

Leaky Gut, Leaky Brain: Mind/Body Connection for Irritable Bowel and Irritable Mind

By Simon Yu, MD

Do you have a problem with concentration, sudden extreme fatigue, irritable mood, chronic vague pain and foggy brain as if you have a leaky brain which is ready to shut down? You are not alone! There are millions of people suffering with the above symptoms.

These symptoms are considered non-specific. A standard medical diagnostic evaluation usually fails to give the medical doctor a clear picture of the underlying causes. The patient is often labeled “It is all in your head.”

Often these symptoms manifest from a collection of unrecognized food allergies, hypoglycemia, nutritional deficiency, yeast over-growth, heavy metal toxicity, food additive toxins, and hidden parasite infections.

Leaky gut and intestinal dysbiosis have been associated with irritable bowel syndrome with a whole list of symptoms. Most frequently listed symptoms include abdominal cramps, bloating, gas, diarrhea, constipation, general malaise, and fatigue. These are often associated with brain fog and mood swings.

Yeast and fungal problems have been the suspected culprits. Many books have been written on intestinal fungal infection including *The Yeast Syndrome* by Dr. John Trowbridge, MD and *The Yeast Connection* by Dr. William G. Crook, MD. For most people, despite aggressive anti-fungal medications and a yeast free diet, their symptoms persist.

Most of the fungal problems are a reflection of environmental problems from the over use of antibiotics and environmental exposure to toxins including heavy metal toxicity and synthetic chemicals. These toxins adversely disturb the gut flora which directly influences our immune system, alter hormonal balance, and disturb metabolism. They may create the host of unexplainable medical complaints.

Over growth of yeast in the gut disrupts the integrity of the lining of the intestine and can make patients prone to develop food allergies. It disrupts gut neuropeptide production. The neuropeptide in the gut is the same neuropeptide as in your brain. The disruption of the gut neuropeptide creates irritable bowel symptoms which lead to irritable brain.

Neuropeptides are “information molecules”, the basic units of a language used by cells throughout the organism to communicate across systems such as the endocrine, neurological, gastrointestinal and immune systems. Our gut neuropeptide creates molecules of emotions for “gut feeling” and directly communicates with the brain. I recommend the book *Molecules of Emotions* by Dr. Candace B. Pert, Ph.D.

One of the most overlooked areas for gut/brain dysfunction comes from tastily packaged processed food with food additives like MSG (monosodium glutamate). Food additives like MSG have been used by industrial food giants to enhance the taste and craving for more food. Many food additives are “excitotoxins.” Another well known excitotoxin is aspartame, a sweetener found in many diet sodas.

Excitotoxins have been known to over stimulate and eventually kill specific brain cells. Excitotoxins play a major role in a growing number of neurological diseases including Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis, ALS, seizures, behavioral and psychiatric disorders, compulsive eating, gross obesity, brain tumors, and sudden death syndrome.

MSG labeling has been often disguised under the name of hydrolyzed proteins, vegetable proteins, soy concentrate or isolates, protein isolates, and natural flavor broth. Please check out the important information on excitotoxins by Russell L. Blaylock, MD at www.russellblaylockmd.com.

The first line of therapy for leaky gut is to stop using antibiotics for common minor infections, stop eating hormone fed animal products, and stop eating all forms of sugars which include all grains, alcohol, and fruit juices. Food allergy testing is mandatory for people suffering from leaky gut/leaky brain syndrome. A common food allergen, gluten, also behaves like an excitotoxin in gluten sensitive people.

Introduce normal intestinal flora by eating and drinking fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, butter milk, sauerkraut, and kimchi. You may add probiotics, nutritional supplements, and an intestinal herbal cleanser. A gallbladder/liver flush is a powerful yet inexpensive your internal cleansing program.

Another major area that has been over looked too many times is unrecognized parasite infections. These disrupt the gut lining and create a leaky gut which is more susceptible to food allergens and excitotoxins. Most parasites affect areas in the body outside of the GI tract. There are several articles about parasites on my web site (see below).

In summary, the ultimate mind/body connection starts out with the quality of foods, integrity of the digestive tract, and our brain function. What we eat and how we feel is not an accident but follows from neurophysiologic effects from gut feelings from the assimilation of the food into neuropeptides. When we have leaky gut, we have leaky brain. Your irritable mind might be caused by your irritable bowel!

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles and information about alternative medicine as well as patient success stories visit his web site at www.preventionandhealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly presentation and discussion by Dr. Yu on Alternative Medicine at his office on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Please call to verify the date and reserve your space.



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