

The Tuesday Minute

Nutritional information.... one byte at a time

This Week's Topic

How To Use Pre- and Probiotics

Here's a quick refresher with some updated instructions about combining pre- and probiotics. After years of treating patients, when I get stumped – and stumped means “when common things don't work” – I know they must have some form of dysbiosis.

I use a test called the comprehensive stool digestive analysis that a variety of laboratories have. They take the stool, culture it, and then examine it to see what kind of bacteria, amoebas, parasites, or what kind of fungal forms may exist. Two things are common: one, there is a proliferation of bad bacteria or bad “bugs”; and secondly, there's an absence of healthy bacteria.

So which came first, the chicken or the egg? Did the bad bacteria come first and crowd out the good bacteria or was it an absence of good bacteria that allowed the proliferation of the bad bacteria? Well a conservative approach is to feed the good bacteria.

Here are some things that cause what the researchers are calling intestinal overgrowth or bad bacteria: stress, which causes a change in the pH of the bowel, allowing the healthy bacteria to not proliferate as they should; low fiber, starves out the healthy bacteria; sugar-laden diet, feeds the bad bacteria; and high trans-fats or hydrogenated oils, which have a

negative effect on biliary function. We need healthy bile flow to create the proper pH and to have the proper transit time that we need for the proliferation of good bacteria.

Another reason is antibiotics and whether we take the pills; or if we consume commercially prepared antibiotic tainted meat...chicken, beef, or pork, we're getting the side effect of those antibiotics. Also, eating too fast can cause the growth of bad bacteria. If we eat too fast we're not digesting our food properly and our enzymes are not killing the bacteria that are naturally present in our food.

So if you think about it, just about everybody we treat has one or more of these factors. So really, all our patients should go on a periodic “re-seeding” of healthy probiotics. The more research accumulates, the more we find that gut problems are a contributing factor to just about every condition. A huge part of fixing the GI tract is balancing the gut micro-flora.

As many of you know, healthy probiotics have been shown to improve digestive function, to improve or modulate the gut immune system – whether it's up or down. Healthy probiotics have been shown to increase the growth of anaerobic bacteria. Also, healthy probiotics have been shown to decrease bad or unfriendly bacteria and to reduce leaky gut.

Probiotics are a big factor in maintaining a healthy GI barrier. This barrier selectively blocks unhealthy organisms and antibodies from entering the blood stream. Healthy probiotics have also been shown to improve liver function, to stimulate phagocytosis, and to benefit healthy gastro-mucosal linings.

Many of you are familiar with a newer product from Biotics, Biodoph-7 Plus developed by Dr. Gary Lasneski. It has 20 billion bacteria per capsule. Clinically, it's difficult to measure how fast these micro-organisms double. World renowned bacteriologist, Dr. Klem Shahani said they double every 20 minutes. Other commercial bacteriologists say they multiply about every two hours. But regardless of the number, they multiply very fast; so if you're getting 20 billion viable or living organisms per capsule, you're going to get a strong dose of the healthy bacteria.

In many of the commercial preparations tested, they did not meet label claims in terms of the numbers of bacteria and in many cases the healthy bacteria were already dead. In developing Biodoph-7 Plus, Dr. Lasneski took all the commercially available bacterial strains that had really solid research and tested them energetically. First, he tested them individually to see which were the best strains and then he tested them in combination to find the correct ratios.

He then tested a variety of prebiotics that are valuable to make sure that the healthy bacteria can grow, kind of like putting starter fertilizer on new grass. For example, he added

inulin which increases the growth of the bifidobacterium. He also added arabinogalactans, a soluble fiber which increases the butyric acid which feeds the anaerobic bacteria. We're also familiar with arabinogalactans having a positive effect on the immune system of our bodies; also marshmallow root, which is very effective for healthy mucousal lining. That's where the bacteria live in the mucosal lining. The marshmallow root helps to grow nice healthy mucous, so healthy bacteria have a place to "hang out".

That's the beauty of this product. In essence, Biotics took the best prebiotics and added them to this new high potency probiotic blend – Biodoph-7 Plus. The Biodoph-7 stands for seven different strains of probiotics, and the Plus stands for the prebiotics. One of the reasons I've been enthusiastic about Biodoph-7 Plus is that surprisingly it's inexpensive as far as probiotics go; but more importantly, because it's clinically solid. The feedback we get from clinicians is very encouraging.

The dosage is very simple – just 3-4 at bedtime with water. Use it with patients having symptoms or if testing shows a deficiency. However remember all your patients would benefit with a periodic "re-seeding" to maintain healthy bacteria. One capsule at bedtime is a nice maintenance dose.

Thanks for checking in this week. I'll see you next Tuesday.