

Self-Reliance in Health Course

Lesson 2 - Gut Health

If we are to continue the analogy of building a strong, healthy body to constructing a home, the walls go up after the foundation is laid. We discussed how the importance of nutrition is like laying a strong foundation and our gut health can be likened to the walls that will support the function of the entire body.

Remember my story about healing my hands of “eczema”? Well during that time period, which was about five years, my little guy was experiencing frequent, high fevers and myriad of health conditions that would vary from month to month such as painful rashes, lung and bronchial conditions, ear infections, diarrhea, stomach aches with puking, pink eye, etc. Every month I was in the doctor’s office trying to get answers and the results were about the same as my hands. “Here, take this antibiotic, it might be (fill in the blank with a condition)”, the condition was different with each visit and each doctor. In essence, they could not help me. Again, I was left to figure this out through study, prayer and the spirit directing me to truth. Well, the root cause of both of our conditions was the same problem, our gut health. Little Man had received an antibiotic when he was 12 months old to treat a severe sinus infection. Not only did he have an allergic reaction, but it also destroyed his gut flora and with it, his immune system. Every time a virus or bacteria got around him, his body could not fight it, so it went into extreme fever mode. Ironically, the very thing that caused the condition in the first place, antibiotics, was what the doctors wanted me to give him every time I went in. Luckily, I had the spirit directing me to not fill the prescriptions and so that first dose at 12 months, was the only one he ever had.

Every path to health starts with a healthy gut, which refers to the digestive system, primarily the large intestine. The microbiome is the bacteria that populate your gut. For every human cell, there are ten bacterial cells, we are more bacteria than we are human! These bacteria are key to our immune function, working with our body to consume and kill viruses, toxins, and harmful bacteria. They produce vitamins, have an effect on our personality and the way we think, they communicate with each other and with our brain, affecting mental health. They are tied to our nervous system and even produce hormones.

This microbiome consists of both beneficial and harmful bacteria. The key is to keep the beneficial bacteria more productive and thriving than the harmful. If there are too many harmful bacteria, the beneficial can morph into harmful and that is where you see many of the health issues common in society today. Most health concerns have a root cause in the gut and once you work on killing off the harmful bacteria, healing the gut from resulting damage and feeding the beneficial bacteria, your body will return to a balanced state of optimal health.

Building the Microbiome

The foundation to a healthy microbiome starts at birth. A baby coming through the birth canal is coated with the first beneficial bacteria he will receive. Mother's milk will continue to introduce more bacteria that will enter the new baby's gut. Nursing provides the best foundation for a strong immune system.

Have you ever noticed how babies put everything into their mouths? This is a natural instinct the baby uses to continue introducing more and more bacteria into their microbiome. Kids love to run around in bare feet, climb trees, play in the mud, etc. All this contact with dirt, plants, and animals continues to introduce different kinds of bacteria to the gut.

In his book *Eat Dirt*, Dr. Axe shares a few ways to continue building the immune system once that foundation is laid at birth:

- Toss the hand sanitizer and other sanitizing products and cleaners.
- Eat probiotic-rich foods like kefir, yogurt, and sauerkraut.
- Consume raw honey.
- Get a pet.
- Swim in the ocean.
- Walk barefoot in the dirt and grass.
- Do not wash your garden produce. (Yes, wash store bought)

Just as the bacteria can grow in the gut, it can also be destroyed. My son's experience with antibiotics is a great example of having an entire colony wiped out and what can happen when we do not have that strong foundation. Other ways the friendly bacteria can be destroyed is through over sanitizing as antibacterial chemicals not only kill harmful bacteria but also wipe out the friendly, toxins in our environment, GMO's, pesticides in foods and soil, pasteurized foods, the list goes on and on. While this can be an overwhelming list, just do the best you can and ask the Lord to make up for the rest by strengthening and protecting your body through the efforts you can make.

The way to have a healthy gut and put up supporting "walls" in your body is to follow the above-mentioned things. If your gut is already damaged and you need to repair those "walls", here is an inspired, simple gut healing regimen that will kill off and sweep out harmful bacteria, then heal and soothe the gut to set a healthy terrain to build and strengthen the beneficial bacteria. In addition to this protocol, it is important to follow a whole foods diet we discussed in lesson one on nutrition.

If you are not sure if you have a gut issue, check out this statement from the book, *Eat Dirt* by Dr. Josh Axe:

“The signs of leaky gut can be confusingly varied:

- *You might feel tired and sluggish.*
- *You could get frequent indigestion, heartburn, bloating and gas.*
- *You might develop sensitivities to certain foods, foods that you have enjoyed without incident for years (or decades).*
- *You can experience persistent “brain fog” characterized by a cloudy memory and lack of focus.*
- *You may notice changes in your skin, such as dark circles under your eyes, or inflamed skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis, and acne.*

If the situation persists, you might start to develop more serious ramifications:

- *chronic fatigue, adrenal exhaustion, and lethargy.*
- *Crippling pain and arthritis.*
- *A range of dangerous digestive conditions, including inflammatory bowel disease.*
- *Autoimmune diseases like Hashimotos’ thyroiditis.*
- *Sometimes, frighteningly, inexplicably life-threatening conditions.”*

I would add to that list “mystery conditions” such as my son experienced. As always, use your light of Christ to direct you if this may be an answer to a condition you or a family member are suffering with.

Gut Healing Program

The program is broken down into the following steps:

- Kill Off
- Sweep Out
- Soothe and Heal
- Build and Strengthen

KILL OFF

The following herbs are used to kill off the harmful bacteria inhabiting your gut. These bacteria can cause addictions, including sugar, alcohol, tobacco and other substances. They affect mental health and can actually cause depression and anxiety. Because of their affect over our hormones and cravings they can cause chemical imbalances, obesity, mystery illness, allergies and chronic conditions. Kill off herbs can be taken alone or in a combination. I recommend using the Autumn Spice Tea because of its pleasant taste or go with what you feel directed to use. Take any of these herbs along with your breakfast in the morning for 4-6 weeks. Dosage would be around 2-3 capsules, 1-2 dropperfuls or 1 cup of tea. Go with what you feel when it comes to

dosage remembering how each body is created individually and may need more or less.

- Black walnut hull (Herbs to Know in Garden, p. 20)
- Cayenne <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/healing-benefits-of-cayenne-capsicum>
- Clove
- Cinnamon <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/healing-benefits-of-cinnamon>
- Ginger <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/healing-benefits-of-ginger>
- Garlic <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/garlic-natures-antibiotic>
- Lomatium (Herbs to Know in Wild, p. 76)
- Oregano <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-oregano>
- Peppermint <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/all-about-mint>
- Sagebrush (Herbs to Know in Wild, p. 128)
- Turmeric <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-turmeric>
- Wormwood <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-wormwood>
- Willow (Herbs to Know in Wild, p. 158)
- Dr. Christopher's Intestinal Sweep https://drchristophersherbshop.com/products/intestinal-sweep-180-cap?_pos=1&_sid=736db36d2&_ss=r
- Autumn Spice Tea (<http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/autumn-spice-herbal-tea>) can also purchase a readymade blend called Creamy Pumpkin Pie Tea from <https://www.bulkherbstore.com/collections/herbal-tea/products/creamy-pumpkin-pie-tea-organic>

SWEEP OUT

These herbs help the body sweep out the bacteria that are being killed off. They will also help flush out other toxins and cleanse the gut. Take these herbs in the evening before bed along with the kill off herbs in the morning for 4-6 weeks. Dosage would be around 2-3 capsules, 1-2 dropperfuls or 1 cup of tea. Go with what you feel when it comes to dosage. Go with what you feel when it comes to dosage remembering how each body is created individually and may need more or less.

- Dandelion <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-dandelion-medicinal-weeds>
- Gumweed (Herbs to Know in Wild, p. 64)
- Flaxseed
- Psyllium seed powder
- Fiber flush (from *The Prime*) 1 tsp. each of flaxseed and psyllium seed powder stirred into a glass of room temperature water, drink immediately.
- Red clover <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-red-clover>
- Yellow dock root (Herbs to Know in Wild, p.168)
- Triphala
- Dried fruits; raisins, dates, figs, prunes

- Blood Purifier <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/blood-purifying-herbal-blend>
- Dr. Christopher Blood Stream Formula <https://drchristophersherbshop.com/search?type=product&options%5Bprefix%5D=last&q=blood+stream>
- Dr. Christopher Lower Bowel Formula <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/dr-christophers-lower-bowel-formula>
- Dandy Blend <https://amzn.to/2TfgqtC>
- Liver Cleanse and Support blend <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/liver-cleanse-formula>

SOOTHE AND HEAL

After killing off and sweeping out the harmful bacteria, the cleansed gut needs to be healed. Harmful bacteria cause all kinds of damage including leaky gut, which is where the intestinal wall has been damaged and undigested particles can leak through into the bloodstream. These herbs and foods help seal up "leaks", tighten and firm the intestinal lining and soothe inflammation. They also lay a strong foundation for the beneficial bacteria to adhere to. Take these herbs for 1- 2 weeks after the kill off and sweep phase, then continue to incorporate into the diet. Dosage for herbs and blends would be around 2-3 capsules with each meal, 1-2 dropperfuls with each meal or a quart of tea sipped throughout the day. Ghee, collagen, and bone broth can be incorporated into meals each day.

- Aloe vera juice <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/all-about-aloe-vera>
- Calendula <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/calendula-the-skin-care-herb>
- Chamomile <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-chamomile>
- Chia seeds
- Marshmallow <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-marsh-mallow>
- Mullein (Herbs to Know in the Wild, p. 88)
- Purslane (Herbs to Know in the Wild, p.116)
- Slippery Elm
- Licorice root
- Bone broth <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/turkey-stock-for-colds-and-flu>
- Collagen; found in bone broth, certain foods or as a supplement.
- Ghee
- Gelatin; found in bone broth, gummies (purchased from health food store or make your own) or as a supplement.
- Olive oil, coconut oil, flaxseed oil
- Frankincense essential oil massaged over abdomen
- Heartburn Blend <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/heartburn-herbal-blend>
- Gut Soother Blend <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/gut-healer-herbal-mix>

BUILD AND STRENGTHEN

Now the gut is ready to build up a healthy colony of beneficial bacteria. There are some herbs that will help with this, but the majority of building will be done by introducing cultured foods, supplements full of different species of microbes and “dirt”. Now is a good time to incorporate the other ways to build beneficial bacteria that we discussed at the beginning of this lesson. Start slowly with the building process, one item at a time in small amounts. Be mindful of how your body feels. If you get nauseous, head or body aches or just not feeling good, slow it down.

- Alfalfa <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-alfalfa-the-father-of-all-foods>
- Clover <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-red-clover>
- Elderberries <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-elder>
- Nettles (Herbs to Know in the Wild, p. 92)
- Red raspberry leaf <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/herb-series-red-raspberry-leaf>
- Blackstrap molasses
- Yogurt and Kefir
- Cultured foods and drinks
- Probiotic supplements or mixes
- Happy Gut supplement from www.bulkherbstore.com
- Raw honey <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/raw-honey-gods-amazing-healer>

Example:

I just gave a big list of herbs and foods that can heal, repair and build gut health which will now need to be fitted to an individual and their constitution as we discussed in [Lesson 1](#). Let me give you an example of the protocol I used to heal my son's gut to give you an idea of how that might look. All of his meals were whole foods with no sugar or processed foods and I tried to incorporate dried fruits and other foods listed above:

- Breakfast with a cup of kefir, Gut Soother and Digize essential oil blend (from Young Living) massaged on abdomen
- Lunch with Happy Gut digestive capsules and Digize massage
- Dinner with Happy Gut digestive capsules and a cup of kefir
- Bedtime - two dropperfuls of Gut Soother and Digize massage

It took three months of this simple schedule to completely heal his gut. He no longer had fevers and his body returned to a balanced state with no more mystery conditions.

Conclusion:

Once the gut is healed you must continue to populate the microbiome with a regular source of probiotic rich foods or supplements and the "dirt" we talked about that comes through walking barefoot, not washing garden produce, having pets, etc. Make the foods listed above part of your regular diet and strive to avoid substances that will destroy your friendly flora such as sugar, processed foods, pesticides and pharmaceuticals.

Assignment:

Using the resources below or others you feel directed to, study and seek the Lord's will for yourself and family regarding gut health. Make some bone broth and/or a cultured food such as kraut or choose one from the Cultures for Health website.

Projects:

- Bone broth
- Kraut
- Ghee

Resources for Further Learning:

- Cultures for Health <https://www.culturesforhealth.com/>
- Traditional Cooking School <https://traditionalcookingschool.com/>
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Fermenting Foods* by Wardeh Harmon
- *Eat Dirt* by Dr. Josh Axe
- *The Prime* by Kulreet Chaudhary
- Herbs to Know in the Garden and the Wild download PDF books from this link <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/herbs.html>