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THE BETTER HEALTH NEWS

OUR INTERNAL ECOSYSTEM

The bowel is an ecosystem containing several pounds of microorganisms. In fact, there are more bacterial cells in your intestine than there are cells in your entire body. When in balance, bowl flora nourish the intestinal lining, produce nutrients and help detoxify the body.

According to research appearing in the *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* (2007, Volume 66) supplementing with prebiotics and probiotics can improve antioxidant status. Prebiotics are supplements that feed normal bowel flora, like fructo-oligosaccharides. Probiotics contain the desirable flora.

Improving antioxidant status protects the body against oxidative stress. It can be at the root of serious diseases like heart disease and cancer, or simply make you fatigued. Oxidative stress is caused by chemicals in the diet and in the environment. Many of these chemicals produce free radicals, which are electrons that are not tightly bound to the molecule. These electrons interact with the body. Think of these electrons as electronic “bullets”. Antioxidants are the body’s “bullet-proof vests”. Free electrons cause damage to tissue and inflammation. Oxidative stress can be measured by looking at certain biomarkers, including lipid peroxidation, DNA oxidation, and protein oxidation.

In one double-blind, placebo controlled study, one group received maltodextrin as a placebo, and he other group received a combination of probiotics and prebiotics for three weeks. The group receiving the supplements exhibited improvement in the biomarkers or oxidative stress.

So when thinking about detoxification, it is important to pay attention to your intestinal ecosystem. Just as beneficial flora can produce antioxidants and other healthful substances, dysbiotic flora can be the source of toxins—creating a wide range of problems that go beyond digestive symptoms.

Dysbiosis can cause tryptophan and tyrosine to be in short supply; these essential amino acids are necessary to produce norepinepherine and serotonin. Ammonia, and other toxic substance can also be produced, creating brain fog, fatigue, depression or anxiety. There is a strong link between allergies, asthma and bowel ecology as well. Patients with sinus problems or allergies, may well have digestion issues. A wide variety of symptoms can benefit from detox.

One of the strengths of the 3-Step Detox is that it addresses bowel ecology and dysbiosis, which is important since a wide variety of symptoms may have digestion as their source.

MERCURY AMALGAMS

Mercury fillings have been around since around 1890. In the early 1900s, German chemist, Alfred Stock warned of mercury toxicity from the fillings. So the mercury fillings and the controversy surrounding them are not new. Mercury fillings contain 50%mercury, 35% silver and 10% tin, copper and zinc. In spite of the propensity of the dental profession to call amalgam fillings "silver", more than 50% of the material is mercury, which is toxic.

The American Dental Association has long held the belief that amalgam fillings became inert after a few days and were safe. Currently the ADA recognizes that there is some absorption from amalgam fillings, but still claim they are safe. The FDA recommends not placing mercury fillings in children under the age of six. The FDA has produced a lengthy report (posted on their website) that discusses the amount of mercury absorbed from fillings, the effects of mercury toxicity and methods of testing. The report cites a study performed at the University of Tubingen Health Clinic, involving 20,000 subjects with mercury fillings. On average the amount of mercury found in saliva was 11.6 mcg/L; gum chewing could triple that figure. Also, those subjects with multiple fillings tended to have higher levels. Some subjects had extremely high levels, with 1% having more than 200 mcg/L and 10% having more than 100 mcg/L.

According to research appearing in the *Journal of Dental Research* (1992;71AADR,Abstracts);284/1424) polishing the fillings increased the mercury released from the fillings. A filling with a surface area of 25 square millimeters released over 3x more mercury vapor after being polished.

A study appearing in the *Archives of Environmental Health* (May/June, 1996;51(3):234-241) evaluated the amount of mercury in blood, hair and breast milk in 30 Swedish women six weeks after giving birth. Researchers found that the amount of inorganic mercury in the blood and breast milk correlated with the number of mercury fillings the patient had. The exposure of infants to mercury from breast milk was found to be about half of the tolerable daily intake for adults recommended by the World Health Organization.

Research appearing in *Biological Trace Element Research* (1997;56:143-152) looked at mercury absorption from amalgams experimentally placed in pregnant sheep. Three ewes were given 12 mercury amalgams, containing

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radioactive mercury, while three other ewes (not given amalgam fillings) acted as controls. The lambs born of the ewes with the fillings had mercury (which was found primarily in the liver). Breast feeding provided the newborn lambs with additional mercury, found primarily in the kidney. Mercury crosses the placenta into the fetus. Mercury also crosses into the breast milk.

Cadavers were examined in research appearing in the *Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry* (1987;58 (6):704-707) to find the relationship between the number of amalgam fillings and the presence of mercury in nerve tissue. The data showed a positive correlation between the number of fillings and the amount of mercury found in brain tissue.

Clearly there is a relationship between mercury fillings and the absorption of mercury into the body. Also, the amount absorbed seems to vary between patients, but there is a correlation between the number of fillings and the amount of mercury absorbed. Mothers can pass the mercury on to the fetus. There currently is controversy surrounding the presence of mercury in vaccines and the increase in autism. Some experts make much of the fact that autism did not exist before the advent of vaccines in the 1940s. It might be worth noting that, although mercury amalgams have been around for 150 years, their use became widespread in the 1930s. If there is a connection between autism and mercury toxicity, it may be worth looking into mercury fillings.

DIOXIN

Dioxin is the name generally given to a class of super-toxic chemicals, the chlorinated dioxins and furans, formed as a by-product of the manufacture, molding, or burning of organic chemicals and plastics that contain chlorine. It is the nastiest, most toxic man-made organic chemical; its toxicity is second only to radioactive waste. Dioxin made headlines several years ago at places such as Love Canal, where hundreds of families needed to abandon their homes due to dioxin contamination, and Times Beach, Missouri, a town that was abandoned as a result of dioxin.

We now know that dioxin exhibits serious health effects when its level reaches as little as a few parts per ***trillion*** in your body fat. Dioxin is a powerful hormone disrupting chemical. By binding to a cell's hormone receptor, it literally modifies the functioning and genetic mechanism of the cell, causing a wide range of effects, from cancer to reduced immunity to nervous system disorders to miscarriages and birth deformities. Because it literally changes the functioning of your cells, the effects can be very obvious or very subtle. Because it changes gene functions as well, it can cause so-called genetic diseases to appear. It can also interfere with child development. There is no "threshold" dose - the tiniest amount can cause damage, and our bodies have no defense against it.

The major sources of dioxin are in our diet. Since dioxin is fat-soluble, it bioaccumulates, climbing up the food chain. A North American eating a typical North American diet will receive 93% of their dioxin exposure from meat and dairy products (23% is from milk and dairy alone; the other large sources of exposure are beef, fish, pork, poultry and eggs). In fish, these toxins bioaccumulate up the food chain so that dioxin levels in fish are 100,000 times that of the surrounding environment. The best way to avoid dioxin exposure is to reduce or eliminate your consumption of meat and dairy products by adopting a vegan diet. According to a May 2001 study of dioxin in foods, "The category with the lowest [dioxin] level was a simulated vegan diet, with 0.09 ppt.... Blood dioxin levels in pure vegans have also been found to be very low in comparison with the general population, indicating a lower contribution of these foods to human dioxin body burden."

In addition to cancer, exposure to dioxin can also cause severe reproductive and developmental problems (at levels 100 times lower than those associated with its cancer causing effects). Dioxin is well-known for its ability to damage the immune system and interfere with hormonal systems.

Dioxin is one of many chemicals found in our bodies. The “body burden” of chemicals is tested by the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention every two years. They have found that the average American now has 116 synthetic compounds in his or her body. These include dioxin (from burning plastic), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (from auto exhaust) and organochlorine pesticides. There are about 75,000 different chemicals produced in the United States each year, 3,000 of which are produced in quantities greater than 50,000 tons each year.

The American public is not aware that there might be potential allergenic and toxic reactions. With regular food, at least people know which foods they have an allergy to.

Jeremy Rifkin

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THE PROBLEM WITH GMOS

According to the May 2000 issue of the *Journal of the American Chiropractic Association*, genetically engineered foods are not adequately tested for the effect they may have on the people who consume them. They were introduced into the food supply in the mid-1990s, with very little testing and very little information provided to the public. Journalist Barbara Keeler, a health and nutrition expert, in a JACA article states that the hazards of genetic engineered food could directly harm patients who eat it. Other problems are indirect, operating through the corruption of other food species or through unintended effects on the ecosystem.

Some of the problems with these foods are serious. Corn and potatoes have been engineered to produce toxins that kill insects. The article quotes FDA articles that state that such vegetables are, “classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as pesticides, rather than vegetables." Some of the genetically engineered food is resistant to a specific herbicide made by the company engineering the seed, enabling the company to use a lot of that herbicide (which in turn ends up in our food supply).

Genetic engineering presents problems for people with allergies. Genetic engineering introduces new proteins from one food into another. People with allergies have no way of knowing if the food they are eating contains protein from a food to which they are allergic.

Bees consuming pollen from genetically engineered plants have shortened life spans and loss of sense of smell. Cows fed genetically engineered soybeans have changes in hormone levels and milk content. Toxicity is moving up the food chain. There is death or impaired health in animals from consuming insects that were fed crops with bacillicus thuringiensis toxins. In short, genetically engineered food can be harmful to our individual health and to our environment.