

In the Gut

When we think about bacteria we often evoke of harmful microbes and disease. While many bacteria are pathogenic, it has long been known that an astounding number and diversity of mostly beneficial bacteria are commonly found on the surfaces of the human body: on the skin, in the eyes, the nose, the pharynx, the mouth, the lower gastrointestinal tract and in women in the urethra and the vagina. These tissues are constantly in contact with the environment and become readily colonized by various organisms.

This "normal flora" in the body is essential for health and life and it is the imbalance between beneficial and harmful bacterial in this flora that can lead to a decline in health. Colonic flora imbalance may also include the presence of harmful parasites and yeasts. The term for this imbalance is dysbiosis.

The latest research shows a strong correlation between dysbiosis, especially in the lower gastrointestinal tract and illness, auto-immune disease and even brain function. Fortunately there are protocols that help to correct these imbalances, helping many people to improve or resolve long standing health problems.

The gastrointestinal tract is the largest and most vulnerable surface in contact with the outside world. It has a huge surface area - around 100 square meters. Upwards of 40,000 bacterial species are estimated to comprise the collective flora of the GI tract. Most of these are necessary for digestion and assimilation of food.

Changes in the levels of these beneficial microbiota give pathogenic bacteria a chance to grow, and can lead to auto-toxicity, autoimmune problems and malnutrition.

Hippocrates, the Father of Western Medicine said that "death sits in the bowel," and "bad digestion is the root of all evil." These are powerful statements, but it indicates that bowel toxemia was recognized as a serious health risk as early as 400 BC. In the late 1800's physicians lectured on the connections between a lack of stomach acid production, inflammation of the intestinal wall and "the risk of being overpowered by poison generated within the system" leading to physical disease and in some cases depression.

Dysbiosis is rampant in our culture and is becoming a major underlying cause of disease. On the other hand healing the gut can often lead to a marked improvement in many health issues. Gut problems are showing up in unprecedented numbers in our culture. Here's why.

While the use of antibiotics has undoubtedly saved lives, the concept that "more is better" is a false one. Because broad-spectrum antibiotics kill bacteria they also wreak havoc on intestinal flora, which is a collective colony of mostly bacteria. Not only is medicinal antibiotic use a problem here. Because most of our food production includes systematic antibiotic use in raising poultry and livestock, and because most animal fertilizers can contain traces of these antibiotics we regularly ingest the drugs in our food. This can have an insidious and harmful effect on our intestinal flora.

Aside from genetics, stress and poor diet are also contributing factors in dysbiosis. There is also a rise in infections that are increasingly difficult to treat. More virulent strains of

bacteria and viruses may also be in response to overuse of antibiotics. Infections weaken the system and have an adverse effect on intestinal flora.

While we have no control over our genetics and much of our food production, there is a lot we can do to address the problem of dysbiosis. There is a particular nutritional protocol I use designed for gastrointestinal health that heals and repopulates the flora in the lower GI tract. It is quite effective. I'll be glad to discuss the details of this protocol with you.

In addition to this protocol a high fiber diet is essential as well as adequate water intake every day. It can be sometimes difficult and affordable to completely change your diet but there are many changes you can make that would greatly improve gastrointestinal health. Moderate exercise is also important for physical health and stress reduction. Addressing physical and emotional stress is also key to improving gut health. In my practice using cranio-sacral therapy, chiropractic adjustments and NET I find marked improvements in the health of the people I work with.

Addressing dysbiosis and improving the conditions in your gut can lead to a vast improvement in your physical, mental and emotional health. While I am not qualified to diagnose or treat gastrointestinal illness, there are supportive measures we can take that may be helpful in improving your health. For more information or to make an appointment call (845) 679-6700.

Best regards,
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