

PROBIOTICS:
BENEFICIAL BACTERIA FOR
HEALTH AND LONGEVITY

by

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Why Read This Book?

It is likely that you or a friend or family member suffers from a medical condition for which, as in my case, conventional therapies have failed. This is very common for the majority of chronic, nagging diseases that are treated by prescription and over the counter drugs. Or you may prefer a more natural approach that enables your body to actually heal rather than to just escape from symptoms. Regardless, this book is not intended for self-diagnosis, self-medication, or substitution for appropriate intervention by a health care professional, even one who is trained in complementary and alternative medicine. In fact, the best use of this book might be for you to take the knowledge you have gained from it to your physician so that, together, you can determine the best way for you to get and stay healthy.

This book also provides you with a tool to educate your doctor on the use of probiotics. Doctors do not learn about probiotics in medical school, and once in practice their continuing education depends largely on pharmaceutical sales people and promotional materials that tout the use of patented drugs. Doctors don't have time to spend more than about 7 minutes with each patient, much less to find out about the broad base of clinical documentation on the uses of probiotics. The merits of probiotics are clear and well-supported in the medical literature, and your health may depend on your doctor's knowledge and use of these organisms, which means that your health might depend on you educating your doctor about them.

Now you know the basic premise behind probiotic supplements. The remainder of this book explains why they are crucial for maintaining good health and for recovering good health when things go bad. The focus is on the science behind the importance of friendly bacteria in an amazingly broad array of human health issues.

Chapter 1. The Probiotic Decision: A Personal Story

As a university research scientist, I did not fully appreciate the value of probiotics for my own health until I was faced with the consequences of a chronic medical condition for which modern medicine had no cure. Because of my experience, I want you to know how I learned about probiotics and what brought me to write this book. It is a story of how my own health challenge became an opportunity for me to discover one of the greatest health secrets of all time, and how you can benefit from my scientific research, experience, and knowledge about it.

Development of a Health Disaster

My road to probiotics began with a series of disastrous developments involving 20 years of ulcerative colitis. These developments centered around the failure to diagnose my condition correctly, leading to years of ineffective treatment. By the time I finally heard the words, “ulcerative colitis,” I had already realized that modern medicine could only offer me a fancy name for a disease, without any idea on how to cure it. There was not even a safe and effective treatment for the symptoms.

Oh, sure, my doctors had drugs to prescribe for treating ulcerative colitis. One, called azulfidine, had been used since 1952, with only a small benefit as an intestinal anti-inflammatory. The other was prednisone, which is a dangerous corticosteroid. As with drugs in general, the benefits had to be weighed against potential side effects, so azulfidine was the choice for me. Although it offered little help, it also came with fewer side effects. I didn't realize how ineffective my treatment had been until I reached a point where I almost died from anemia. It is still disappointing to realize that, after decades of research on ulcerative colitis, the options that I had so long ago have not been improved.

In hindsight, it is no surprise that my condition worsened over the years. It finally reached the point where my doctor decided that my colon was precancerous and had to be removed. Although I know better now, I submitted to this strategy out of fear of the consequences of not having the surgery and of ignorance about any possible alternatives. So, without further consideration by me, my colon was removed at the end of 1990. Now I have an internal pouch, called a J-pouch, that was constructed from the end of my small intestine, as a better-than-nothing replacement for my colon.

At first what I felt was a personal medical disaster instead became an opportunity for me to look outside mainstream medicine for ways to help me with my new health challenge. This is when I first learned about probiotics. What a godsend they have been.

My Discovery of Probiotics

One of the drawbacks of having a J- pouch is a condition that medical professionals have creatively named “pouchitis,” which just means that it becomes infected and inflamed by an overgrowth of the wrong kind of bacteria. It is a miserable problem that causes pain, bloody diarrhea, cramping, fever, frequent visits to the bathroom (sometimes every 10

minutes!), and embarrassing accidents when I don't make it there in time. Even getting a good night's sleep is simply not possible during bouts of pouchitis.

The conventional treatment for pouchitis is a particular antibiotic called metronidazole, which targets several types of infectious colon microbes, including one called *Clostridium difficile*. This is a type of bacterium that infects the colon when there aren't enough of friendly bacteria to keep it in check. Side effects that are listed for metronidazole include a metallic taste (it is a lot worse than that), nausea, and diarrhea. Furthermore, the International Agency for Research on Cancer lists it as a cancer-causing drug.

The best strategy for dealing with pouchitis, in my mind, is to prevent it. So when I started looking for alternative therapies for prevention and treatment, I was pleased to find medical research on how probiotics – that is, dietary bacteria – can reduce the frequency of this infection and even relieve its symptoms when it does occur. It made perfect sense to me that enlisting friendly bacteria to fight against the infectious ones would be a big help, which it has been.

Once I discovered the importance of probiotics for addressing pouchitis, my main challenge became finding the best product from among numerous brands and from mountains of information about different strains, different doses, and different manufacturers. As a scientist I was able to sort out the good science from sales hype and choose what I needed. This was time-consuming and tedious, so I'll save you the trouble of doing what I did by explaining later in the book how you can choose the best probiotics for your own use.

The Bonus for You

As I dug deeper into the scientific research on probiotics, I learned that chronic colon problems often respond well to probiotic supplements. I realize now that I could have slowed and maybe even stopped the degeneration of my colon and brought it back into a more functional, healthy state with the addition of probiotics to my diet when my symptoms first appeared. The bonus for you, therefore, is to benefit from my personal experience and my scientific expertise to learn what you can do to avoid a similar medical disaster.

As a result of my research, I now know that the power of probiotics extends well beyond ulcerative colitis. In fact, I believe that probiotics represent one of the greatest health secrets of all time. I am pleased that modern medicine has finally begun to recognize the role of probiotics for addressing many adverse health conditions. My mission is to enlighten others about this phenomenal natural approach to good health. This book is my way of accomplishing that mission.

Regardless of whether you have ulcerative colitis like I did, or any of a hundred other health disorders, your health will be better when you have a balance of friendly intestinal bacteria working for you. Daily intake of probiotics will support that balance. This is what I

discovered, and this is what you will learn about in this book.