one's children to play in the sand at the

beach! Oh, boy.

This is an easy read and exceptionally well written book by two PHD " Research Scientists" Its format is Question and Answer and is broad in its review and descriptions of the importance of our Human Microbiome "the Community of friendly bacteria" that populate the human body and are so vitally important to a babies developing system. There is a noteworthy and excellent review about breast feeding as it relates to the positive transfer of microbes not just as it relates to nutrition....the book and authors speak to the value and importance of exposing children to a diverse bacterial world. This is written in an understandable layman's language, not science jargon, the authors quote both factual data and also speak to when research/data is not yet available or proven. I think grandparents and friends alike would go along way to help expecting parents by giving them a copy of this understandable and insightful book,it is sure to help address many of their early questions. The Chapter headings are from Pregnancy thru childbirth, breastfeeding, antibiotics/probiotics speaking to early child diets,Gut Microbes, vaccines, et al, this book even looks to address what conditions may be impacting food allergies and food sensitivities. I give this book an A+ for its format, its thoughtful and insightful content.... a sure to be appreciated book. Kudos to the Authors

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