



## 'Gut Feelings' Bring Overall Health & Vitality

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"A healthy gut is a healthy body" this saying connotes how essential maintaining optimal health of the digestive system is for overall wellbeing. However, the digestive system is the most ignored part of our body until there is a problem. When the digestive system is not functioning the way it should, people can experience problems ranging from poor nutrient absorption, weight issues, nausea, bloating, constipation, stomach pain and diarrhea to severe and often debilitating conditions like acid reflux, irritable bowel disease (IBD) and hormonal imbalance.

Other factors that influence the digestive system include stress, age, genetics, lifestyle and dietary habits, food additives and chemicals, and lack of physical activity. Optimal digestive health is supported by following a healthy lifestyle, good and balanced eating habits, exercising regularly, having sound sleep and keeping stress under check.

However, it is easier said than done because today's fast-paced lifestyle and resultant dietary variables can disrupt the digestive system, altering bacteria, disturbing the activity of digestive enzymes or enzyme insufficiency. According to the National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC), an information broadcasting service under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, about 60 to 70 million people are affected by digestive health-related conditions.

Recently, consumers have become more aware of the impact a healthy digestive system has on their overall health and wellness, so they are exploring various opportunities to support good digestive health. As a result, probiotics and digestive enzymes are gaining popularity.

Probiotics are live microorganisms, usually bacteria, found in the human gut that helps digestive processes to function properly and optimally, by exerting various protective roles. Various strains of bacteria are in use as probiotics; *Lactobacillus*, *Bifidobacterium* and yeast *Saccharomyces boulardii* are the most common. Mostly, these organisms convey different but overlapping health benefits.

Of the 400 different bacterial species that promote a healthy digestive system, *Bacillus coagulans* is the largest group that produces lactic acid. This lactic acid-producing species is known to possess health and nutritional benefits, including improved nutritional value of food, control of intestinal infections, improved lactose digestion and help in fighting certain allergic conditions.

Several studies have demonstrated that *Lactobacillus* has been beneficial in a wide variety of conditions ranging from yeast infections and bacterial vaginosis, irritable bowel syndrome and inflammatory bowel disease, lactose intolerance, several skin conditions, prevention of respiratory infections, support of cognitive health, and management of healthy cholesterol levels.

Enzymes are simple proteins found within each living cell, where they act as biological catalysts to regulate various biological reactions. Enzymes are the essential part of any chemical reactions that take place in our body. Various biological reactions, such as digesting food, activities of the brain, cellular energy and repair process of tissues, organs and cells are regulated by different types of enzymes.

Digestive enzyme supplements help balance the digestive process, particularly in people who experience chronic gastrointestinal discomfort (e.g., constipation, diarrhea, cramps), support healthy immune functions and help in the breakdown of fats, proteins and carbohydrates.

As consumer demand for better digestive health grows, we're seeing great opportunity for ingredients such as Sabinsa's LactoSpore® and DigeZyme®.

*His title may be marketing director, but Shaheen Majeed is involved in nearly everything the Sami Labs (<http://www.samilabs.com/>)/Sabinsa (<http://www.sabinsa.com/>) Group of Companies does. Shaheen's first job was in the Sabinsa warehouse when he was just 17 years old, and over the past 22 years he has held a variety of positions representing the Group's substantial portfolio of proprietary nutritional and cosmeceutical ingredients. He oversees Sabinsa's contract farming program to ensure best agricultural practices and fair pay for farmers, is deeply involved in the cGMP and regulatory compliance at its factories and offices throughout the world, and oversees GRAS status applications. He holds board positions with Sabinsa, Sami Labs and Sami Direct, the Group's multi-level marketing company in India. He oversees an extensive marketing program, Latin America Business Development, and guides many clinical studies through the publishing process. He has managed contract manufacturing, cosmetic marketing and launched VetVitals, the pet supplements ingredient line.*