

RECIPE

for a Healthy Baby

by Don Chisholm

If I were preparing a recipe and needed to decide what to put in to produce a healthy baby, I would have to say 'bacteria'.

Bacteria play a vital role in everyone's health. It is the basis of our immune system and without it we could not break down our food to absorb nutrients, minerals and vitamins. We all need a balance of good and not so good bacteria (80/20) to be healthy, and this is especially essential for couples who wish to conceive and give birth to a healthy, thriving baby.

Why? Science has found that over 80% of all ill-health and disease is initiated or contributed to by compromised bacteria in the gut and body. So if an intending mother or father have compromised bacteria, they are less likely to be as healthy as they should be and less likely to conceive successfully or for the pregnancy to go the full term.

It is before conception that the couple should focus on getting as healthy as possible, but if that time has already passed, it is a good time to focus on the pregnant mother.

It is important to know that the womb is a sterile environment for the growing foetus. It is not until the birthing process that the baby comes into contact with its first life-enhancing

bacteria (or lack of them, depending on the state of the mother's natural flora and the type of birth). As the baby moves through the birth canal, it picks up the mother's bacteria. This is further enhanced by the bacteria in the mother's breast milk. This is then responsible for establishing the baby's own gut bacteria and immune system. The healthier the bacterial balance of the mother, the greater the chance of a healthy start for the baby.

There is a lot to be said for a natural birth. In nature, everything happens for a reason. The impression that we can sidestep nature is now evident in the health of the young. Well over 30% of all births are now Caesarians and these infants miss out on having contact with the initial bacteria in the birth canal. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that in the event of a C-section, the mother must get the newborn to the breast within the first hour. This is often difficult for a mother who has just undergone surgery and, even then, the mother's milk would be affected by the drugs used during such a procedure. ADD, ADHD, autism and many other conditions are increasing at alarming rates. These have been attributed to compromised gut bacteria. Dr Natasha Campbell McBride states in her book, *Gut and Psychology Syndrome*, that there is clear evidence that ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, autism, depression and schizophrenia are all directly related to compromised gut bacteria.

Western culture is now less exposed to bacteria than ever before – both the good and the bad varieties. Many of the supposedly healthy foods we eat have had their essential

bacteria destroyed during the production process. Our foods are treated with chemicals to make them last longer; herbicides and pesticides which then reach our tables and in turn destroy more of our own native beneficial bacteria. Our foods are heated, pasteurised and sterilized, leaving us with foods devoid of the health-enhancing bacteria we need.

Science is now stating that we have an ecosystem living within us that is non-human. The problem is that we are washing away this ecosystem with chemicals, birth control pills, alcohol, stress and antibiotics. Without these bacteria, we have a wholly depleted immune system and a digestive system that has little chance of absorbing the essential minerals and nutrients we need for survival. Without good bacteria we would miss out on digesting amino acids, which are the major building blocks for our cells and are essential for good health.

A healthy newborn needs to build up its trillions of bacteria from the very first moment it is born. Eventually, the gut should have over 500 strains in it with a bacterial weight of over 1.6 kg!

These initial bacteria must come from somewhere and the quality and variety of what babies receive depends a lot on the mother. For example, the bacteria in the birth canal will be determined by the bacteria in the mother's own gut. If this is compromised, then so is the baby. Sometimes I wonder if what we call a hereditary illness is simply a compromised gut being passed on from mother to child.

With the ever increasing ill-health of our younger generation, we need to start looking at the reasons why this is so. We need to stop giving children more and more drugs to hide what could have been prevented in the first place. If your child has any gut-related conditions, you only have to go back to my earlier statement that 80% of all disease is related to compromised gut bacteria.

Science is showing that the bacterium *L. planterum* is lacking in children with autism and that when it is introduced, many

of their conditions start to improve. Isn't it amazing that one bacterium can make such a difference?

Everything the mother does affects the future of her child. If she were on the contraceptive pill prior to conception, then it would be a good idea to supplement herself with a good probiotic to offset the reduced bacteria caused by the pill. If she consumed alcohol, was under stress or had a diet that included non-organically produced foods which were contaminated with pesticides and herbicides she would also need supplementation. And if her diet contained aspartame, too much sugar or toxic chemicals, she would need to replace those lost bacteria – preferably before falling pregnant.

One very important area to consider is that many of the things you put on your skin are absorbed and this includes make up and sunscreens. A Danish research study of 2000 pregnant mothers exposed to chemicals showed changes in the development of the male foetus. Males were much more susceptible when the mother was exposed to phalates. Phalates can be found in baby feeding bottles, and worst of all, in cosmetics. For you and your baby's sake, do not put such things on your skin or use plastics which contain them. It has been found that animals which are subjected to chemicals like phalates are losing their ability to breed. It is more than a possibility that this can also happen to newborn males if these chemicals get to them during gestation. Mothers or fathers putting these chemicals on their skin is just one way this can happen.

This is just an overview. Having a child in today's toxic world requires some effort on the part of both parents to ensure minimal contact with chemicals. It is a good time to use good, food-based probiotics as well to offset the damage caused by all the influences that kill off our beneficial bacteria on a daily basis.

I feel that the best form of bacteria is derived and cultured from food – not from dairy or soil-based organisms. These bacteria



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assist in breaking down the nutrients in food, the end result being a release of vital nutrients and naturally occurring amino acids – a process which occurs in a healthy gut. Products such as these take the pressure off a compromised gut by effectively predigesting the foods so that the vital goodness in can be absorbed and not just pass through undigested.

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Women who wish to have a baby but are tired, have IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), or suffer from any gut-related condition have to realize they will need to feed two instead of one when they are pregnant. If the mother has compromised bacteria and is malnourished, this will have an effect on the foetus, not only during the gestation period, but also from the moment of birth.

Sauerkraut is a good example of foods being broken down and releasing the nutrients. Sauerkraut has 20 times the viable vitamin C as raw cabbage. Imagine the positive effects of a product with its vitamins, nutrients and amino acids in such a state.

My suggestion is for not only the mothers or mothers-to-be, but for the partners involved in the conception process as well. Men are also losing their ability to produce healthy sperm. This can be seen in fertility clinics all over the world which are filling up with couples unable to conceive or go to full term.

If you haven't time to ferment your own foods, start looking for a probiotic supplement that will deliver what you need. You need probiotics that start to work from the moment they enter your mouth; that's why I stay with a food-based powder wherever possible.

Healthy mothers have a healthy gut, which in turn creates healthy children with health guts. Better still, if the children can hold onto their vital good bacteria, they will grow up to be healthy adults who have healthy guts.

Don Chisholm recently returned to Australia from the UK where he marketed health products and lectured on health and the importance of bacteria. Since returning to Australia he has further developed his fermented food range and include gluten free probiotics. He is contactable at www.nuferm.com or available at 07 5549 2554.

Applied wisdom

1. Healthy babies begin well before they are conceived. Pre-conception care for both prospective mothers and fathers is essential for a healthy outcome for all concerned.

2. Pay attention to the mother's gut flora. If a baby is born to a mother with the correct flora (e.g. no thrush or floral imbalances), they are one step ahead on the road to a healthy life and strong immune system.

3. Both mothers and fathers need to be aware of their diets, exposure to toxins, medications and stress levels.

A CHILD'S HEALTH STARTS IN THEIR TUMMY



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