## Microbiome market is skin deep

Companies bet on supplements targeting gut-skin axis

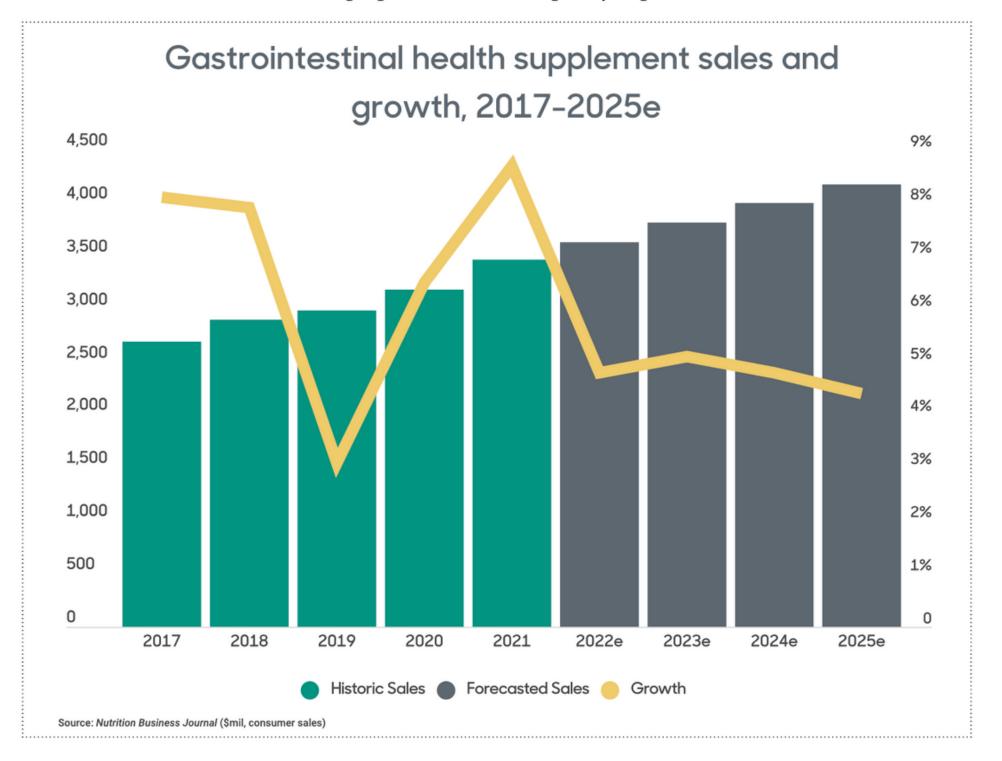
## By Robyn Lawrence

he way **Gut to Glow** co-founder Dr. William Davis sees it, the consumer market for products addressing the microbiota-gut-skin axis is in about the same place as the personal computer market was when the 8-bit Commodore 64 was introduced in 1982.

"The science is unfolding very rapidly," says Davis, who developed his oral skincare formulation around a proprietary *Lactobacillus reuteri* strain that provides a useful microbe often missing in the colon and upper GI tract. "It's clear the microbiome is going to dominate and change everything

## **NBJ Takeaways**

- » Nearly a decade after researchers discovered the microbiota-gutbrain axis, consumers are slowly becoming aware of its connection to skin health
- » Only a small percentage of consumers are using supplements to fortify the gut-skin axis
- » Education and influencer partnerships are needed to bring about widespread awareness
- » Research into irritable bowel disorder has identified skin conditions tied to microbiota



Paula Simpson, a nutrition and formulation consultant and author of *Good Bacteria for Healthy Skin: Nurture Your Skin Microbiome with Pre- and Probiotics for Clear and Luminous Skin* (Ulysses Press, 2019), says all the pieces are coming together for gut-skin axis products to explode. "There's such a snowball effect happening right now in the microbiome science space, with technology and science advancing really quickly," she says.

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"We can get a little bit too excited or hyper-focused on the science and technology and often forget about the education component," Simpson says. "It's a trifecta. They really need to go together."

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"Everything in the microbiome world is coming together," Simpson says. After scrubbing away a lot of helpful bacteria along with harmful germs during the COVID hygienic frenzy—and suffering from skin conditions as a result—more consumers are ready to take a less invasive, more minimalist approach to skin care.

"We have a unique opportunity to talk about an ecosystem and balance and things that consumers are really gravitating toward right now, and consumers are slowly getting it."