

Supporting the intestines in a meaningful way – using prebiotics and probiotics in an Ayurvedic therapy



indigestible for humans but metabolized by certain intestinal bacteria and thus promoting their proliferation. Probiotics, on the other hand, contain living microorganisms, which multiply in the intestine and are helpful for our health.

Both approaches stimulate the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut, and thus improve the intestinal milieu and enable normal digestion again. However, the sequence is important: a healthy mucosal barrier is a prerequisite for supportive bacterial cultures to take root.

The first step is a microecological stool analysis. This is because selecting the proper strategy and the right preparations is only possible after determining suitable parameters, which can be narrowed down on the basis of the symptoms. All too often, this step is skipped: people randomly buy over-the-counter products without proper consultation, and are then discouraged when the hoped-for effect does not materialize.



Normalizing the digestive system with Ayurveda

If the intestinal mucosa is inflamed or damaged, as in the case of irritable bowel symptoms, leaky gut or chronic inflammatory bowel diseases, the mucosa must first be soothed and regenerated before the natural bacterial flora can be reset.

The best starting point is a relief diet that prevents further aggravation of the stressed intestine and allows it to naturally regenerate itself through the body's inherent intelligence. A good example is following the 10-day Ama-reducing diet (outlined towards the end of [this article on 'eliminating excess Kapha'](#)) and then switch to an easily-digestible vegetarian diet.

Naturally, the royal way is a Panchakarma course of treatment according to Maharishi Ayurveda, as this includes purging and enemas designed specifically to cleanse the intestines.

It is equally important to follow the Ayurvedic dietary recommendations:

- During this period of cleansing, try to keep your mealtimes as regular as possible, in order to restore the balance of the digestive system.
- Eat only when there is a clear feeling of hunger and observe your point of satiety. If possible, omit snacks in between meals.
- In the evening, have a light dinner, if possible by 6 or 7 p.m.
- A good supporting measure is also the regular drinking of hot water in between meals to cleanse the intestines again and again and to activate the digestive power.

These Ayurvedic recommendations prevent the development of new Ama, which would cause imbalance of the intestinal flora again and thus significantly hinder the healing process.

Restoring the intestinal milieu

1. Pre-treatment of the intestinal mucosa

The condition of the intestinal mucosa can often be significantly improved in as little as four to six weeks with anti-inflammatory and immunoregulatory preparations, which often contain extracts from inactivated bacterial metabolites, e.g. from *E. coli*.

In particular with inflammatory processes, there is an increased amount of mucus and blood in the

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intestine, providing a perfect breeding ground for decay germs such as Clostridia. In this situation, just administering probiotics would not be useful, as the cultures cannot develop in this environment. Consequently, treatment of the mucosa is the primary focus, before probiotics can be used in a second stage.

Also suitable for this purpose are glutamine, an amino acid that is important for the renewal and repair of the intestinal mucosa, and anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids.

2. Prebiotics

Prebiotics are quickly digestible dietary fibers which nourish beneficial strains of bacteria that cannot be brought in from outside, e.g. with supplements. Through fermentation by the bacteria in the large intestine, they yield short-chain fatty acids (butyrates), which in turn serve as a source of energy for the intestinal mucosa. They can be compared with fertilizer on an agricultural field and are found in various foods, such as artichoke, chicory, onion, garlic, banana, oatmeal, topinambur, asparagus and parsnip.

Another prebiotic is resistant starch, which is found in potatoes and rice that have cooled down, as well as in whole grain products, peas and beans.

So prebiotics can be consumed through food, but also in powder form as a supplement; available are, for example, inulin, dextrin, acacia fiber and citrus pectin. Daily intake of dietary fiber is very important for a healthy intestine, because in addition to nourishing the intestinal mucosa, it also facilitates the passage of food pulp and thus defecation.

It is important to note that some people are sensitive to prebiotics, which may initially increase the digestive problems. If you experience symptoms such as bloating or abdominal pain, the dose of prebiotics should be reduced and then increased more gradually.

3. Probiotics

Probiotics are preparations with helpful intestinal bacteria that promote the proliferation of beneficial intestinal microbes and push back pathogenic ones. As part of the intestinal rebuilding process,



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a very good choice is usually a high-dose multi-strain preparation – meaning that it contains several bacterial strains in large numbers, often lactic acid bacteria and Bifidobacteria.

In the end, the choice of preparations to be used depends on the individual stool findings and the diagnosis – in many cases, particular combinations of bacterial subgroups are needed to ensure the therapy's success.

The duration of intake should be at least three months; sometimes, it can be necessary to continue much longer. Indeed, intestinal rehabilitation requires a good deal of patience, because damage that has accumulated over decades cannot be undone in a few weeks.

Herbal preparations of Maharishi Ayurveda

Ayurvedic intestinal rehabilitation consists of activating digestive power on the one hand and preventing the development of new Ama in the digestive tract on the other.

For the first purpose, various herbal blends exist which are designed to specifically address individual Dosha conditions, such as flatulence or constipation in the case of increased Vata Dosha, fullness or heaviness in the case of Kapha disorders, or inflammatory Pitta-type reactions of the digestive tract.

The second purpose is served by preparations for releasing stored metabolic residues from cells and tissues and activating the digestive power in such a way that new Ama is prevented from developing.

Maintenance

The improved situation as a result of the microbiological therapy can only be kept up in the long term by maintaining the newly-gained healthy nutritional habits – as well as possible – and regular care of the intestines. Apart from the general dietary recommendations of Ayurveda already mentioned above, this includes the following basic measures:

- Increasing the intake of high-fiber foods: Fiber helps digestion and supports the growth of good bacteria in the gut.
- Avoiding unhealthy foods, such as sugar, alcohol, white flour products and processed foods.
- Eating a diet appropriate to your constitution, according to Ayurvedic recommendations.
- Exercising regularly, e.g. yoga, cycling, or brisk walks.
- If recommended by an Ayurvedic doctor, you can reserve [one day of the week to disburden](#) by taking just fresh juices and soup.
- Applying a cleansing, once a year or every two years, for example within the framework of a fasting regimen or an Ama-reducing course of treatment.