DR. MICOZZI'S
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Brand new research—REVEALED!

Microscopic bugs may hold the secret to transforming your health

It looks like some good might come out of a new initiative at the NIH (National Institutes of Health) for once. Back in 2008, they launched a research program called the Human Microbiome Project. Four years later, the results of this research have started to emerge. And the findings have created quite a stir.

It's made the cover of magazines, and more than one headline—even in mainstream news outlets. In fact, I was interviewed by *The Boston Globe* about it recently, and I'll share what I told them—and more—in just a moment.

First, you need to understand what the "microbiome" is—and how it may affect the way you keep yourself and your family healthy.

The 100 trillion microbes you can't live without

It's estimated there are 100 trillion microbes normally present in the human body. This is what scientists are calling the "microbiome."

And to understand how it works in terms of health and disease, some medical scientists are finally doing what I've been suggesting for years: thinking like biologists and ecologists.

The micro-organisms that make up the normal human microbiome have evolved with us for millions of years. And they form part of the natural and normal ecology of health.

Microbes are normally present on the skin and in the gastro-intestinal tract, the two components of the body that are normally exposed to the outside environment. The surface areas involved are larger than the surface of a tennis court. And within the mouth alone, there are many different "mini-microbiomes." Those on the tongue, gums, and even individual teeth are different from each other.

These tiny organisms are a key to helping us stay in good health—mostly. They have been linked to warding off infections and helping us breakdown and metabolize nutrients for healthy digestion. They may even be critical for preventing obesity and cancer.

The microbiome is important from birth. For example, during pregnancy, the mother's birth canal begins growing Lactobacillus bacteria. The newborn absorbs this bacteria at birth, and it's critical for healthy digestion of mother's milk during breastfeeding. During childhood, the microbiome guides healthy development of the immune system.

Not only does the microbiome help protect us from deadly infections and diseases, it may help define us as individuals—like tiny colonizers on our bodily "planets."

However, while each person is an individual when it comes to her or his own personal microbiome, some scientists have recently suggested that there are three basic types of normal biome (like the three different blood types) called "enterotypes." Your enterotype is based on which of these three basic bacterial types predominates in your own microbiome.

As with blood types, the enterotypes don't explain everything about an individual. But they may go a long way toward tailoring

Continued on page 2...

In this issue:

Marc S. Micozzi, M.D., Ph.D., is a worldwide leader in nutritional and complementary/alternative medicine. He has had a distinguished career as a researcher and physician executive at the National Institutes of Health and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington, DC, and the College of Physicians in Philadelphia PA. He has published over 30 medical and trade books, and founded and edited the first scientific journal, and the first textbook, on complementary/alternative and nutritional medicine, now going into a 5th edition (2014) and continuously in print since 1995.

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appropriate treatments to each individual. This is something that has long been one of the primary tenets of natural medicine. And is one of the things that make the Human Microbiome Project such an exciting advancement in mainstream medicine.

Putting the cart before the horse

Until now, the major focus of researchers has been on the ability of the microbiome to ward off infections from foreign bacteria that try to invade the body.

And the related concern that antibiotics (used to treat specific bacterial infections) also kill off the "good" bacteria of the normal microbiome. This opens the door to other disease-causing infections.

For example, Clostridium difficile (a dangerous bacteria in the family that causes gangrene, botulism, and tetanus, and whose name means "difficult" in Latin) often colonizes antibiotic-treated patients. And it can indeed be "difficult"—if not impossible—to treat. Over the past decade, hospital-acquired infections with C. difficile have more than doubled—from 140,000 to 340,000 cases.

And when it comes to the microbiome of the skin, there are important concerns about disruptions that may lead to dangerous infections with strains of Staphylococcus aureus, for example.

But most doctors still don't "get it" when it comes to dealing with the microbiome. Mostly because there's no simple, "one-size-fits-all," solution (i.e. drug) to dole out.

But if there is one thing that has become crystal clear, it's that we all need to tend to our microbiomes on a regular basis. And not just when we're battling a bout of diarrhea or taking a course of antibiotics.

In other words, we need to begin looking at our microbiomes as the foundation of good health—rather than something to "fix" after the fact.

One researcher at the National Human Genome Research Institute suggests that the best way to make that mindset shift is to stop using aggressive terms when it comes to bacteria. Common phrases like "war" on infection, and "magic bullets" to kill bacteria, and "combatting" microbes present a one-sided view of the role of microbes in health.

The key is reaching or restoring the right balance. And, thanks to the insights coming out of the Human Microbiome Project, medical researchers are marveling at this "new" concept. Of course, biologists and medical anthropologists have been studying this approach for generations.

But regardless of how long this idea has been around, one thing is clear: Balancing your microbiome can make a dramatic impact on your health.

Why that probiotic supplement may not be the best choice

Of course, when most people think about restoring or maintaining the GI microbiome (more commonly known as "gut microflora," or simply "gut health"), they assume a probiotic dietary supplement will do the job.

But I have to admit, as common as probiotic supplements are these days—and as widely accepted as they've become by both natural and mainstream medicine—I'm still skeptical.

The problem is, a probiotic must pass through the entire digestive system—the mouth, esophagus, stomach, and intestines—in order to reach the site of most of the microbiome.

This passage goes through a very hostile environment with numerous enzymes, strong acids,

and biochemicals designed to break down and destroy whatever is passing through. This is why protein-based therapies like insulin, or complex vitamins like vitamin B12, and some steroids, have to be injected directly into the bloodstream. Because they can't make it through the digestive tract and into the blood.

So, the chances of living "probiotic" bacteria swallowed in dietary supplements making it through this gauntlet are very slim. Plus, most of the microbes in probiotic supplements were chosen because they have a long shelf-life or for other reasons not based upon any evidence of their effectiveness. Many studies on probiotics find that people who take them simply have more healthy immune systems to begin with.

So it's difficult to say what—if any—effect the standard probiotics have on overall immunity.

That said, there is also no evidence that they do any harm. And some specific probiotics, such as *Lactobacillus reuteri* have been shown to be helpful in diarrhea—especially in children.

So it's not necessarily a matter of writing probiotic supplements off completely. However, I do think there are more effective ways to ensure your microbiome is balanced and healthy.

How to give your body a more guaranteed microbe boost

First and foremost, you should avoid the use of antibiotics unless they're absolutely necessary. Antibiotics disrupt the normal microbiome, causing adverse health consequences that scientists are just now beginning to understand. Not to mention the fact that overuse and misuse of antibiotics has led to the development of dangerous strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Along these same lines, avoid using "anti-bacterial" gels and soaps. Obviously, these products disrupt your skin's natural microbiome. I discussed the hazards associated with these in more detail in the November 2012 issue of *Insiders' Cures*.

Beyond avoiding these common microbiome disruptors, there are also some simple steps you can take to give your body a "microbe boost."

There are several food sources of healthy bacteria (probiotics) that, when eaten regularly, can be absorbed in the normal food matrix and help keep your microbiome balanced as had been done in traditional cultures for generations.

Yogurt and cheese are two of the easiest to find. But raw milk may be even more effective—if you can get it. From my experience as a physician, a good dose of raw milk seems to be able to help just about any gastro-intestinal problem. In this way, I've always considered it more as a medicine than a food. Unfortunately, raw milk is forbidden by many nanny state governments. To find a source near you, visit www.realmilk.com.

Traditionally cultured foods like sauerkraut or Korean kim chi are also good dietary sources of probiotics. As are traditional soy sauces and fish sauces and pastes from East and Southeast Asia. Even home-brewed beer and wine can be a good, natural source of probiotics—as long as it hasn't been pasteurized. (Plus, you get the benefits of moderate alcohol consumption).

In addition to these probiotic foods which introduce and help maintain healthy microbes, there are also some foods that can help nurture the normal microbiome itself. Artichoke, barley, beans, green, leafy vegetables, and oats all naturally promote and support the growth of good bacteria that are already present in the GI tract.

These probiotic foods used to be common in many traditional diets worldwide. They provided our ancestors with a steady diet of healthy microbes that helped to keep intestinal microbes and immune systems in healthy balance.

Unfortunately, sterilization and pasteurization came along—and killed off all microbes in foods. In theory, it sounds like a good thing. But as we're seeing now, these "modern" techniques have made a

Continued on page 7...

A new kind of life-saving "transplant"

Recently, scientists have had success improving microbiome imbalances using "fecal transplants." Yes, you read that correctly.

Using a simple suppository, they're able to introduce normal bacterial microbiome directly into the colon (large intestines)—bypassing all the problems of digestion and destruction in the upper GI tract.

And squirm factor aside, this approach is proving very beneficial for patients who have had their normal bacteria disrupted by disease and/or antibiotic treatments. In fact, these "transplants" have been successful in nearly 90 percent of cases. If it sounds like you might be a candidate for such a treatment, ask your doctor or GI specialist whether it is available in your area.

NEWS BRIEFS

The new chelation "surprise" decades in the making

Cardiologists across the country were recently shocked by the results of a new study. It showed that chelation therapy can be effective in treating—and even reversing—heart disease.

But it shouldn't have come as a surprise. Fifteen years ago, the Federal Trade Commission conducted a serious investigation on claims that chelation therapy could reverse heart disease. They retained me as an expert witness for an administrative hearing on the matter. And there were enough positive studies—even back then—for the FTC to relent.

Now comes the NIH (National Institutes of Health) with a $30 million study to "prove" what hundreds of doctors and thousands of patients have already known for years.

Chelation therapy uses an FDA-approved drug called EDTA. EDTA has been known for many years to remove heavy metals, such as lead, from the bloodstream and tissues. By the same token it is also thought that EDTA can remove the mineral calcium from plaques that block coronary arteries and other blood vessels. This makes arteries and blood vessels more pliable and allows the blockages to be dissolved.

Chelation therapy is administered under medical supervision by infusing EDTA directly into the bloodstream. Doctors often add other beneficial nutrients to the infusions as well.

In this new study, the treatment protocol included infusions of vitamin C and the safe blood thinner heparin. Of course critics are claiming that the heart health benefits seen in this study must be due to the vitamin C—not the chelation therapy itself. So, it seems the only time they give any credit to vitamin C is when they can use it to try to explain away the benefits of chelation therapy. Either way, it sure beats having to undergo the expensive and invasive surgical procedures most cardiologists recommend for blocked arteries.

To find a qualified practitioner near you, visit the American College for Advancement in Medicine at www.acam.org.

The winter health hazard no one is talking about
And the simple, delicious solution

Most people think of dehydration as being a problem during hot summer weather, when we lose water and electrolytes through perspiration. But cold winter weather presents different dehydration risks. When the air gets cold outside, it can't hold moisture. Therefore, the atmosphere becomes very dry. And indoors, heating systems bake the moisture out of the air. This dries out your respiratory passages. Which then try to compensate by drawing fluid from the rest of your body.

So it's just as easy to become dehydrated in the winter as it is in summertime.

But there's an easy—and delicious—solution. And I don't mean drinking more water.

Unfortunately, our drinking water (yes, even bottled water) is missing elements it should have. And tap water often contains toxic chemicals (including chlorine) that no one should drink.

Which is why I recommend replacing your 8-glasses-a-day with 4-6 glasses of rooibos tea. It's delicious, easy to keep a pitcher on hand, and much more hydrating than any other fluid I've ever seen.

Rooibos quickly and easily adds back most of the constituents that are missing in our modern day "dead" water. Plus, rooibos has a similar antioxidant profile to green tea. It's also naturally free of caffeine and oxalic acid (which may cause urinary stones). This makes it an ideal alternative to typical green or black tea.

Look for rooibos (or red bush) tea in your local health food store or even some regular grocery stores. It can also be found in some specialty coffee and tea shops. Simply steep the tea bags in pure water and drink hot, or pour over ice. And if you happen to be in Sarasota, Florida over the winter months, you should plan a visit to the Red Joe Café, recently opened by my friend Joe Firek. The café beverage menu centers around rooibos tea beverages and promises to be a real treat. I know I'll be stopping by—and I hope to see you there.

The New Year's resolution you may not need to make

Why cutting back on smoking may be better for you than quitting cold turkey

'Tis the season—for New Year's resolutions. Losing weight, of course, ranks No. 1 on many people's resolution lists. But close on its heels is another health-driven ambition—to quit smoking.

I've addressed this topic in greater detail previously—at least in terms of cigarette smoking (refer back to the special report titled **"The day science went UP IN SMOKE—and why the right amount of tobacco could *actually be good for you*,"** which you received when you first subscribed to *Insiders' Cures*). So, just a quick reminder that if you've resolved to quit smoking cigarettes, there is a way to make it easier on yourself.

While nobody should be smoking two packs per day (or even one, for that matter), there's really no need to quit "cold turkey." Instead, try simply cutting back to half-a-pack per day or less. Scientific evidence shows you'll generally be just as healthy for it.

But I've received several questions from readers wondering about the potential effects of other forms of tobacco use. So today, let's take a few minutes to look at those in a bit more detail. And I'll tell you what the scientific research really has to say about the so-called "hazards" of tobacco.

Before cigarettes took center stage

It's only during the past 100 years that cigarettes have become the common or typical form of consuming tobacco.

Down through history there have been many other means, including chewing tobacco (chaw), cigars, fumigants, pipes, snuff, and, believe it or not, even suppositories.

But no matter what the form, when it comes to tobacco use and health consequences it seems that science has taken a back seat to political public health agendas.

How that stogie may actually help you live longer

Back in 1989, I was one of the researchers involved in the largest study on health then available. And we observed that cigar and pipe smokers actually have lower rates of disease and mortality overall than do non-smokers. (That said, they do have a higher rate of oral cancers.)

But today, even the National Cancer Institute has come around. And in a monograph devoted to the subject of cigars, they've concluded that smoking two cigars or less per day is not associated with significant health risks.

Continued on page 6...

Quitting doesn't give you a "get-out-of-lung-cancer-free" card

Back in November, I happened upon a radio program talking about a lung cancer vigil held in Albany, NY. And one of the most poignant lines of the broadcast came from a woman who said that lung cancer victims are seen to "have brought it on themselves." All thanks to the myopic view—and social stigma—that smoking causes lung cancer.

But I've always said there is a lot more to lung cancer than just cigarette smoking. And indeed, a full 80 percent of people who come down with lung cancer today are former smokers or those who never smoked.

So, what does the government have to say to non-smokers and former smokers about lung cancer? Precious little—due their politically misguided policy decision 25 years ago to put lung cancer research funding primarily into smoking prevention and cessation programs.

Thus, little or no progress has been made in understanding genetic and other risk factors involved in lung cancer—or potential treatments. While the government pours small fortunes into research on breast cancer and colon cancer, for example, lung cancer—the third most common cancer today—is woefully neglected. The victims have been abandoned. And they get little or no attention from "races for the cure" and other PR stunts.

If the NIH had stuck with science instead of social engineering we would be able to offer something more to those suffering from lung cancer—other than saying "I told you so."

One form of tobacco you won't hear me recommending

The cancer concerns surrounding tobacco have focused primarily on the "combustion products" (such as tar) involved in inhaled forms. Chewing tobacco has a different profile than smoking because users aren't exposed to these combustion products.

However, that doesn't necessarily make chewing tobacco a safer option. In fact, it may be more problematic than light to moderate smoking.

For example, chewing tobacco causes problems such as leukoplakia in the mouth which may lead to oral cancers. In addition, no study has shown that tobacco chewers actually have lower rates of disease and death. Research has shown, as I mentioned above, that cigar- or pipe-only smokers do have a lower rate of disease and death, despite their increase in oral cancer.

The benefits of smoking—without the tobacco

So it's clear there ARE relatively safe ways to enjoy tobacco in moderation. Which means there's really no need to eliminate it from your daily life entirely. At least not from a health perspective.

Obviously, though, this is a very personal choice. And if—for whatever reason—you decide you do want to quit completely, nicotine patches and gums are effective at replacing nicotine without the need for tobacco.

However, if there are any benefits to long-term use of these patches or gums, I'm not aware of them. There ARE however, well-documented medicinal benefits associated with the nicotine you get from moderate tobacco consumption. Including improved digestion, stimulating the brain without becoming "hyper" or "wired," and an overall feeling of relaxation and peace.

NEWS BRIEF

Even "natural know-it-alls" can be wrong about wine

A friend of mine who happens to be a very big name in the popular natural-health world published a comment recently about red wine that took me by surprise. Particularly because it echoed the same narrow, reductionist view that mainstream biomedical researchers and many doctors typically have.

He said people who are not already wine drinkers shouldn't start drinking just to get the benefits of resveratrol. Resveratrol, of course, is one of the latest "magic bullets" the biochemically-blinded use to explain the overwhelming health benefits of moderate wine consumption. My friend did correctly point out that to get really high levels of the compound, it is more efficient to simply take a high-quality supplement rather than drink wine… But he missed the vineyard for the grapes by not considering the powerful stress-reducing (not to mention circulatory) benefits that come from the alcohol in wine.

And there's also the other half of the equation to consider: The mind-body impact of sharing food and drink with family and friends. I've always maintained that it's not just *what* we eat (and drink), but how, that influences health (as I explained in my report *The Top of the Food Chain Cure for Obesity*, which you received when you subscribed to *Insiders' Cures*). All the ancient health traditions understand that. And I would expect any natural guru or practitioner of complementary and alternative medicine to understand it as well.

Unfortunately, like my friend, many practitioners of natural, alternative, and complementary therapies began their work in natural medicine only after dropping out of mainstream medicine. Of course, such interests were not well tolerated, let alone fostered, by the medical mainstream (and, in many cases, still aren't). And even today, alternative practitioners don't get much in the way of formal biomedical training at all. I have a great deal of respect for all those who choose to help others using a natural approach…but natural medicine is *medicine* after all, not just folklore.

A better understanding of human biology and patho-physiology goes a long way, whether for "natural know-it-alls," or the mainstream medical minions.

Continued from page 3...

huge impact on our microbiomes—and not for the better. Particularly when you consider the over-use of antibiotics and anti-bacterial products that has also come about in recent years.

Over time all this has resulted in making us more vulnerable to acute infection and chronic inflammation. These developments may, in turn, be contributing to the dramatic increases in chronic inflammatory diseases, autoimmune disorders, and diabetes. Not to mention health problems like asthma, allergies, chronic sinus infections, and even some cancers.

The more we learn about the human microbiome, the more complex it seems. And the modern day threats to our systems just keep piling up. The good news is, protecting yourself from these threats and keeping your body's microbiome balanced is really quite simple with the steps I outlined above. IC

Three simple steps to a healthy microbiome

1. Take antibiotics only when necessary, confirmed by a medical test for bacterial infection.
2. Wash your hands and face frequently with regular soap and water.
3. Three to five times per week, eat a serving of yogurt, and incorporate foods like artichoke, kimchi, legumes, oats, or sauerkraut into your regular diet.

NEWS BRIEF

More senseless salt advice from the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association (AHA) is still on the anti-salt bandwagon. Despite the lack of science behind the government's decades-long "war on salt." In fact, now they're taking it even further, urging everyone to drastically cut back on salt. Even those who don't currently have high blood pressure.

They claim cutting salt will help prevent hypertension and heart disease. However, recent studies show that, while salt may slightly raise blood pressure, it is not actually associated with heart or vascular diseases. But the AHA is still sticking to their story.

One thing I can agree on with the AHA is their recommendation to limit processed and packaged foods. But not for the same reason. The AHA believes that people get most of their salt from processed and packaged foods. Which may be true. But these "foods" aren't just full of salt. They contain plenty of unhealthy constituents, too. So the AHA is very likely misidentifying salt as the culprit.

Besides, the dietary studies the AHA uses to assess salt intake are notoriously flawed. Most of them rely on asking study subjects to simply recall how often they eat certain foods. Which is hardly an accurate or objective way to measure food intake.

So, the fact is, the government doesn't really know what people are eating.

The AHA does make it clear that our bodies need sodium to function. And that, under normal circumstances, any excess sodium in the body is filtered out by the kidneys and excreted in the urine.

What they fail to mention is that when you're under stress, the neuroendocrine system sends "danger" signals to the kidneys to retain extra salt. The extra salt starts to build up in the blood and attract water. Which causes blood volume to swell. Which increases blood pressure.

This response makes perfect sense when we really are in danger. The problem is, most people aren't in danger on a daily basis. But they are under stress. And over time, the elevated blood pressure brought on by this stress can boost the risk of heart disease and stroke. It can also lead to heart failure and kidney disease, starting a vicious cycle since both of those conditions make it harder for the kidneys to balance the body's salt levels.

And keep in mind, retaining extra salt is just one of the ways the body can raise blood pressure when it needs to (or "thinks" it needs to). So even if you follow the AHA's misguided advice to all but eliminate salt, your body will find other ways to raise blood pressure if you're under chronic stress.

To say that eliminating salt from the diet will prevent heart disease is like saying removing seat belts from an automobile will cause an accident. It just doesn't make sense. Once again, stress—not salt—is the real killer.

NEWS BRIEFS

Blood pressure benefits of vitamin C—only halfway there

There has been more evidence on the potential health benefits of vitamin C than almost any other nutrient. And yet, as I discussed in my special report *Classified Cancer Answers*, the NCI (National Cancer Institute) failed to conduct a clinical trial on its cancer-preventing abilities. They claimed it had actually been "given a bad name" by the efforts of two-time Nobel laureate Linus Pauling to promote its scientifically proven benefits for preventing everything from cancer to the common cold.

Researchers have also had evidence that vitamin C can lower blood pressure for a long time. But once again research funds were not made available to sufficiently test this benefit in clinical trials—until now.

Recently, researchers at Johns Hopkins found sufficient evidence from research studies that a 500 mg daily dose of vitamin C can lower blood pressure by 5 mm Hg. (Granted, 500 mg of vitamin C is higher than the RDA. But it is still a very reasonable—and safe—daily dose.)

Although the cardiovascular risks associated with high blood pressure have been known for many years, medical experts are finally starting to realize that even slightly elevated levels are risky. So it's worth reducing blood pressure by every point.

However, it's important to keep this news in perspective.

While it can help you shave a few points off of your blood pressure readings—and likely help you cut back on the amount of medication you're taking—vitamin C simply isn't as potent as drugs. Plus, there are no clear protocols for managing blood pressure purely with natural products (like vitamin C). And high blood pressure is just too deadly to "experiment" with.

So by all means use vitamin C—for lots of reasons. But don't rely on it in place of the effective blood pressure medications available today. Work with your doctor to get high blood pressure under control swiftly and efficiently with drugs. Then work to address underlying causes through lifestyle and dietary modifications, which can include supplementation with vitamin C and other nutrients known to support the heart.

Got a cold or flu? Don't take Tylenol

In the November 2012 issue of *Insiders' Cures*, I gave you detailed advice on how to avoid getting a cold or flu this winter. But at some point, despite your best efforts, you might still find yourself with a case of the sniffles. And you may be tempted to take a dose of Tylenol to reduce your fever or take the edge off the achiness. But don't trade temporary relief for an even bigger problem—liver failure.

Although there are many other pain relievers available, this poison continues to be a permanent fixture in medicine cabinets throughout the United States. But the fact of the matter is, acetaminophen (Tylenol) is the No. 1 cause of acute liver failure.

Ironically, I have heard concerned mothers tell me they use acetaminophen for their children because they are afraid of aspirin causing Reye's Syndrome. Reye's Syndrome also causes liver damage. But it's a very rare complication of aspirin that occurs only in young children. Unlike the all-too-common liver damage caused by acetaminophen—in adults and children alike.

Unfortunately, even hospitals have been brainwashed into believing that acetaminophen is a safe pain reliever. In fact, a recent study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* found that excessively high doses of acetaminophen are routinely administered to hospital patients.[1] To make matters worse, nearly one-quarter of patients received daily doses above the level accepted as "safe." And nearly 5 percent received even higher, supposedly "supra-therapeutic" doses. Super toxic is more like it.

Frankly, there is no reason to use acetaminophen for anything, by anyone, ever.

There are much safer ways to relieve pain. And as far as cold and flu symptoms go, I mentioned in a recent *Daily Dispatch* ("A cure for the common cold—hiding in plain sight") that Echinacea has now been proven to reduce the duration and severity. Without putting you at risk for liver failure.

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