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A new study seeks to determine if living with dogs may have a positive effect on our microbiome.
[Shara Rutberg](#) | Sep 28, 2015

Can kissing your pup have a positive probiotic effect? Researchers hope to find out in a new study.

Scientists with the University of Arizona's new Human-Animal Interaction Research Initiative are exploring whether living with a dog encourages the growth of positive microorganisms in our gut.

"We think dogs might work as probiotics to enhance the health of the bacteria that live in our guts," Charles Raison, MD, principal investigator for the study and a UA professor of psychiatry in the College of Medicine said in a [university release](#). "These bacteria, or 'microbiota,' are increasingly recognized as playing an essential role in our mental and physical health, especially as we age."

"We essentially want to find out, is a dog acting like yogurt in having a probiotic effect?" Kim Kelly, an anthropology doctoral student and one of the primary investigators on the study said in the release. Research supports probiotics beneficial impact on everything from [blood pressure](#) to [bones](#).

Study subjects, aged 50 years and older, will be paired with a dog from the humane society to live in their homes for three months. At the start of the study, and after one, two and three months, researchers will evaluate the human subjects' gut bacteria, diet, physical activity levels and immune function. They'll also look for changes in both the humans' and dogs' emotional well-being.

An earlier study found that parents may have more in common with their dogs than their kids in terms of their microbiome.

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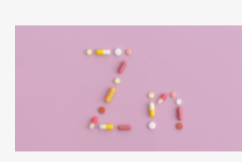
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New Hope research reveals consumers are more ready than ever to return to stores, restaurants and other public venues, even as tidal wave of omicron variant sweeps country
[Rick Polito](#) | Jan 13, 2022

Natural Products Industry Health Monitor, Dec. 16, 2021

As the world emerges, haltingly from COVID-19, new challenges emerge. In this feature, New Hope Network provides an ongoing update on those challenges and the opportunities they hold. Look for the Industry Health Monitor every other Friday to learn the major news that is affecting the natural products market immediately and the less obvious insights that could dictate where the market may struggle or thrive in the months to come.

While the omicron variant may be making previous waves of COVID-19 infections look tame in comparison, there is another "variant" that looks remarkable in New Hope Network's latest consumer research.

We might call it the "oh, whatever" variant as consumers in a survey deployed this week say they are increasingly ready to go on with their lives. Perhaps accepting a common belief that omicron will be mild for them, consumers who were asked how ready they are to participate in public activities showed more willingness to engage in every single category than they were in May and November of 2020. Indeed, the results look very much like a classic stair-step progression.

Normal life, it appears, is not pausing its comeback for omicron.

A short attention span certainly isn't a comorbidity, but it definitely looks like a factor in how willing people are to return to normal life. The results for non-essential shopping stand out, with 70% now ready to engage in some retail therapy. The appetite to visit restaurants and bars is also up. Note that both of these activities are optional and could be described as entertainment, and both outpace the more specific entertainment of going to the movies.

Going into a theater to see a movie, however, comes in ahead of air travel and gyms. It probably shouldn't be surprising, however, that closed-in spaces such as airplanes and the sweaty, huff-and-puff of gyms look less appealing.

Consumer readiness to engage in public activities

All shoppers

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