

# How to Protect Yourself and Your Children from the Health Hazards Associated with Medical and Agricultural Antibiotics

The issue of antibiotic overuse, both in medicine and food production, and the subsequent threats to human health, has been featured in a number of recent news articles.

According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), antibiotic resistance is a major threat to public health, worldwide, and the primary cause for this man-made epidemic is the widespread misuse of antibiotics.

For example, data from the ECDC<sup>1</sup> shows a significant rise of resistance to multiple antibiotics in *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *E. coli* in just the last four years alone, affecting more than one-third of the EU. According to a recent report by *Medical News Today*:<sup>2</sup>

*"In several of the member states, between 25 and over 60 percent of K pneumoniae from bloodstream infections show combined resistance to multiple antibiotics..."*

*"The ECDC data shows that consumption of carbapenems, a major class of last-line antibiotics, went up significantly in EU/EEA countries between 2007 and 2010. The report suggests this is most likely due to increasing multidrug resistance in Gram-negative infections, such as pneumonia or bloodstream infections, which are often treated with carbapenems."*

In an effort to raise awareness, the UK has issued an informational leaflet<sup>3</sup> on the judicious use of antibiotics, urging patients to *not* ask their doctors for an antibiotic to treat symptoms of cold and flu, as antibiotics *do not work* on infections caused by viruses — they only work on bacterial infections.

## Antibiotics During Pregnancy Linked to Asthma in Kids

Antibiotic-resistant disease is not the only danger associated with the misuse of these drugs. Excessive exposure to antibiotics also takes a heavy toll on your gastrointestinal health, which can predispose you to virtually *any* disease. Abnormal gut flora may actually be a major contributing factor to the rise in a wide variety of childhood diseases and ailments.

For example, recent research<sup>4</sup> from Denmark shows that children whose mothers took antibiotics during their pregnancy were more likely to develop asthma, compared to those whose mother did not take antibiotics. Taking other risk factors into account, the researchers estimated that children exposed to antibiotics were 17 percent more likely to be hospitalized for asthma before the age of five.

Children who were already predisposed to asthma (due to their mother having the condition) were *twice* as likely to develop asthma if their mother used antibiotics during the third trimester, compared to those whose mother did not use antibiotics.

While the study cannot tell us whether the asthma was the result of the antibiotic or the infection itself, the increased asthma risk found does support the theory that probiotics — beneficial bacteria residing in your gut, which are decimated by antibiotics — play a role in the development of asthma. Co-author Dr. Hans Bisgaard told Reuters Health:<sup>5</sup>

*"We speculate that mothers' use of antibiotics changes the balance of natural bacteria, which is transmitted to the newborn, and that such unbalanced bacteria in early life impact on the immune maturation in the newborn."*

Indeed, one of the most important prerequisites for your newborn is establishing a healthy gastrointestinal tract. Regardless of age, your gut is your first line of defense in terms of immunity.

The baby gets his or her first "inoculation" of gut flora from the mother's birth canal during childbirth, which is why a mother's use of antibiotics during pregnancy can predispose the child to asthma and a variety of other ailments, as the antibiotic severely disrupts the natural microflora — in the mother's bowels and vagina.

It's important to understand that if *mother's* flora is abnormal, her baby's flora will also be abnormal, as whatever organisms live in her vagina end up coating her baby's body and lining his or her intestinal tract.

## Antibiotic Use May Predispose Your Baby to GAPS

The introduction of unfriendly flora can predispose your baby to GAPS (*Gut and Psychology Syndrome*, and also *Gut and Physiology Syndrome*). GAPS can have very damaging long-term effects on a child's health, both neurologically and physiologically. Besides an increased risk of asthma and other allergies, it can also increase his or her risk of learning and/or behavioral disabilities, mood disorders, gastrointestinal problems, and autoimmune disorders.

GAPS may even have profound implications for the autism epidemic. Rates of childhood autism are staggering, now 50 times higher in some areas than three decades ago. Not surprisingly, there is a matching epidemic of GAPS.

Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride is a neurologist and neurosurgeon who has devoted years of her career to studying this phenomenon, and how to treat and prevent it. She's convinced that abnormal gut flora is at the heart of the problem, and that the solution to stem the rise in autistic spectrum disabilities lies in "healing and sealing" the child's gut. As a result of her groundbreaking research, she has developed a very effective nutritional protocol for doing just that. To learn more, please review my previous article . [How a Physician Cured Her Son's Autism](#)

## The Importance of Probiotic Foods

The widespread deterioration of people's gut health can be traced back to the change in our modern diet. Historically, people have regularly consumed a wide variety of fermented foods, which are naturally high in the beneficial bacteria necessary for optimal gut health. Fermented foods are therefore a mainstay of the GAPS diet. Ideally, you'll want to include a variety of cultured foods and beverages in your diet, as each food will inoculate your gut with a variety of different microorganisms. Fermented foods you can easily make at home include:

- Fermented vegetables
- Chutneys
- Condiments, such as salsa and mayonnaise
- Cultured dairy, such as yoghurt, kefir, and sour cream
- Fish, such as mackerel and Swedish gravlax

The beneficial bacteria in these foods are also potent detoxifiers, capable of drawing out a wide range of toxins and heavy metals. According to Dr. McBride, the GAPS Nutritional Protocol restores the detoxification system in about 90 percent of people, and the fermented/cultured foods are instrumental in this self-healing process. You don't need to consume huge amounts either. Just a quarter to a half a cup of fermented vegetables or cultured food such as raw yoghurt, per day, is sufficient. Kombucha, a fermented drink, is another great addition to your diet.

The key is variety. The greater the variety of fermented and cultured foods you include in your diet, the better, as each food will inoculate your gut with a variety of different microorganisms. Also remember to always reseed your gut with probiotics whenever you're using an antibiotic, either by consuming fermented foods, or taking a high quality probiotics supplement.

In the following interview, Caroline Barringer, a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner (NTP), and an expert in the preparation of the foods prescribed in Dr. Campbell-McBride's GAPS nutritional program, discusses the process of fermenting your own vegetables.

It's actually easier than you might think, and it can save you a lot of money. It's unusual to find a probiotic supplement containing more than 10 billion colony-forming units. But when my team actually tested fermented vegetables produced by probiotic starter cultures, they had *10 trillion* colony-forming units of bacteria. Literally, one serving of fermented vegetables was equal to an entire bottle of a high potency probiotic! So clearly, you're far better off using fermented foods.

If you fear the culturing process might lead to some horrific pathogenic infection, please read Caroline's article "Taking the Mystery out of Culturing Your Own Superfoods,"<sup>6</sup> where she lays such fears to rest. Educating yourself about the process will help alleviate concerns about eating fermented foods, which are very much "alive."



**2001 W. Kenosha \* Broken Arrow, OK , 74012 \*[Naturalhealthclinic.biz](http://Naturalhealthclinic.biz) \***  
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