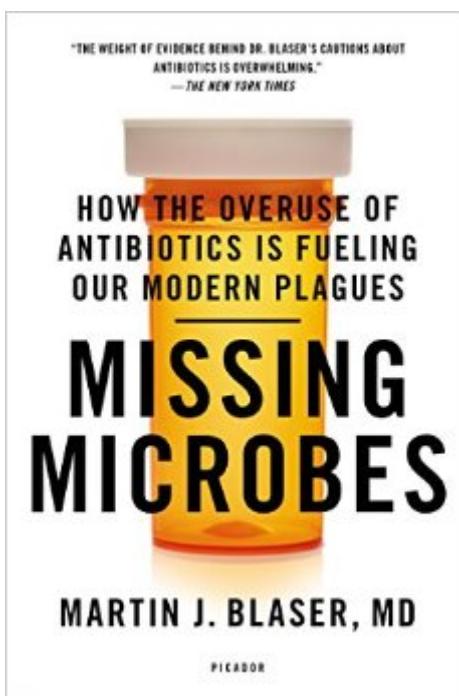


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Missing Microbes: How The Overuse Of Antibiotics Is Fueling Our Modern Plagues



Synopsis

""Missing Microbes" presents a surprisingly clear perspective on a complex problem."--"The Philadelphia Inquirer """"In "Missing Microbes," Dr. Martin J. Blaser invites us into the wilds of the human microbiome, where for hundreds of thousands of years bacterial and human cells have existed in a peaceful symbiosis that is responsible for the equilibrium and health of our bodies. Now this invisible Eden is under assault from our overreliance on medical advances including antibiotics and caesarian sections, threatening the extinction of our irreplaceable microbes and leading to severe health consequences. Taking us into the lab to recount his groundbreaking studies, Blaser not only provides elegant support for his theory, he guides us to what we can do to avoid even more catastrophic health problems in the future.

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Customer Reviews

As most of us know, the medical community has been over prescribing antibiotics for some time now, and there is a call for the practice to end. There is no need for the use of antibiotics in many cases, and the use of them could be curtailed significantly without harm to public health. In addition, the author of this book presents compelling evidence that the overuse of antibiotics is not just causing resistance in microbes, but may also be contributing to the alarming increase in a number of diseases. The book begins with several chapters that explain microbiology and how microbes are aligned with the human body. For instance, there are millions of microbes living in your intestinal tract, but they are not harmful; in fact they may be very beneficial. Early and frequent use of

antibiotics can disrupt this natural ecosystem causing a myriad of problems. There is also information on how we obtain our microbiological flora. For instance, microbes are passed from a mother to a baby during birth. As the baby exits the birth canal, it is coated in the naturally occurring bacteria that is found there normally. In addition, the newborn will pick up bacteria from nursing and from being handled by the mother. All of this is normal, and healthy, but overuse of antibiotics maybe causing disruption of the normal process. In information presented that was startling, the author has linked a bacteria found in the stomach, and thought to cause ulcers, to an increase in the number of cases of gastrointestinal esophageal reflux disease. When it was first proven that the bacteria in question was responsible for ulcers, doctors went on a spree to eradicate it from adults.

The Medical community is slowly but surely coming to recognize the importance of gut flora and the epidemic proportions of the issues caused by the overprescription of antibiotics today. For someone unaware of the issues this book is an eye opener. The discussions of the individual flora that modern medicine has sought to eradicate (E.G H Pylori) and the link to various diseases that cropped up in individuals missing certain flora are clear and well explained. The issues caused by C-Sections and rampant antibiotic use in infancy are also explored. The reason for my rating only having four stars is that there are very few suggestions for what we, as individuals, can do now that we are in the midst of the issue. I've had the H-Pylori treatment. My children were on multiple rounds of antibiotics before age two. One has celiac disease and is on the Spectrum. If, as this book shows, antibiotic use may have contributed to or triggered many of the health issues we have then I would like to know what I can do about it. The last chapter in this book is titled 'Solutions' but there are not so many of those that an average parent can employ. Probiotics and prebiotics are compared to placebos (granted some of them ARE pure rubbish), and the suggestions given involve reduced prescription of antibiotics, reduced use of antibiotics in animal husbandry, reduced use of hand sanitizers, less C-sections and, most radically, fecal transfer. This is all well and good but what are parents who are aware of the problem to do now? I've tried to eliminate all the contaminants I can but know well that there is a very good chance one of my children would not have survived if not for the powerful antibiotics he was treated with as a child.

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