



THE HELPFUL ROLE OF GUT BACTERIA

Human Microbiome

Okay all of you germaphobes! This one is for you. This month's newsletter is about the human microbiome – all of the bacteria in our gut and the amazing things they do for us. It is my intent to help all the folks out there who are afraid of “germs” (bacteria) to see how important they are for our very survival. And for those of us on the other end of the spectrum, who are in awe of the importance of bacteria, I have included the actual names of different bacteria to deepen your understanding.

How about this fact for starters:

there are at least as many bacterial cells as there are our own cells in our bodies, and many researchers believe there are two to three times more bacterial cells than our own.

Imagine all of the places bacteria can live on us and in us, including the mouth, stomach, small and large intestines, nose, lungs, skin, vagina – you name it, they are everywhere! And thank

goodness, too, because now we are learning about all of the important functions that healthy bacteria do for us.

In recent years, scientists have learned that the bacterial balance in our gut – how many good, how many bad, and what species there are – has a role in diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, auto-immunity, and obesity.

Healthy bacteria help us to absorb certain nutrients, such as minerals, starches,

fibers, some fats, and sugars. They also make some nutrients that we need, including vitamins B3, B5, B6, B9, B12 and vitamin K2. Healthy bacteria even help us clear out toxins. As a matter of fact, bacteria DNA is more important for our very survival than our own DNA. All of this is according to the findings of the human microbiome project, which was completed in 2013. Just like the human genome project, which set about to decode our DNA and discover all of our genes, the human microbiome project (HMP) worked to uncover the DNA footprint of the bacteria that live within us and on us, and the roles they play for us.

It seems that the HMP was just a starting point for all of the information that we are learning about the human microbiome, and, just like the human genome project, we will be sorting out more and more layers of the interaction between man and bacteria for years to come.

This newsletter is designed to give you just a smattering of what we now know about the significant role that bacteria play in our health and in our lives.

Interestingly, at birth we are sterile. We are born