

What's Eating You?

Happy New Year!! Have you made your resolutions for 2008? Hopefully you haven't already abandoned them. A lot of people feel fat, tired, sick and disgusted on New Year's Day because of too much overindulgence during the holidays. Now that we have this bright, shiny new year ahead of us, let's start talking about getting on the highway to health.

Health is an inside job – head, heart, gut, and it's about choices. It is your choice to allow only positive thoughts to take up residence in your head. It is your choice to allow yourself to believe that you're worthy and deserving of a healthy mind and body. And you get to choose what goes into your mouth and on your body.

Lack of knowledge about how your body functions and ignoring its needs are major contributing factors to ill-health. There are three major areas to address: (1) consuming whole food nutrients to regenerate and heal, (2) cleansing the body of toxic accumulation, and (3) bacterial imbalance.

Let's talk about what's happening in your gut. Won't that be fun!

“Death begins in the colon.” This statement was made by the Russian born bacteriologist and 1908 Nobel Laureate, Ilya Mechnikov. In his book *Prolongation of Life* he made observations of 100+ year old men and women who were still leading active and healthy lives. One of the things they had in common was that they ate fermented foods and special bacterial cultures called kefir. Unfortunately, most Americans eat very few fermented foods and most of what's available is full of sugar and other nasty things. So, where can we get bacteria for our colons, why don't we naturally have enough, and why is it so important?

One of the secrets to good health lies in the friendly bacteria in the intestinal tract. Our intestines are full of all kinds of bacteria and they all serve certain purposes such as manufacturing vitamins and producing enzymes that help in the digestion and assimilation of our food. The ideal ratio in our intestines should be 85% probiotic (for life) bacteria and 15% pathogenic (capable of causing disease) bacteria. Most people have the opposite because of an unhealthy diet, frequent use of antibiotics (which kill everything), fluorine, chlorine, pesticides, drugs, stress, preservatives, etc. Actually, just about everything we eat, breathe, and put on our skins has chemicals in it. So we need to be aware of the dangers of this imbalance and to know what we can do about it.

The common warning signs of a bacterial imbalance include: difficulty losing weight; sugar/starch cravings; fatigue, poor concentration and memory; constipation or diarrhea; indigestion, acid reflux, heartburn and other digestive disorders; sleeping poorly, night sweats; painful joint inflammation and stiffness; bad breath, gum disease, thrush; frequent colds, flu or infections; chronic yeast problems, candida overgrowth; acne, eczema, skin and foot fungus; extreme menstrual or menopausal symptoms; allergies and food sensitivities.

The “bad” bacteria love to chow down on sugars and starches and they are so happy when you accommodate them by eating pastries, desserts, bread, pasta, and refined cereals. They just keep multiplying and building high rise condos for their offspring to live in and every time they see a doughnut coming down your gullet they shout for joy and spread the word that it’s party time. And while they’re having a good time you’re feeling more and more lousy.

You can get more of the “good” bacteria in your diet by eating yogurt and kefir. Just make sure it’s organic and does not have added sugar. It will help but it’s really not the best source. You can also buy probiotic supplements. It’s very important to choose a probiotic that contains a wide spectrum of bacteria as well as a delivery mechanism that enables them to survive until they get to your intestines. Please feel free to email me for advice on that.

Getting more probiotics in your diet is an easy choice to make and a good beginning place. We’ll be talking more in the future about how to transition to a healthier diet. For now, just try to eat more real food and less manufactured food. I’ve traveled all over the world and never seen a doughnut tree or candy bush and hope I never do!

We’ll also discuss methods of cleansing the toxins from your body – all that gunk we’ve accumulated from living in a polluted world and making bad choices. We want to prepare the “soil” for the good “seed” we’ll be planting as we make better food choices. Until then, happy munching!