



# Missing Microbes: How the Overuse of Antibiotics Is Fueling Our Modern Plagues

*Martin J. Blaser*

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A critical call to arms about the harmful effects of some of our most revered modern medical practices.

Welcome to the wilds of the microbiome, where for hundreds of thousands of years bacterial and human cells have co-existed in a peaceful symbiosis that is responsible for the equilibrium and health of our bodies. But now this invisible Eden is under assault. Our overreliance on medical advances such as antibiotics and Cesarean sections is threatening the extinction of these irreplaceable microbes and leading to severe health problems.

In *Missing Microbes*, Dr. Martin Blaser goes back to the discovery of antibiotics, which ushered in a golden age of medicine, and traces how our subsequent overuse of these supposed wonder drugs has left its mark on our systems and contributed to the rise of what Blaser calls our modern plagues: obesity, asthma, allergies, diabetes and certain forms of cancer. Blaser's studies suggest that antibiotic use during early childhood poses the greatest risk to long-term health; alarmingly, American children receive on average seventeen courses of antibiotics before they are twenty years old. His studies also suggest that C-sections deprive babies of important contact with their mothers' microbiomes.

Taking us into the lab to explain his groundbreaking studies, Blaser not only provides elegant support for his theories but guides us toward avoiding even more catastrophic health problems in the future.

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