

Health and Well-Being

Our topic this month is gastrointestinal health.

You may have noticed that probiotics are now featuring in articles relating to all sorts of health problems, including obesity, diabetes, depression and heart disease. All in all, the research into probiotics indicates that supplementing with probiotics is probably more important than taking a multivitamin and its true importance for your health is likely right up there with vitamin D.

Your body contains about 100 trillion bacteria -- more than 10 times the number of cells you have in your entire body. It's now quite clear that the type and quantity of micro-organisms in your gut interact with your body in ways that can either prevent or encourage the development of many diseases. The ideal ratio between the bacteria in your gut is 85 percent "good" and 15 percent "bad." Maintaining this optimal ratio is essential for good health.

Two signs that your gut flora may be adversely impacted are depression and lowered immunity. Both of these are actually common-sense side effects of poor gut health, but they're usually completely overlooked. Most people, including many physicians, do not realize that 80 percent of your immune system is located in your digestive system, making a healthy gut a major focal point if you want to maintain optimal health.

Furthermore, your gut is quite literally your second brain, as it originates from the same type of tissue as your brain! During fetal development, one part turns into your central nervous system, while the other develops into your enteric nervous system. These two systems are connected via the vagus nerve, the tenth cranial nerve that runs from your brain stem down to your abdomen. Hence your gut and your brain work in tandem, each influence the other. And this is why your intestinal health can have such a profound influence on your mental health, and vice versa.

Food sources that can help keep your gut healthy and happy include: Non-sweetened yogurt, Kefir- a fermented dairy product similar to yogurt, cultured vegetables such as sauerkraut and kimchi, and kombucha. All of these can be made at home as well as purchased at the grocery store.

Book Recommendation: Gut and Psychology Syndrome by Dr. Natasha Campbell McBride M.D.

Sources:

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Blessings in good health,
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