

Probiotics, Horton Finds a Flora! Kelly Pomeroy, M.H.

In honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday this last week, I got thinking about a delightful book made movie called Horton Hears a Who. It's a wonderful story of an elephant named Horton that hears a noise coming from a speck of dust. Horton at first believed that it was only a small person. However, he later discovers the speck is an entire world with a thriving civilization! Horton vows to protect this tiny precious world. We too have a tiny precious world that needs protecting with the same passion Horton devoted to his newfound friends. Flora is our tiny precious world.



Flora is bacteria, fungi and other organisms. We often think of these things as harmful organisms that we should protect our bodies against. However, flora is a harmless and helpful system within us. This microscopic ecosystem is found both on our skin and inside our bodies. We share a symbiotic relationship; we help them, they help us. Up to a thousand different species of these organisms thrive throughout our bodies. Well-known genus's of internal bacteria are Bifidobacterium and Lactobacillus. These bacteria are commonly found in yogurts and other products. Common fungi found in our intestines are Candida, Saccharomyces, Aspergillus and Penicillium.

Without these organisms we could not maintain a healthy body. Floras ferment unused energy substances to help keep their world balanced and ours cleaner. They keep our immune system strong, prevent the growth of harmful pathogenic organisms, produce vitamins for us such as biotin and vitamin K, produce hormones that help us store fats and much more.

In Horton Hears a Who, many of the animals in the forest tried to destroy the speck of dust that Horton so valiantly protected. Flora in our bodies undergo similar threats. One of the most prevalent threats are antibiotics. Antibiotics kill off harmful pathogens, but by so doing, they also kill off our friendly flora. When taking antibiotics we create more opportunity for harmful disease because our friendly flora have been drastically reduced, if not completely wiped out.

Another threat to this delicate ecosystem is the overgrowth of the fungus Candida albicans. It is responsible for breaking down sugar and alcohol. Candida is a harmless, helpful fungus when in balance, but when there is too much the other flora die off and Candida is left to proliferate and grow tails that lacerate the intestinal walls and leave place for many illnesses. Common ailments such as yeast infections and leaky gut syndrome come from Candida albicans overgrowth. This overgrowth stems from a weak immune system, an overly acidic system and/or excessive alcohol or sugar consumption.

When Horton discovered the fantastical world on his speck of dust, he vowed to protect it. What can we do to protect our flora world? Strengthen the immune system and consume probiotics! Probiotics are bacteria and fungi and organisms that build up your flora.

Grab the Garlic!- When sick, consider fresh garlic. Garlic is a natural “antibiotic” that will not kill off friendly flora, but will kill off disease. It also strengthens the immune system. Mince it up and let it sit 3-5 minutes to activate the powerful healing allicin constituent.

Cheers with Apple Cider Vinegar!- This vinegar is a natural probiotic for your body that contains acetic acid bacteria from the fermentation process. It supports the immune system, removes toxins, improves digestion, helps create a healthy pH in the body and is great for dry throats and more.

Fermented Food Smorgasbord!- Consume more fermented foods that are naturally full of probiotics such as sauerkraut, kim chi, miso, kefir, tempeh or try yogurt (nondairy).

Do It Yourself with Probiotics!- Make a probiotic with whole grains. The recipe for Rejuvelac is below. This makes friendly bacteria such as Lactobacillus bifidus, containing eight of the vitamin B's, vitamin E and K, proteins, carbohydrates, phosphates, saccharines and enzymes.

Probiotics have been known to help with irritable bowel syndrome, leaky gut syndrome, strengthen the immune system, clear up skin conditions, prevent allergies, help digestive problems such as diarrhea, improve female health and more. Like Horton, let's protect our natural ecosystem inside so that they can protect us!

Kelly Pomeroy is the mother of four amazing children, Student Adviser and graduated Master Herbalist from The School of Natural Healing.