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The Human Microbiome And Its Influence Upon Human Health

MRSA: methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus. The very mention of this acronym strikes fear into the hearts of multitudes. Just the thought of an invisible yet very deadly enemy inspires those in the western world to wage a proactive attack with antibacterial wipes, sanitizers and preventative antibiotics. However, this indiscriminate assault on an unseen world of microorganisms may be leading to the extinction of numerous species of beneficial microbes upon which our very lives depend. Furthermore, the rampant defoliation of the flora within a microscopic world may very well be the primary cause in a host of ailments afflicting the human population in epidemic proportions such as diabetes, obesity, asthma, autism and mental illness.

Although I acknowledge the great benefit of antibiotics and antimicrobials, I feel that the overuse and flagrant abuse of them has fostered an environment that is threatening not only our lives but also the lives of future generations. Granted, when the first battle was waged against a microscopic world in the early 1900's, people had little idea what far-reaching effect it would have a century later. However, now that we know from recent research that our health truly depends upon a symbiotic relationship with that world, how can we in all good conscience continue practices that clearly harm that relationship? When I think of my children and grandchildren living in a world where the quality of life is plagued with the fear of resistant pathogens and chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and obesity, I know I must change whatever I can; it is the least I can do. Nonetheless, we all must collectively change. Our future depends upon it.

Keywords: Human microbiome, antibiotic resistance, obesity, mental illness, MRSA, antibiotics, antimicrobials.