

Leyla weighs in: Healing your gut

Inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease (CD) and ulcerative colitis (UC) are on the rise in United States as well as in other developed nations. Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and leaky gut syndrome have become major diagnoses for many. What we know is that two of the most profound influences on gut integrity are poor diet and the increased use of antibiotics.

Antibiotics do a very good job of wiping out bad bacteria, but also wipe out the beneficial bacteria critical to the health and functioning of the GI tract. A poor diet full of antinutrients such as sugars, empty calories, trans fats and food toxins such as pesticides, herbicides, artificial ingredients, additives and allergens contribute to the progression of the disease process.



The "Pillars of GI Health" is a holistic, or functional, medicine approach to treating gut imbalances. It helps clinicians find the unique root causes of disease in the individual patient. These pillars include:

1. *Digestion/absorption*
2. *Elimination*
3. *Microflora balance*
4. *Gut integrity*

A comprehensive treatment for GI dysfunction involves four basic steps:

1. **Remove:** Remove toxins, allergens and harmful organisms with an elimination diet and detoxification protocol.
2. **Replace:** Replacement of digestive enzymes and other factors until the patient's GI complaints can be normalized.
3. **Reinoculate:** Reinoculate the gut with beneficial probiotics and prebiotics to re-establish microflora balance.
4. **Repair:** For full healing of the intestinal mucosa, repairing gut integrity is essential. This includes reducing inflammation, providing nutrients for GI cell growth, and strengthening liver and immune function.

Healing the gut is possible with the right approach. A qualified nutritionist can help you with a comprehensive assessment and program to achieve your goals.

Source: The Standard: A Review of Natural & Nutraceutical Therapies for Clinical Practice. 2009(9); No. 1.