



“THE GOODNESS OF PROBIOTICS”

Fatigue, lack of energy and bowel problems is often the result of congestion due to insufficient good bacteria in the digestive tract. Correcting this problem may be as easy as introducing more good bacteria or “flora” into the body through a capsule or powdered probiotic however, before purchasing any “off the shelf” product, it is important to know what to look for.

Flora in microbiology is associated with bacteria found in the digestive or Gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Two such cultivated or friendly species of flora are Lactobacillus acidophilus and Bifidobacteria. Flora is also found within the mucosal surfaces of the body such as the respiratory tract, the genitourinary tract and the skin.

As the GI tract is the largest immune organ, it contains the largest population of flora with varying amounts and various kinds of bacteria traveling from the stomach to the large intestine. The stomach which is the most sterile organ of this tract, has very little lactobacillus bacteria whereas the duodenum has the most. The small and large intestine both contain Bifidobacteria with the colon containing a higher population.

Flora functions vary. In one example, flora is essential for normal cell development in the intestines and for improving secretion, absorption and motility. Another function is turning soluble fiber into essential fatty acids. How well this is accomplished is demonstrated by bowel health.

Flora also takes a non-immunological role against infection. In other words, flora helps fight infection by adhering to mucous walls as a protective layer so that unfriendly bacteria and pathogens cannot attach themselves to the wall lining. This is particularly demonstrated with vaginal candidiasis.

Unborn babies in the womb do not manufacture flora. The baby’s first contact with flora happens during the journey down the birth canal. In the third trimester of pregnancy, the mother’s flora in the birth canal significantly increases in order to be transferred to the baby. This healthy transference is very important as it greatly increases the

baby’s resistance to unfriendly bacteria thus helping to reduce the risk of allergies. If a baby does not receive a high-quality dose of normal flora through the skin and breast milk, the baby’s immune system becomes compromised.

When the population ratio of “friendly to unfriendly bacteria” is out of proportion, inflammatory conditions such as candida, bowel diseases, skin conditions and allergies become more prevalent. Refined foods, small quantities of vegetables, antibiotics, and birth control pills are items that over time affect the colonization and stability of healthy flora.

Probiotics, which are components of normal flora, are helpful in restoring healthy bacteria populations, immune stimulation and the colonization of healthy flora however, probiotics need to be non pathogenic.

Research has shown that Lactobacillus Acidophilus and Bifidus bacteria are humanly safe and do not produce pathogenic reactions.

Independent scientific research shows that human cultured bacteria is best compared to bovine, plant, pig and others cultures as the flora must be capable of colonizing in the digestive tract and resistant to stomach and bile salts. It must also be able to attach itself to epithelial surfaces rather than flushed away before doing its job. In summary and better results, bacteria populations need be indigenous to the host.

Before using flora therapeutically, it is important to know the type and numbers of bacteria populations necessary for a specific health condition. It is also important to know the difference in bacteria reporting as optimum laboratory condition numbers and “off the shelf” active bacteria survival numbers differ.

As a natural health practitioner, the choice of probiotic I recommend for my clients needs is based on the individual’s unique health history.

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