

HEALTH NEWS

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Featuring Information on Parasites

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PARASITES: THE HIDDEN EPIDEMIC

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She now consults for various organizations, corporations, and spas all over the country, including Uni Key Health Systems in Bozeman, Montana. She has written nine books, including *Guess What Came to Dinner: Parasites and Your Health*.

Why do you study parasites?

In 1974 I studied with a naturopathic physician in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She explained that parasites are probably the most unsuspected cause of disease among human beings.

Oftentimes problems like immune dysfunction, juvenile-onset diabetes, hypoglycemia, constipation, diarrhea, depression, and liver or lung difficulties can be cleared up if parasites are eliminated from the system.

Aren't parasites mostly a third-world concern?

Parasites are a concern right here in the United States because so many factors, including international travel, expose us to these unseen invaders. Contaminated water is probably one of the biggest carriers of parasites. Other unsuspected sources are exotic,

undercooked foods like sushi. And according to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, humans can become infected with at least thirty parasitic illnesses from their pets.

Parasites have created a hidden epidemic and people don't even suspect they exist. One of the top parasitologists in the country told me that seventy to eighty percent of his patients have one or more parasites.

If parasites are so prevalent, why haven't they been recognized as a leading cause of disease?

For several reasons, all of which relate to the belief that parasites are not a concern in the United States. The symptoms of parasitic illnesses are very similar to the symptoms of other diseases. Parasites are known as the great masquerades.

For example, what appears to be ulcerative colitis can actually be an amoebae infection in the colon. The acid-reflux condition so prevalent today may also be dramatically connected to *Giardia*. Even gallbladder problems can come from protozoa.

And it's my estimation that many of these hyperactive kids on Ritalin probably need to be deformed.

What are some of the symptoms of parasites?

They can affect us in different ways. It all depends on your particular Achilles heel. For a water-borne disease, the first symptom would probably be a problem in the gastrointestinal tract, sometimes watery diarrhea that can last several weeks.

Often children come down with this symptom when they're in day-care centers, which is another place parasites can spread. Other symptoms might include abdominal cramps, nausea, very foul smelling gas, or a low-grade fever. How long symptoms persist all depends on how the body's inner environment is handling the problem. But as we become overloaded with toxins from many sources—bacteria, viruses, yeast—we find that our resistance lowers.

How do we treat parasites?

I've found that cleansing the gastrointestinal tract is the best treatment. Parasites embed themselves in the intestinal wall and hide behind a layer of mucous and encrusted waste matter, so it's important to use high-fiber substances that help soften and remove the encrusted matter and sweep out the parasites.

Psyllium, wheat bran, and guar gum are all wonderful colon-cleansing products. (However, these treatments are not appropriate for some of the more exotic parasites.)

Mother Nature also provides some wonderful herbs for cleansing the colon and liver.

The Chinese have used black walnut for centuries to get rid of larger parasites. Other herbs include centaury, artemisia annua, butternut, and grapefruit seed.

Taking digestive enzymes that help break down parasites is another part of cleansing. Some people, especially those over forty or with type-A blood, are more prone to parasites because they do not produce enough hydrochloric acid, which is necessary for proper pH balance in the stomach.

We all need to make sure we're taking enzymes. Pancreatic enzymes, hydrochloric acid, pepsin, or plant-based enzymes such as papain or bromelain are the best.

In addition to treating the problem, cleansing prevents future infestation, creating an inner environment in which parasites are less likely to thrive. Once the intestinal tract has been cleansed, we must make sure it is well fortified with probiotics (good bacteria such as streptococcus, acidophilus, and bifidum).

These bacteria are found in fermented products such as yogurt, or in powdered supplements.

The important thing is to keep the digestive system clean and filled with beneficial bacteria that can go to war against the creatures trying to take up residence.

Prevention is the real key to fighting parasites. Home water filtration is extremely important because bacteria, contaminants, and parasites can slip through municipal water treatment facilities. New EPA guidelines recommend only filters with a one micron absolute pore size, or smaller.

I recommend having a filter that removes ninety-nine percent of all tiny bacteria and parasites. We also need to be certain when we eat meat that it comes from as clean a source as possible — organically raised beef and farm-raised fish, for example.

And it's essential that we wash our hands after playing with pets.

Parasites can contaminate a whole household. Infected children need to be bathed and have their beds and personal clothing laundered daily. Toilet seats also need to be scrubbed and sanitized each day.

We should keep all rooms well aired and should clean and vacuum daily in areas where the whole family gathers, so we remove parasite eggs along with the dirt. If even one member of a family is infected, everyone must be treated.

The prevention and treatment of parasites really depend on the body's inner environment. Herbal cleansing products are an effective way to treat problems so they don't recur.