

Why you should feed your brain probiotics

There's gut reactions and then there's gut reactions. I'm not talking about the intuitive type but that sudden on-set warning system that says find a bathroom sooner not later.



Medically this is a healthy communication network between your brain's sense of well-being and intestinal peace. You know how it feels to enjoy a great meal, when you eat too much, when you eat something that doesn't sit right and how your stomach sympathizes when you're stressed out.

New research just been published in the journal *Gastroenterology* indicates that your brain's function and performance can be changed by the probiotic quality of your intestinal gut flora.

Let's start by covering some basics.

What is gut flora?

Gut flora are living microorganisms in your intestines. For the most part they are healthy bacteria that act to aid in digestion and metabolizing the release of energy, support the immune system, prevent bad bacteria from taking over, produce vitamin K and biotin and produce hormones that regulate storing fats.

What are probiotics?

Probiotics are the healthy living microorganisms found in certain food sources that help to maintain a healthy gut flora. You are probably most familiar with the large variety of yogurts and influx of probiotic supplement commercials.

Probiotics also act to counter the unhealthy gut flora caused by diets high in carbohydrates and high fructose corn syrup and overuse of antibiotics.

What do probiotics have to do with your brain?

Researchers suspected there might be a deeper relationship between the brain and quality of intestinal flora. In studies where mice were fed probiotics they manifested less stress markers. Also, patient reported non-prior events of depression and anxiety only after experiencing gut problems.

The Study

36 women between the ages of 18 and 55 were divided into three groups. Group 1 received yogurt with 4 major probiotics, Group 2 received yogurt without probiotics and Group 3 acted as the control group and received nothing.

After 4 weeks and eating servings twice a day, the women were rescanned with a function MRI while at rest and while matching two different sets of emotional images to each other.

The Results

The greatest amount of altered brain function was found in the women who ate the yogurt with probiotics. Scanning revealed greater brain functioning with increased midbrain connectivity for sensory and emotional processing

The Implications

The relationship between the brain and the gut are now seen as interrelated and that brain function can be altered by the condition of the bacteria in the gut.

This opens up a whole new way of thinking about mental health, treating conditions of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Autism and considering the use of antibiotics, especially when used on infants where it could affect brain development.

If you're the type that expects the very best from your brain, maybe it's time to add some quality probiotics to your lifestyle.

If you are already eating some form of probiotics let us know if you notice a difference.

Study conducted by: Lead author Dr. Kirsten Tillisch, associate professor of medicine in the digestive diseases division, UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine

Resources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gut_flora

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/17/gut-bacteria-brain-dietary-changes-_n_3455148.html?utm_hp_ref=@healthnews123#slide=974549

<http://newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/changing-gut-bacteria-through-245617.aspx>

[http://www.gastrojournal.org/article/S0016-5085\(13\)00292-8/abstract](http://www.gastrojournal.org/article/S0016-5085(13)00292-8/abstract)