

HEALTHY CHOICES

Latest tips on the art of living well.

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Healthy Stem Cells

Part 2: Factors that support healthy stem cells



Having a healthy gut ensures that we have a healthy immune response

In Part 1 of Healthy Stem Cells (Healthy Choices Issue No. 10) we looked at what stem cells do in the body and the key elements of an efficient stem cell cascade: Release, Migration, Engraftment, Differentiation and Viability.

While this may seem very complex (and it is!) there are simple measures that you can take to support this whole process. Part 2 of this topic will cover the factors that support healthy stem cells, including important diet and lifestyle habits.

The primary system in the body that drives the whole stem cell cascade is the immune system. Evidence has shown us that a healthy diet, regular exercise, good stress management and a positive outlook all have beneficial effects on our immune system and overall health. Another very important link to immune health is having a healthy gut as up to 70% of all of our immune cells reside in the gut – or more technically – the GALT (gut associated lymphatic tissue).

Having a healthy gut ensures that we have a healthy immune response as well as optimal absorption of the food and other nutrients we take. Also, more specifically in relation to stem cell activity, the GALT is particularly rich in a subset of immune cells called myeloid cells. These cells bind to and are subsequently stimulated by certain substances called polysaccharides. As a result of this, polysaccharide stimulation signals are generated that activate the stem cell cascade.

There are a number of factors that can have a negative effect on the health of our gut; where possible these substances and habits should be avoided.



Fortunately there are a number of substances that support a healthy digestive tract, and subsequently healthy immune system and stem cell cascade.

Key nutrients for a healthy gut:

- **Probiotics** - Natural yoghurt, fermented foods (tempeh, sauerkraut) or supplements.
- **Fibre** - Fresh fruit and vegetables, lentils and pulses, nuts and seeds.
- **Omega 3 fatty acids** - Oily fish or supplements.
- **Aloe vera** - Best taken in supplement form.
- **Colostrum** - Although most readily available in supplement form, colostrum is more like a whole food than a dietary supplement.

By looking after the health of your digestive and immune systems through a healthy lifestyle coupled with key supplements you can help to support your own healthy stem cell population and activity. This will assist with natural cellular repair; healing and regeneration; healthy ageing; health, energy and vitality; keeping your body healthy, vibrant and youthful at any age.



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