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# Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO)

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There is a new diagnosis in our field of naturopathic medicine that is taking off. For many years we have been very successful at treating dysbiosis which is an imbalance of yeast overgrowth in the GI tract causing gas, bloating and digestive upset. SIBO is suspected after a patient has diligently followed the dysbiosis protocol for the suggested three months and has not seen any improvement.

SIBO symptoms arise after a food poisoning incident, a head injury which affects the vagus nerve, or a gastroenteritis infection. The symptoms never get 100% better after these incidents. Foods that are not tolerated in SIBO cases include apples, pears, mangos, avocados, asparagus, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, lactose and any fibrous grains, fiber and sugar that bacteria can feed on. Probiotics often make SIBO symptoms worse!

SIBO symptoms include heartburn, burping, sensation of fullness and slow digestion and minimal bowel sounds. Some can be constipated, others can have alternating constipation with diarrhea. These patients cannot come off

their FODMAP diet without getting serious symptoms.

The best strategy is to diagnose it with a SIBO breath test. This test is not available in the medical community. We use a 3-hour breath test kit from SAGE clinic in Vancouver and we get results promptly once the samples are submitted. A positive result for hydrogen and/or methane producing bacteria in the small intestine confirms the SIBO diagnosis and a 3-6 month protocol is followed.

There is not supposed to be any bacteria in the small intestine so how does it get there? An infectious process caused by campylobacter, E. coli, Shigella and Salmonella or trouble with the ileocecal valve (at the junction of the small and large intestine) or the migrating motor complex or MMC can allow bacteria to grow in the small intestine. If the MMC is not functioning optimally SIBO develops. The MMC are small peristaltic movements in the small intestine that occur over 3-hour periods throughout the day that move bacteria out of the stomach and small intestine into the colon. If a person snacks too often the timing of

the MMC is affected. Part of the SIBO treatment is to space meals three hours apart to recalibrate the MMC.

The treatment program is in four parts:

1. The two-week preparation phase reduces side effects of treatment as well as making treatment protocols more effective.
2. The six-week eradication phase uses antibiotics and/or herbal remedies to kill off the bacteria and stimulate normal digestion.
3. The two-month phase of repair and recovery is when the anti-SIBO diet is introduced, stimulation of the MMC with medications is critical and healing and repairing the gut lining is completed.
4. Prevention phase includes treating gastritis quickly using homeopathic remedies as well as using appropriate probiotics, fish oils and digestive aids such as gallbladder drainage remedies.

Ask about the SIBO breath test at your next appointment at Perceptive Health.

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