

## **Science pic: Gut check** <sup>[1]</sup>

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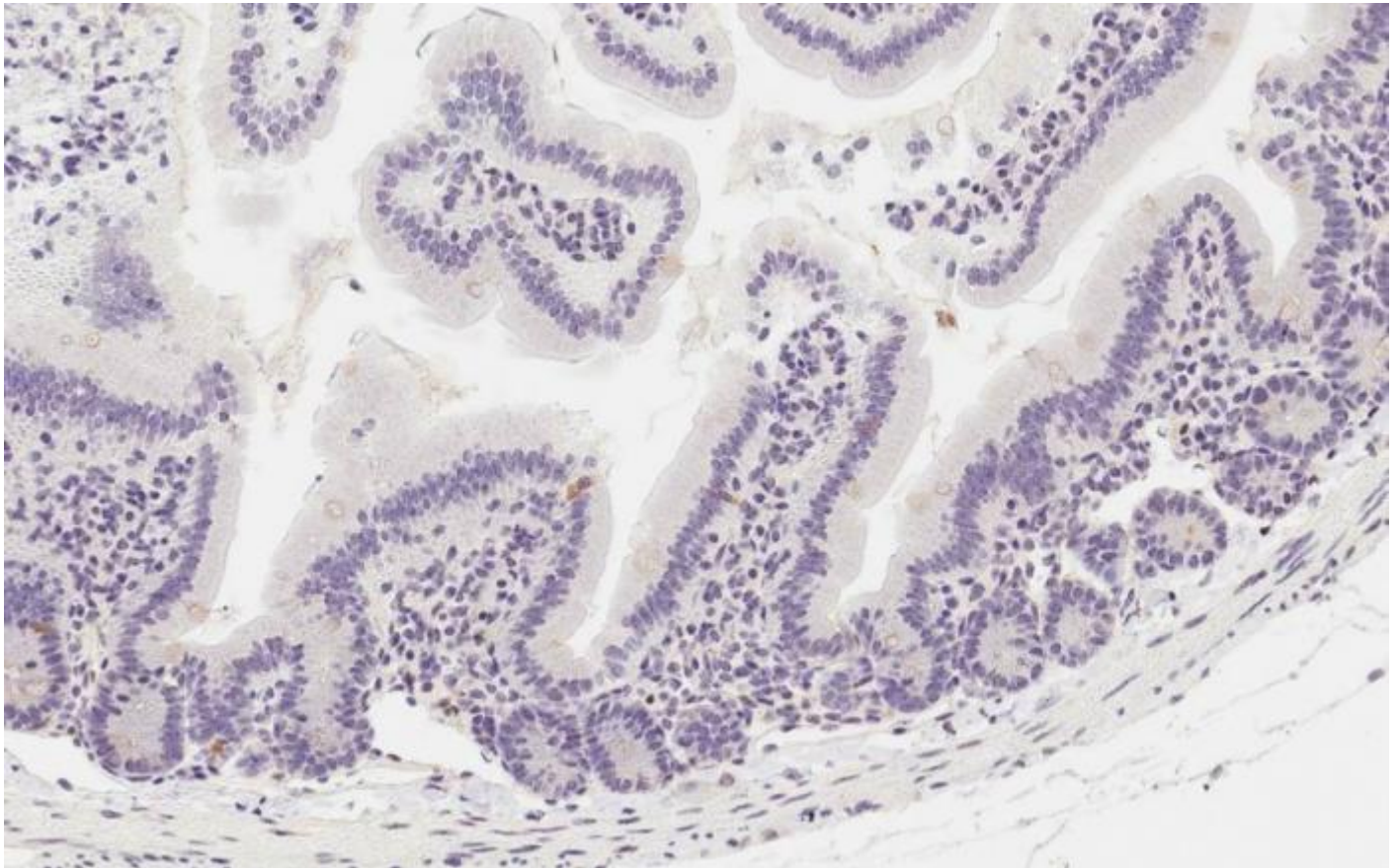


Image: Novartis

These might resemble the swirls you'd see on a paisley shirt, but they're actually key features of the intestine. Finger-like projections called villi jut out of the intestinal wall. They're covered with cells that absorb nutrients—proteins, lipids and carbohydrates that get transported into the blood to nourish the body.

Look closer and you'll see a few brown cells in the mix. These enteroendocrine cells secrete hormones after a meal, hormones that play an important role in metabolism. Take GLP-1, which stimulates the pancreas to produce insulin. Insulin then instructs cells to take up glucose from the blood. Thus enteroendocrine cells help us regulate blood sugar levels. Researchers study their activity while exploring treatments for cardiovascular and metabolic diseases such as type 2 diabetes.

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[Biomedical Research](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

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Scientific Research [6]

Biomedical Science [7]

Diabetes [8]

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#### **Links**

[1] <https://www.novartis.com/stories/from-our-labs/science-pic-gut-check>

[2] <https://www.novartis.com/stories/from-our-labs>

[3] <https://www.novartis.com/tags/biomedical-research>

[4] <https://www.novartis.com/tags/drug-discovery>

[5] <https://www.novartis.com/tags/novartis-institutes-biomedical-research>

[6] <https://www.novartis.com/tags/scientific-research>

[7] <https://www.novartis.com/tags/biomedical-science>

[8] <https://www.novartis.com/tags/diabetes>