Diarrhea, IBS and Colitis: Listening to The Wisdom of the Gut
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organism doesn't need to be found, only it's DNA. In another test, the urine is tested for markers that are produced by "bad" bacterial and yeast species and if present, represent significant presence and toxicity. However, the absence of such markers does not fully rule out these organisms. This special urine test also looks for markers for good bacteria, and if decreased, suggests the need for "pro-biotics".

**Holistic Treatment**

So, whether the tests are done first, or saved till later, treatment is initiated with natural agents, and the response provides additional diagnostic information.

The toxins that need to be considered include: bacteria, yeast, parasites, certain foods, chemical toxins, and emotional/energetic toxicity.

The deficiencies that need to be addressed include critical vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and oils that are needed for the body to repair the lining of the gut, to enable the immune system to mount an attack when there are offending organisms, and/or to suppress the immune system when it attacks the GI tract.

It is almost always effective to begin with "pro-biotic" bacteria and yeast. These are the good organisms that can re-populate the GI tract and push out the bad organisms.

It is also important to remove known toxins from the diet and lifestyle--which include hydrogenated oils, artificial sweeteners, caffeine, alcohol, cigarette smoke, pesticides, preservatives, colorants, and cosmetics (which are absorbed through the skin). Foods that are known to be allergenic should be removed, which include at least, dairy, gluten, soy and nightshades. Since food allergy is a hidden but very prevalent condition, and in allergy the body can react to a single molecule, it is not sufficient to remove most of these foods--they must be totally eliminated, for a while at least. Some allergens persist for months. Once the situation is stable, missed foods can be re-introduced one at a time to observe whether there is a reaction.

Special mention should be made of Celiac Disease and gluten sensitivity ("GS"). Gluten is a family of proteins which are in different amounts in most grains, mostly wheat, spelt, rye, barley, and oat. Some people inherit a genetic sensitivity to gluten--and consumption of gluten will trigger an auto-immune reaction to the gut lining. Up to 90% of GS goes undiagnosed, and sometimes the test are falsely negative (i.e. the person has GS but the test says there is none). Therefore, eliminating all grains except rice and quinoa is strongly advocated. Some people have sensitivities to foods without having a frank immune response, sometimes called food intolerance. This situation will be discussed in a future article.

The last toxin that needs to be briefly addressed are heavy metals such as lead and mercury, which though subtle, can alter immune, hormonal and nerve cell function an be a hidden cause of any disease.

Often, these measures alone will make a significant difference. Identifying and correcting deficiencies of critical nutrients, through supplementation, if tolerated, is an important component of healing. Important supplements include glutamine, fish oils, gamma linoleic acid (an anti-inflammatory omega-6 oil), vitamin D, and others. Sleep should be considered a nutrient that needs sufficient quality and quantity.

Additional measures include the adding of "pre-biotics", compounds that support the GI lining and the good bacteria that populates the gut.

In addition, when the lower GI tract is dysfunctional, it can reflect and/or cause dysfunction of the stomach, pancreas, gallbladder and upper GI tract. Addition of digestive acid and enzymes (under the supervision of a properly trained practitioner) can be a critical component of healing. Supporting the body's detoxification systems through special supplements can also be necessary.

Chronic illness can cause adrenal fatigue; testing and or treatment may be indicated early or late in the process based on numerous considerations--see the article on this topic published previously.

Lastly, the energetic aspects of the gut should always be considered. In Ayurvedic (Indian) and Chinese medicine, the colon has a significant relationship to emotional and spiritual themes of control, survival, obsession, anxiety, grief and depression. A remarkable healing has been experienced by numerous "unresponsive" patients by the addition of yoga, acupuncture and other specific energy treatments.

There are additional tests and measures that are in the tool box of the holistic practitioner. Most cases of diarrhea and colitis can be healed, even after decades, if these principles are applied systematically in a collaborative relationship between a patient and holistic practitioner.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This general information should not be used to make decisions about medical care without the involvement of an experienced practitioner.

**For More Information**

O See Dr. Cheikin's related articles on: Leaky Gut Syndrome, Adrenal Fatigue, Gut & Inflammation, Detoxification and others

O Dr. Cheikin's website, www.cheikin.com, has more information

O Dr. Cheikin offers workshops in several holistic health topics. Please call for more information or to host a Workshop.


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