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Quick Thread on the Gut Microbiome

Hippocrates said: “All disease begins in the gut.”
While there is significant truth to this, in my personal view of health, it is a little more complex, but it is largely true.

The gut affects the rest of the body, being the gateway to what is absorbed, via the gut-brain axis (directly affects the brain), and due to the metabolism, absorption, detoxification and immune system (70% is in the gut) which takes place/resides in the gut, etc.

This is why it is so critical to take care of our gut health, because once it is negatively affected, it may never be the same again. What affects the gut microbiome? There are over 100,000 trillion microorganisms working together in the gut.

There are 10x more bacterial cells than human cells. Usually, we focus on the bacteria, although there are other species.

Currently, out gut microbiome is less diverse than historically, which can have a negative impact on our health as various species have distinct functions (metabolizing food, producing vitamins like B12 – which we have lost, among other functions).

What negatively affects our gut microbiome?
- Medications (most do, but antibiotics are most severe as their job is to kill bad bacteria, but they are not specific to bad, and also kill some of the good)
- Pesticides (i.e. glyphosate)
- Stress
- Junk food, especially sugar

The issue with trying to restore/replenish a good microbiome is that there is limited data on how to do this, and probiotics – which are used, only have a few species, when there are many more in our gut. Which is why being proactive is so important.

Antibiotics are not only overprescribed, they are prescribed when they are not useful and can cause more harm. This is not to say that in urgent cases you should not take them, but this is truly a very huge problem, as once your gut bacteria is wiped out, you may never recover it

It can take up to a year for your gut bacteria to recover after one short course of antibiotics.

Exercise is largely under-appreciated when it comes to having a positive effect on the gut microbiome, because it is not an obvious factor, and the modality has not been elucidated. Exercise has been shown to:

“ Exercise is able to enrich the microflora diversity; to improve the Bacteroidetes-Firmicutes ratio which could potentially contribute to reducing weight, obesity-associated pathologies, and gastrointestinal disorders; to stimulate the proliferation of bacteria which..

can modulate mucosal immunity and improve barrier functions, resulting in reduction in the incidence of obesity and metabolic diseases; and to stimulate bacteria capable of producing substances that protect against gastrointestinal disorders and colon cancer (such as, SCFAs)."

All exercise counts. Just try to do something. Take care of your gut health in all the ways that you can. It does more for you than you can appreciate. <3

References

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