

## The Secrets Of Antibiotics and Bowel Flora

The word Antibiotic is constructed from Greek words anti, which means “against” and bios, meaning “life”, is a phrase used to describe an antibacterial substance made from micro-organisms, all though nowadays most are made synthetically. Antibiotics inhibit the growth or destroy other micro-organisms; penicillin, cephalosporin, amino-glycosides, streptomycin and tetracycline are all examples of common antibiotics. Penicillin is the largest group of antibiotics to be used in modern clinical medicine. Misuse and overuse of antibiotics has caused a lot of bacteria to become immune to them. This is why nowadays many hospitals are having problems in combating strains of bacteria such as methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, other wise known as MRSA. There is estimated to be around three hundred different strains of bacteria in the gut, a large number of these are vital for a healthy gut and therefore a healthy body. These bacteria shield the human body from dangerous organisms, harmful bacteria and viruses. Antibiotics being “against life” wipe out all bacteria in the gut, whether they are bad or good. Different forms of antibiotics are more toxic to bowel flora than others; penicillin is not as toxic as the other broad spectrum of antibiotics which seem to upset the ecology of the gut in a major way. When the antibiotics kill the bacteria within the gut it leaves the intestinal wall exposed to unprocessed food components and irritants that inflame and leave the intestinal wall raw. The raw and irritated bowel then expels its content quickly as diarrhoea, the diarrhoea is produced because the irritated bowel moves its contents through quickly and jerkily which results in the water contents not being removed properly thus causing watery stools – diarrhoea. In research, it has been found that if antibiotics are used for a long time and at a high dosage, then unfriendly bacteria such as candida albicans has a chance to grow and colonise the bowel. Candida albicans is a yeast like organism whose growth is speeded up by eating sugary foods, including fruit. Candida albicans can cause many health problems over time. This damage of the bowel flora by antibiotics can be severe in people who already have compromised health. Recent research has shown that individuals who have taken a course of antibiotics had lower serum concentrations of enterolactone up to 16 months post-antibiotic use. This is particularly interesting because high serum enterolactone concentrations have been clinically shown to protect against cardiovascular mortality and breast cancer. This research has shown that antibiotic use has more damaging effects than first thought. In the case of colitis, antibiotics can be of help. Sulphur antibiotics seem to destroy the bacteria which cause the bowel inflammation in colitis which will temporally slow down the diarrhoea. However, there are more natural ways to relieve the symptoms of colitis and by taking antibiotics it will probably cause more problems than it solves. Antibiotic use has shown to promote the growth of already-present micro-organisms such as fungi and Clostridium difficile, it decrease short-chain fatty acids that play a essential part in the electrolyte and water absorption in the large intestine, it increases the susceptibility to intestinal pathogens caused by the weakening in colonization resistance and it decreases the effect of phytoestrogen-rich foods and some medical herbs as they are reliant on the presents of bacterial enzymes produced by intestinal flora. Hence, antibiotics should be used sparingly and in small doses as not to upset the delicate bowel flora. Bowel flora represents an ecosystem of the highest complexity, the micro flora is thought to be made up of over fifty genera of bacteria which accounts for over five hundred different species. The human gastrointestinal tract is believed to contain 10 micro-organisms; this is estimated to weigh 1-1.5kg. Bowel flora is important because it keeps the colon clean and keeps the “unfriendly” bacteria in check. It helps to create a balance that reduces fermentation and putrefaction which create gas and bad odours. It is estimated that the correct balance of bacteria in the gut is fifteen percent bad bacteria and eighty five per cent friendly bacteria to create a healthy colon. If an individual's bowel flora is compromised in any way then their health will drastically change as the bowel flora plays numerous special roles within the body. The bowel flora is involved in the synthesis of vitamins especially the B group of vitamins and vitamin K which is absorbed by the body, in the stimulation of the immune system, enhancement of the gastrointestinal tract function and motility, the absorption of nutrients and digestion, the stopping of pathogens (colonization resistance), plant compounds and drug metabolism and the production of polyamines and short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). Bowel flora can stop the infection of intestinal parasites such as intestinal worms. Intestinal parasites thrive in unclean condition in the colon by lodging themselves in the old encrusted matter that sticks to the intestinal wall in a filthy bowel. Without having this stagnant material parasites would have no place to colonize and would expelled straight out. Having friendly bowel flora would keep the bowel clean which in tern would keep parasites at bay. The condition of autointoxication, which is were the body literally poisons itself by having decaying matter that gives of poisons within the bowel, can be averted by having friendly bowel flora which as mentioned before would keep the bowel clean and prevent autointoxication from beginning in the first place. In conclusion, many chronic degenerative diseases are contributed to by the changes in bowel flora and its processes. Taking a high dosage of antibiotics for a long period of time will have a profound effect on the healthy functioning of the bowel flora, limiting its ability to keep a healthy large intestine and thus a healthy body. To keep a healthy bowel and thus a healthy body it is wise to use antibiotics sparingly and for a short period of time, take probiotics, eat plenty of fibre preferably in raw plant form and drink lots of mineral water.

## About the Author

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