

Chatting with The Good Dr. Laura Shook
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I'm a chiropractor. My primary tools are my hands, eyes, education and years of clinical experience. A healthy diet, exercise, proper hygiene and the occasional trip to my own chiropractor are key elements of my personal defense against illness and disease. If a brisk walk and eating 6-8 servings of vegetables a day will keep my heart, lungs and immune system strong then I am all for it. I am also a pharmacist's daughter. My formative years were spent in my parent's pharmacy. I learned at a young age that sometimes drugs are necessary and when you need drugs, take drugs, take the right drug and take that drug as prescribed. Listen to your pharmacist and heed his or her advice. Read the literature that comes with your prescription and pay attention to how your body responds to treatment. When in doubt, call your pharmacist or doctor.

Now, let's talk about antibiotics. Antibiotics transformed medicine. Let us not forget that 60 years ago appendicitis or a toothache could easily have resulted in a brain damaging fever or a slow painful death. Antibiotics changed all that. Three cheers for antibiotics!

Most of us will, at some point in time, find ourselves taking antibiotics with the goal of curing a bacterial infection. A tooth abscess, pneumonia or a festering cut, there are many reasons your doctor might prescribe antibiotics. When it's my turn to take antibiotics, I will remember my daddy's advice: 1) Follow the directions. 2) Take the entire prescription; do not stop because you feel better. 3) Take a probiotic to help your digestive tract and immune system recover from having your friendly bacteria, the bacteria that naturally inhabit your intestines, wiped out along with the invading bacteria. "Take a probiotic" I frequently give this advice.

A probiotic is a supplement of friendly bacteria taken to reseed your body's digestive tract and restore balance to a system left out of whack when an antibiotic has wiped out bacteria both friendly and foe. This imbalance can result in stomach pains, gas, diarrhea and an overgrowth of yeast following a course of antibiotic therapy.

These probiotics are not unlike the bacteria that turns milk into yogurt only stronger and more concentrate. You can buy it at the natural food store and perhaps at some pharmacies (Many years ago my daddy carried a product called Lactonex). These probiotics are living creatures so look for them in the refrigerated section. They, the probiotics, have to survive the acid in our stomachs so look for something with many billions of viable cells. My personal recommendation is Udo's Choice Super Bifido Plus Probiotic "guaranteed to contain no less than 34 billion total viable cells" (\$44 for 30 capsules/10 day supply).

You may also find it useful to reseed with a probiotic after a bout of stomach flu or other purging of the digestive tract.

For more information on digestion check out D. Lindsey Berkson's book *Healthy Digestion the Natural Way*.

For more information regarding antibiotic therapy, consult with your pharmacist.

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