

RELEASED: Friday 13 October 2017

Gut Revolution: A Catalyst Special **2-part special from Tuesday 17 October, 8.30pm on ABC & ABC iview**



Who is really in the driver's seat – your brain or your gut bugs?

Is your mood influencing your gastrointestinal health – or is it the other way around?

Can a simple nutritional intervention succeed where modern medicine has little to offer?

Is the secret to our physical and mental health hidden in our poo?

Gut Revolution, seeks to sort the facts from the faeces in a two-part observational series that follows two people with debilitating gut issues on their quest for better health. Could changing their gut bugs turn their health around in just six weeks?

Stepping up for the challenge is Garry, a former *Biggest Loser* contestant now desperate to stop his yoyo dieting cycle before diabetes sets in, as well as young mum Melissa, who is battling hourly bouts of irritable bowel syndrome.

Their journey starts and ends with a poo sample revealing the unique bacterial fingerprint that makes up each of their individual gut microbiomes – and charts their transformational gut odyssey over time.

Supporting them on their quest to harness the hidden power of their gut flora is nutrition scientist, Dr Joanna McMillan. She will design a specialised diet for each of them on the advice of her microbiome 'brains trust'; a cross-disciplinary team comprised of Professor Felice Jacka, a specialist in the emerging area of the mind-gut axis, leading gastroenterologist, Professor Rupert Leong, and gut microbiome microbiologist, Associate Professor Andrew Holmes.

Working together for the first time, Joanna and her specialist brains trust will carefully consider the latest mind, body, and gut science as they pool their experience to try and change their volunteer participants' lives – and gut bugs – for the better.

In the **first episode, screening Tuesday 17 October, 8.30pm on ABC & ABC iview**, 26-year-old mother of two Melissa has been battling a painful case of irritable bowel syndrome for the past two years. She's seen all the doctors and had all the investigations but no one has been able to help her. Can the latest science driving the ***Gut Revolution*** provide any answers? We follow Melissa over her transformational six-week journey as our team of experts design an intervention that literally changes her life.

In the **second episode, screening Tuesday 24 October, 8.30pm on ABC & ABC iview**, Garry has tried it all to lose weight, from *The Biggest Loser* to meal replacement shakes. And despite temporary victories, the kilos always pile back on. Are Garry's gut bacteria keeping him fat and can the **Gut Revolution** help him? Nutrition scientist Dr Joanna McMillan and her team of experts explore new and controversial science that suggests gut bacteria might just be affecting our appetites and moods.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Dr Joanna McMillan, originally hails from Scotland, but, came to Australia in 1999, where she won a scholarship to complete her PhD in Nutritional Science at The University of Sydney. As a dietitian and former fitness instructor, a passion drives her to promote the influence that diet and lifestyle have on our health and wellbeing. As a published author and international presenter, Joanna advocates for nutrition and health on our TV screens and tablets.

Associate Professor Andrew Holmes is a world leading microbiologist and researcher, Associate Professor Holmes is leading the Gut Microbiome project at the Charles Perkins Centre at Sydney University. He and his multi-disciplinary team of collaborators are discovering the influence our gut microorganisms have over our metabolism, immune and nervous systems, and food choices. Their mission is to get to the guts of weight control and develop personalised lifestyle interventions that will incorporate an individual's unique gut micro-organism profile and make successful weight management more achievable.

Professor Felice Jacka is a research fellow from Deakin University and the Director of the Food and Mood Centre; the only centre in the world specifically focusing on Nutritional Psychiatry research. Her multi-disciplinary team are studying the ways in which what we eat influences our brain, mood, and mental health, including new research on the role of the microbiome. In 2017, she published the results of a randomised control trial of the Mediterranean diet to relieve depression with successful outcomes. Her upcoming research will include clinical trials to further explore the links between the microbiome, diet, and mental health.

Professor Rupert Leong is a specialist gastroenterologist, Director of Endoscopy, and Head of the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Service at Concord Hospital in Sydney. He is also Clinical Professor of Medicine at University of Sydney and UNSW. He regularly treats patients with Irritable Bowel Syndrome and has made a substantial contribution to research with over 120 high quality scientific journal publications. Professor Leong identified that leaky gut was responsible for ongoing bowel symptoms in inflammatory bowel disease patients who have achieved healing of the bowel. This was previously seen in patients having concurrent irritable bowel syndrome.

PRODUCTION: Director / Producer: Marc Radomsky. ABC Head of Factual: Steve Bibb, *Catalyst*
Executive Producer: Aidan Laverty.

#ABCCatalyst

~~*Ice Wars (4x60 minute factual series) is a Northern Pictures production in association with ABC, Screen Australia and Screen NSW. Executive Producers: Sue Clothier, Alex Hodgkinson and Karina Holden. ABC Head of Factual, Steve Bibb.*~~

For further information and to organise interviews - contact:

Bridget Stenhouse, ABC TV Publicity,
02 8333 3847 | 0466 541 642 | stenhouse.bridget@abc.net.au