



Acupuncture & Holistic Health Associates  
At The Bayshore Town Center  
500 W. Silver Spring Drive, Suite K-205  
Milwaukee, WI 53217  
Phone: (414) 332-8888  
www.milwaukeeacu.com

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# Steps to Maintain a Healthy Digestive Tract

## Basic definitions:

**Acidophilus:** A microorganism that is added to dairy products or prepared as a dietary supplement, is part of the normal intestinal and vaginal flora, and is used therapeutically especially to promote intestinal health. (In Chinese Medicine acidophilus has a "cooling" nature. Meaning, if taken for long periods of time it will cool the digestive system, reducing metabolic function.)

**Bifidum:** A type of "friendly bacteria" that helps maintain health in the large intestine. Increases the acidity of the region it inhabits and makes the area inhospitable to dangerous bacteria.

**Candida:** Parasitic fungi that resemble yeasts, occurring especially in the mouth, vagina, and intestinal tract where they are usually benign but can become pathogenic (able to cause disease).

**Flora:** The microorganisms (such as bacteria or fungi) living in or on the body. Usually only about 10% of bacteria is bad or pathogenic and the other 90% is good, non-pathogenic.

**Immune system:** The bodily system that protects the body from foreign substances, cells, and tissues by producing the immune response and that includes the thymus, spleen, lymph nodes, special deposits of lymphoid tissue (as in the gastrointestinal tract and bone marrow), lymphocytes including the B cells and T cells, which are the two main types of white blood cells, and antibodies.

**Metabolism:** The sum of the physical and chemical processes in an organism by which its material substance is produced, maintained, and destroyed, and by which energy is made available.

Source: Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary, © 2007 Merriam-Webster, Inc.

There are some critical components to immune and digestive system health, including Acidophilus, Bifidum and Candida. There must be good balance among these and other organisms that live in the digestive tract; otherwise many problems occur. There are certain signs and symptoms that go along with a person that has a Candida overgrowth including fatigue, pain, gas, bloating, skin problems, weakened immunity and digestive irregularity.

Although many things can throw this intestinal organism balance off, the most common are sugar consumption and antibiotic usage. Candida, when given sugar, will grow in number rapidly. Antibiotic usage destroys healthy intestinal flora such as acidophilus and bifidum which may lead to a candida overgrowth. For someone who has symptoms related to a Candida overgrowth, it's highly recommended to use short bursts, (say for a month on and a month off) of acidophilus and bifidum consistently especially when there has been antibiotic usage over a long time. It's also a good idea to use acidophilus upon completing any course of antibiotics.

Incidentally, for individuals dealing with acne,

1. Build function-Acupuncture and herbs,
2. Seasons change: cleanse (we recommend the "ultimate cleanse" by Nature's secret),
3. Acidophilus/Bifidum complex,
4. Tea tree oil gently applied in small dosages to lesions.

*Note: it seems with acidophilus, like many supplements, it is important to choose the highest quality available where you shop. When shopping at a health food store for such a thing make sure it's in the refrigerator. It seems the more expensive versions use products with a wide variety of different intestinal flora, including at least acidophilus and bifidum. For example, we've seen patients do very well after a course of antibiotics by taking an entire 60 capsule bottle (say, 2-4 capsules per day), using the recommendations on the bottle. The good news is if you get acidophilus that was not refrigerated and happens to be dead there is no negative effect. It simply passes through the digestive system causing no positive or negative effects.*

Best of health to you! If you have any questions on this topic or anything else, don't hesitate to call. 414-322-8888

Healthfully,

Curry D. Chaudoir, Diplomate in Acupuncture

Note: Nothing in this document is intended as a substitute for your doctor's diagnosis and/or treatment. This statement has not been evaluated by the FDA.