Antibiotics

Description

Gentle Reader,

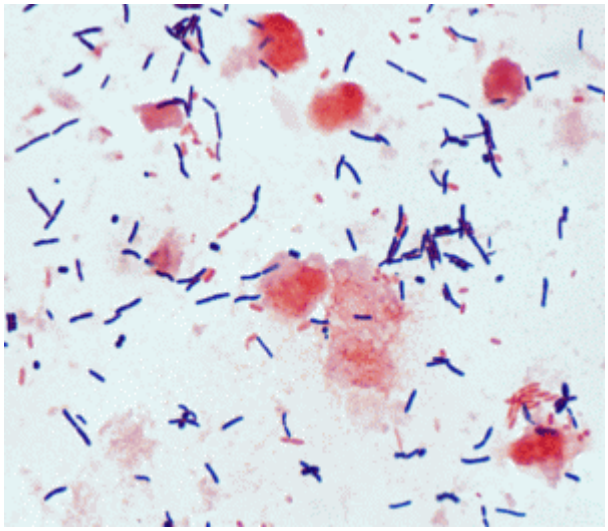
Seventy years ago when I turned 7, an add in Life Magazine read “Thanks to penicillin…he will come home.” Antibiotics dramatically lowered the incidence of death on the battlefields of WWII from infection. The miracle created by chemist, Alexander Fleming and the mass production of drugs reversed certain death to probably life. My parents -as nurse and physician-worked through New York City’s flu epidemic, the horrors of infection during surgery and the fear for their three small children with the polio virus running rampant. They embraced *Better Living through Chemistry* with open arms. So did the farming industry; chickens and pigs and beef all grew faster and fatter with antibiotics.

Collateral damage has made the news. Books have been written about the dangers of bacterial resistence to antibiotics. The first voices against over use of antibiotics came as early as the 1970s but the manufacturers of these wonder drugs refused to cut their profits in favor of promoting more moderate usage. My brothers and I used antibiotics on our Holstein dairy cows and our meat chickens, following the instructions from the agricultural bulletins handed out to 4H members. (My brother thought growth hormones would be good for him, too, and swallowed a vial meant for the chickens! He was 12.)

Today Americans experience an unprecedented number of deaths –23,000 fatalities each year and 2 million sick–directly related to antibiotic resistent bacteria.

Debra Daniel-Zeller published an article in this month’s Puget Consumer Coop newsletter in which she takes a close look at the microbial world being altered and victimized by antibiotics. I had no idea that microbes, including bacteria, were one of the first life forms on the planet. They inhabit outer space, living 22,000 feet above the earth and influence

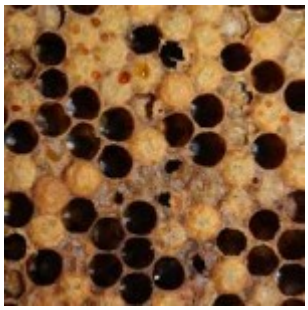
the weather. They inhabit the ocean. They form 70-90 percent of the cells in and on our bodies. More than 500 types of microbes live in the human gut. Ms. Daniel-Zeller mentions microbe



clostridium difficile

clostridium difficile, a little bugger that antibiotics don't kill, that lies in wait in the body for up to 2 years and comes back to haunt our good health. We need a balance of microbes. Antibiotics wipes out some upsetting the balance.

Everyone is worried about the disappearance of the honeybee. For the past 50 years, farmers have been using an antibiotic in the hives to treat foul-brood disease. Now the bees carry several antibiotic-resistant genes, adversely effecting their metabolism.



foulbrood disease in the hive

One of the reasons it is so hard to lose weight, it turns out, is because the very antibiotics used to fatten animals, fatten humans. You may or may not take antibiotics but you are getting them in the meat and chicken you eat. There is a direct correlation between rates of obesity in states where the highest number of antibiotic prescriptions are written. (New England Journal of Medicine) Let's face it, thin people have a rich diversity of gut bacteria functions, unlike low diversity in fat people.

All bacteria in the gut become shell shocked and put up defenses when an antibiotic comes along. Vulnerable bacteria die and their functions no longer benefit us. Seventy percent of our immune system cells are found in the walls of the gut. When these cells die off, the walls of the gut become permeable.

Bateria in the gut

It is probable that various autoimmune disorders such as Lupus, MS, asthma and even simple allergies result from the breakdown of our gut's bacterial barrier. Chrone's disease and celiac disease are on the rise, possibly due to early and frequent use of antibiotics.

Antibiotics are not going away very soon. While they have been banned in animal husbandry in the EU and Russia, the US agricultural, meat and dairy industries remain "self-regulating", i.e. no government regulations. Five US cities have passed resolutions supporting statewide and national bans on non-therapeutic use of antibiotics. This is a start.

Personally I am convinced that my diagnosis of breast cancer at the age of 34 was

influenced by my parents' enthusiastic use of antibiotics at the slightest sign of the sniffles. Such was their delight in these miracle drugs. When situational stress put an extreme burden on my immune system, I did not have the defences to correct the DNA damage that may have resulted in cancer growing cells. I will never be able to substantiate this theory, but articles like this one in the PCC paper shed more light on how overuse of antibiotics allows disease states to start.

Healthy gut.
photo by
Shuttercock

Want to stay healthy and avoid these diseases? Want to lose weight? Here are three things you can begin now.

1. Take no antibiotic unless it is certain you are suffering from a bacterial infection.

2. Eat only organically grown meat and chicken which have no antibiotics (or hormones) added to their feed or injected into their bodies.

3. Take supplemental probiotics daily to help populate your gut with friendly, beneficial bacteria. I appreciate the quality of Shaklee's Pre and Pro biotics, Optiflora. For more information on this product, please visit my Resources page.

Since this is a blog about arthritis, I have to add this: losing even 10 pounds will make your joints happier and less painful. Changing your diet away from antibiotic laden foods might be your missing weight loss link. Thinner bodies, healthier guts, less inflammed joints.

Be well, Do well and Keep Moving

Betsy

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www.EmpoweredGrandma.net (my travel adventures, both spiritual and physical)

www.HiHoHealth.com (shopping for Shaklee products)

Category

1. Be Well health tips
2. Health and Fitness

Tags

1. antibiotics
2. autoimmune disease
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