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## THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY ANNOUNCES *INSIDE YOU*

EXHIBITION INVITES VISITORS TO MEET THEIR MICROBIOME

OPENS JUNE 24, 2017

*Inside You* explores the rapidly evolving science that is revolutionizing how we view human health. Our bodies are home to many trillions of microbes, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other organisms collectively called the human microbiome. In any human, microbial genes outnumber the genes in human DNA by more than 100 to one. This new perspective leads us to look at our bodies not just as individuals, but as entire ecosystems.

Inspired by the popular Museum-created exhibition *The Secret World Inside You*, this new gallery will introduce more visitors to the world of microbes and how they impact our health and well-being. Investigating the human microbiome is a very young science, and researchers are just beginning to understand what constitutes a “normal” microbiome, how it changes over time, and how it affects health and disease. But what is clear is that the effects of the microbiome on its human host are profound and multifaceted – and could play an important role in common health problems like allergies, asthma, obesity, and even anxiety and depression.

Visitors will discover where microbes live in, on, and around them: Microbes thrive on your skin, in your mouth, and also in your gastrointestinal tract, home to your body’s densest and most diverse microbial community – about 100 trillion bacteria, more than all the stars in the Milky Way. Engaging graphics detail how microbes aid digestion, influence your immune system, and help fight harmful microbes. You’ll find out how we acquire our microbiome and how it is shaped by the foods we eat and the environment we live in. There will also be a video featuring some of the scientists who are breaking new ground in microbiome research.

How do your interactions with microbes – from who you touch and what you wear to the pets you keep – influence your health? In what ways can your microbiome be said to be its own

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organ? And is it possible that the state of the bacteria in your gut plays a role in your mental health? *Inside You* dives into these intriguing and other profound questions.

*Inside You* at the American Museum of Natural History is co-curated by Susan Perkins and Rob DeSalle, curators in the Museum's Division of Invertebrate Zoology and the Sackler Institute for Comparative Genomics. The exhibition will run from June 24, 2017, to June 16, 2019.

#### **AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH.ORG)**

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses 45 permanent exhibition halls, including those in the Rose Center for Earth and Space and the Hayden Planetarium, as well as galleries for temporary exhibitions. It is home to New York State's official memorial to Theodore Roosevelt, a tribute to Roosevelt's enduring legacy of environmental conservation. The Museum's approximately 200 scientists draw on a world-class research collection of more than 34 million artifacts and specimens, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, the Museum grants the Ph.D. degree in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree, the only such program at any museum in the United States. Annual physical attendance has grown to approximately 5 million, and the Museum's exhibitions and Space Shows can be seen in venues on six continents. The Museum's website, digital videos, and apps for mobile devices bring its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions more around the world. Visit [amnh.org](http://amnh.org) for more information.

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