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Health newsfeed for Friday, August 2, 2013

HEADLINE: GUT BUGS AND HEALTH

ANCHOR LEAD: CAN CHRONIC INFECTION CHANGE YOUR GUT BACTERIA? ELIZABETH TRACEY REPORTS

Probiotics, yogurt, even fecal transplant are all aimed at changing gut flora, known as the gut microbiome, to benefit someone's health. Now a new study points out that chronic HIV infection changes gut flora. Michael Melia, an HIV expert at Johns Hopkins, says inflammation may be the link.

MELIA: What we've begun to understand is that even among persons who have well-controlled HIV infection they continue to have ongoing activation of their immune system, an ongoing chronic inflammation that seems to be associated with downstream detrimental effects, and that's one of the very intriguing aspects of this publication, which shows that even among persons who have well-controlled HIV infection, they do not have the microbiome of an uninfected individual. :29

Melia says chronic HIV infection is likely similar to other chronic infections or diseases in causing chronic inflammation, and the change in gut flora is one consequence, but may also point the way to intervention. At Johns Hopkins, I'm Elizabeth Tracey.