

Press Release 25 June 2018

Mind our Microbes on the first ever World Microbiome Day

The first ever World Microbiome Day (Wednesday June 27th, 2018) has captured the imaginations of scientists and the public right across the globe.

World Microbiome Day has been developed by the SFI Research Centre APC Microbiome Ireland to encourage public dialogue on the critical importance of microbes (bacteria, viruses, fungi) to human, animal and environmental health. The theme of the inaugural World Microbiome Day is **“Mind our Microbes”**.

Microbes have existed on planet earth for billions of years. They are everywhere, including in and on humans where they provide us with nutrients and safeguard our health. In fact, a world without microbes is unimaginable. Often the public perception of microbes is negative as some microbes cause infections, but the vast majority of microbes do not cause any harm and many are essential for plant, animal and human life. We have become obsessed with eliminating bacteria, attacking with antibacterial gels and wipes, but taking care of “good” microbes may be more important than destroying “bad” microbes. And as in many other aspects of life, diversity is key.

A formal announcement for **World Microbiome Day** will take place at a major international conference “Translating the Microbiome” at the INEC in Killarney on Wednesday morning. The International Human Microbiome Consortium meeting will see more than 700 scientists from 39 countries gather to discuss the latest science developments, as well as a strong industry-led session on bringing microbiome technology to the marketplace

Events to celebrate microbes are being planned right around the world, including North Carolina, Indonesia, Pamplona, Paraguay, Warsaw and Dubai.

At Killarney Outlet Centre, APC Microbiome Ireland are hosting an event for the general public from 11am-4pm where people will be able to explore the new Alimentary Adventures inflatable walkthrough tunnel of the digestive system along as well as engage with educational exhibits on all different microbiomes, producers of fermented foods and relevant patient support organisations. Admission is free and all are welcome.

In Cambridge, UK, at the Wellcome Genome Campus, there will be a talk on beneficial microbes followed by an “ask the expert” Q&A session and visitors can engage with microbiome researchers making balloon microbes or playing the board game Gut Check.

In Germany, DSM Nutritional Products at Kaiseraugst are offering free probiotic yoghurt to all their staff.

A number of online events have been scheduled including a social media campaign from the American College of Gastroenterology, a Teagasc Twitter event from the soil microbiologists based in Johnstown, and from London there will be an online Live Micro Class “5 things you need to know about your microbiome”. The public are also invited participate in an online

Reddit “Ask Me Anything” about microbiomes from 6.30-7.30pm on the day where a panel of expert will be available to answer questions on all microbiomes.

APC Microbiome Ireland scientists will be visiting primary schools in Cork to engage with children on the topic of “Mind our Microbes”. These presentations developed for younger and older primary school children can be downloaded from the website.

The public have been invited to nominate their “**Microbiome Hero**” - people/groups who have carried out microbiome friendly activities e.g. a school planting a garden, a farmer who has introduced microbiome friendly agricultural practices, a community group organising a clean-up of their local park or beach, someone who makes fermented foods, or cooks healthy meals- in advance of the day. All nominations received will be highlighted on the World Microbiome Day website and on social media where winners of art, photography and limerick competitions will also be announced.

World Microbiome Day flags will be flown from APC Microbiome Ireland’s host institutions - University College Cork and Teagasc Food Research Centre in Moorepark - and from Cork City Hall.

So please join us in our celebrating microbes and mind our microbes!

Follow World Microbiome Day on social media - #worldmicrobiomeday; Twitter @WMicrobiomeDay; Instagram: worldmicrobiomeday; Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/WorldMicrobiomeDay>

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About APC Microbiome Ireland

The SFI Research Centre APC Microbiome Ireland (APC; <http://apc.ucc.ie>) is a world leading research institute which was formed in 2003 with funding from Science Foundation Ireland and in conjunction with key industry partners. It represents a seamless collaboration between University College Cork and Teagasc (the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority). It is widely recognised that the gut microbiota plays an important role in human health and has become one of the most dynamic, complex and exciting areas of research in both food and pharmaceutical arenas. Over the last decade the APC has established itself as one of the leading global centres in gut microbiota research. The APC has made several landmark discoveries and has published over 1,700 research articles in peer-reviewed journals, generating many journal covers and associated editorials. The APC comprises over 300 individuals, from the scientific PI’s (the APC Faculty) funded by the partner Institutions, the management team, and a dedicated group of research scientists, research assistants and postgraduate students.

About IHMC : The goal of the International Human Microbiome Consortium is to work under a common set of principles and policies to study and understand the role of the human microbiome in the maintenance of health and causation of disease and to use that knowledge to improve the ability to prevent and treat disease. The Consortium's efforts are focused on generating a shared comprehensive data resource that will enable investigators to characterize the relationship between the composition of the human microbiome (or of parts of the human microbiome) and human health and disease.

The IHMC "Translating the Microbiome" conference takes place at the INEC Killarney this week. More than 700 microbiome scientists will attend. "Translating the Microbiome" is a cutting-edge microbiome meeting that will focus on the latest science developments, as well as a strong industry-led session on bringing microbiome technology to the marketplace. The conference is organised by APC Microbiome Ireland and the board of the International Human Microbiome Consortium <http://www.human-microbiome.org/> . IHMC 2018 (June 26-28) is a platform to highlight the latest advances and challenges in microbiome research from discovery to delivery. The event will cover a wide range of themes including: Microbiota for molecules and therapeutics, Live Biotherapeutics, Microbiome-host interactions, Analyzing microbiome and host data, Diseases including Cancer, HIV & IBD.