

Putting health first: ASU experts doing research that improves lives and gets results

By Gabriella Kemp, ASU News

March 4, 2025

Arizona State University isn't just studying the topic of health. It's applying what is taught and learned to make a real difference in people's lives.

About this story

This ASU research was possible only because of the longstanding agreement between the U.S. government and America's research universities.

The agreement provides that universities would not only undertake the research but would also build the necessary infrastructure in exchange for grants that fund both the research and construction cost recovery.

Whether it's working with community partners to combat diabetes in kids, finding the latest common link to Alzheimer's or providing research that leads to children receiving free school meals, ASU is making the Valley, the state of Arizona and the world a better, healthier place.

That agreement and all the economic and societal benefits that come from such research have recently been put at risk.

Here are just a few examples to illustrate ASU's commitment to serving the community and delivering research that matters to your health:

Developing the doctors of tomorrow

ASU Health is answering the call to serve the people of Arizona and beyond by launching the new ASU School of Medicine and Advanced Medical Engineering. The school will aim to produce a new breed of doctors who combine medical innovations with technology to produce better health outcomes for all.

[Read more on ASU News.](#)

Improving Ebola survival rates

Researchers have always had a crucial role in modern medicine. Medical advances have found cures for polio and other deadly diseases worldwide. In fact, one of the first antidotes to the deadly Ebola virus was developed by researchers at ASU's Biodesign Institute. Evidence showed improved survival rates by 96% of people who were already infected with the virus.

[Read more on ASU News.](#)

Fighting diabetes with a community approach

ASU researchers are partnering with Phoenix Children's Hospital to make a difference in the lives of Arizona families who are trying to combat diabetes in youth. Researchers are working with children from the hospital to conduct head-to-toe evaluations to better understand how their bodies process sugar and why some kids develop Type 2 diabetes while others don't.

[Read more on ASU News.](#)

Discovering critical links between cancer and diabetes

Does having cancer or being a cancer survivor increase the risk of diabetes?

ASU scientists are examining how cancer cells suppress the body's natural insulin production, leading to a higher risk of diabetes for women who have had breast cancer.

[Read more on ASU News.](#)

Finding a surprising link between gut health and Alzheimer's

A common virus in your gut can be a factor in developing Alzheimer's disease — a discovery that was made thanks to dedicated researchers committed to making a difference. With more than 55 million people living with dementia worldwide — a number expected to rise to 129 million by 2050 — more research is needed to find solutions, especially to help the estimated 14 million Americans living alone.

[Read more on ASU News.](#)

Keeping children healthy so they can thrive

ASU researchers worked with legislators to secure a line item in the state budget for free lunches for qualifying Arizona children, a first for researchers.

[Read more on ASU News.](#)

Helping those with Down syndrome make exercise a priority

Keeping youth healthy and providing them an opportunity to get to adulthood and thrive is just one reason research matters. Through relentless examinations, discoveries are made.

And more and more, we are finding that exercise plays an important role in health and longevity — even as a possible intervention for age-related risks associated with Down syndrome, as some ASU researchers are finding.

[Read more on ASU News here.](#)

Innovating on the front lines of autism

In a world where 1 in every 52 children is diagnosed with autism, sometimes unconventional treatments like fecal transplants can provide long-term, slow but steady improvement.

In a first-ever, double-blind clinical trial, ASU researchers demonstrated that microbiota transplant therapy, which first uses antibiotics to eliminate bad bacteria from the intestines and then replaces

it with healthy bacteria, reduces gastrointestinal symptoms and other symptoms in people with autism, as well as in children with Pitt-Hopkins syndrome.

The results of the first phase were impressive: Participants reported an 80% reduction in GI symptoms and initially a 23% reduction in autism symptoms, reaching nearly a 50% reduction at two years post treatment.

(Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEOtCT8cohE>)

[Read more on ASU News.](#)

Learn more

These are just some of the breakthroughs that researchers are developing. Click on the links below to learn about other ASU health discoveries.

- [Artificial intelligence is revolutionizing medical research.](#)
- [Study reveals the lasting effects of a common weed killer on brain health.](#)
- [ASU researchers target insecticide resistance in mosquitoes.](#)
- [Dangers of desert dust: new diagnostic tool for valley fever.](#)
- [ASU researchers solve a Lyme disease mystery.](#)
- [New indicators to aid Crohn's disease diagnosis and treatment.](#)

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Research scientist Khemlal Nirmalkar and Professor Rosa Krajmalnik-Brown work on autism microbiome research that has shown incredible results: an 80% reduction in GI symptoms and a nearly 50% reduction in autism symptoms two years post-treatment. Photo by Sabira Madady/ASU