

THE Wellness Minute

Wellness Series: 3.1

Dr. Greg Anderson, Chiropractor

March 16, 2015

Orcutt Office (805) 934-5761

Buellton Office (805) 883-8083

Your Microbiome and Health

What the Heck Is a Microbiome and What Does It Have To Do With Your Health?

The human microbiome is the population of more than 100 trillion microorganisms that live in our gut, mouth, skin and elsewhere in our bodies. These microbial communities have numerous beneficial functions relevant to supporting life. They are needed to digest food, to prevent disease-causing bacteria from invading the body, and to synthesize essential nutrients and vitamins.

According to estimates there are 10 times more bacteria in our body than there is the number of cells that make up our body. A 200-pound man will have approximately 3-6 pounds of these bacteria in the body, mostly in the gut.

What Damages The Balance of Your Microbiome?

One study found that after a single treatment of antibiotics, fecal bacteria tests demonstrated a significant change in the variety of bacterial strains in the gut. Another study demonstrated that a short course of antibiotics reduced the diversity of the intestinal microbiota, with significant effects on roughly one-third of the bacterial species. This study also found that while much of the diversity eventually recovered, there were still several species that failed to recover after six months, suggesting that even a short course of antibiotics may cause permanent changes to the community of friendly flora in the gut.

It might be wise to reconsider your consumption of processed foods of all kinds. An article in the February 25, 2015 issue of Time Magazine reported, "Ingredients such as polysorbate 80, lecithin, carrageenan, polyglycerols, and xanthan and other 'gums,' all of which keep ingredients, often oils and fats, from separating. They are also used to improve the texture and shelf-life of many foods found on supermarket shelves, from ice cream and baked goods, to salad dressings, veggie burgers, non-dairy milks, and hamburger patties. Now, a new study suggests these ingredients may also be contributing to the rising incidence of obesity, metabolic syndrome, and inflammatory bowel disease by interfering with microbes in the gastrointestinal tract."



How Can We Protect Our Gut Flora?

Two things can keep you from destroying your normal gut flora; avoiding unnecessary antibiotics and avoiding any processed foods. In addition, eating fermented foods and taking a quality probiotic can help you maintain your microbiome.

WELLNESS