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The Bottom Line on a Probiotic for Weight Loss: Misdirection

One of the basic tenets of magic is misdirection. The magician gets you to look at his right hand when it's actually his left hand that's hiding something. I'm going to use that analogy as we finish our look at the probiotic *Akkermansia muciniphila*.

Let's start with this. The microbiome of people who weigh less is different from the microbiome of those who weigh more. It seems if we could figure out what bacteria are different between those groups, we might be able to help those who weigh more lose weight. It makes sense.

The first study on rodents attempted to do that. We don't know whether that was successful because they looked at just about everything that changed after the fecal transplantation except body weight. That could be more related to the age of the rodents used. They actually gained weight because they were not mature. The cold-exposed mice just gained less than the matched controls that were nice and toasty warm.

The second study was more concerned about personalizing a diet for weight loss that included many variables including the microbiome, but supplementation with probiotics was not part of the dietary approach. We have no idea whether the personalized diet will affect this probiotic or not at this point.

Here's the misdirection part: the changes in bacteria were the result, not the cause. The cold exposure resulted in changes to the microbiome when the animals were underfed. While the benefit was passed on when the other rodents were exposed to the fecal transplant, we don't know how long the benefit lasted or whether it resulted in weight loss.



The Bottom Line



Based on other studies on *Akkermansia muciniphila*, it's the types of food a person eats that causes the bacterium to grow. While the studies are limited, dark-skinned grapes and the polyphenols they contain seem to be related to the growth of this probiotic. You see, the bacteria are already in our gut; we've picked them up at some point in our life. It's what we eat or don't eat that determines whether they grow or not. They may not have anything to do with weight loss. They grow when exposed to the right food.

It's never complicated; eat better. When we do, good things can happen. Sure beats living in 42 degree temperature, wouldn't you agree?

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

References:

1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2015.11.004>
2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2015.11.001>



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