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Good Germs, Bad Germs: Health And Survival In A Bacterial World



Synopsis

Public sanitation and antibiotic drugs have brought about historic increases in the human life span; they have also unintentionally produced new health crises by disrupting the intimate, age-old balance between humans and the microorganisms that inhabit our bodies and our environment. As a result, antibiotic resistance now ranks among the gravest medical problems of modern times. *Good Germs, Bad Germs* tells the story of what went terribly wrong in our war on germs. It also offers a hopeful look into a future in which antibiotics will be designed and used more wisely, and beyond that to a day when we may replace antibacterial drugs and cleansers with bacterial ones.

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Customer Reviews

Science writer Sachs (*Corpse*) makes a strong case for a new paradigm for dealing with the microbial life that teems around and within us. Taking both evolutionary and ecological approaches, she explains why antibiotics work so well but are now losing their effectiveness. She notes that between agricultural antibiotic usage and needless prescriptions written for human use, antibiotic resistance has reached terrifying levels. A decade ago, resistant infections acquired in hospitals were killing an estimated eighty-eight thousand Americans each year... more than car accidents and homicides combined. Our attempts to destroy microorganisms regularly upset useful microbial communities, often leading to serious medical consequences. Sachs also presents evidence suggesting that an epidemiclike rise in autoimmune diseases and allergies may be attributable to our misguided frontal assault on the bacterial world. The solution proposed is to encourage the

growth of healthy, displacement-resistant microbial ecological communities and promote research that disrupts microbial processes rather than simply attempting to kill the germs themselves. Despite the frightening death toll, Sachs's summary of promising new avenues of research offers hope. (Oct. 16) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
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“Ground-breaking.”
“Could hardly be more timely.”
“The New York Times”
“Brings the battle against dirt firmly into the 21st century.”
“The Washington Post”
“Explains how our obsession with cleanliness led us to this point and details how science may still find a way past the danger.”
“O, The Oprah Magazine

Very good book. Very informative. Talks a lot about the reality in medicine of our days. We all want a quick fix, we want things instantly. Instead we are harming our body's systems with the overuse of antibiotics and other medications instead of taking preventive care and leaning towards more natural solutions that are in agreement with our natural way of function.

a really interesting book which i wish every mom & dad would read so they would stop buying into the 'antibacterial' craze. manufacturers have turned us into a country of germophobes, and in doing so are creating a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. this onslaught of products designed to keep our homes germ-free is creating strains of super-bugs, resistant to stronger and stronger antibacterials. we are creating a world where we will all end up being like the 'boy in the bubble', unable to fend off even the most innocuous germs even while they get stronger and stronger. (i'm sorry, but when we are told to buy 'hands free' soap dispensers, i think things have gone too far. who cares if the soap dispenser is 'germy'? isn't that why you're washing your hands? i'm more concerned with the door handle i'll be touching afterward.)anyway, this book will open your eyes to the role bacteria play in our lives as well as the folly of our attempts to eradicate them. well written, and easy to understand without being simplistic, this is a book that everyone should read.

very interesting book about the different types of bacteria and viruses

Jessica Sachs writes about the intimate relationship between people and micro-organisms. Our skin has a 2-deep layer of bacteria, our mouths and gut have trillions of them; they are a constant part of

our environment. We've co-evolved with bacteria, and we need each other. Animals raised in a truly sterile environment, with no bacteria, do not thrive. Good bacteria help with food digestion, produce enzymes so we have better nutrition, and help fight off disease by crowding out disease-causing bacteria. It looks as if we've been too successful in sterilizing our environment. Children raised on farms, where they are exposed to more bacteria while they are growing up, have a much lower rate of allergies and auto-immune diseases than children raised in cities. It looks like we need a certain amount of stimulation of our immune system by outside bacteria for it to develop optimally.

Otherwise, our immune system grows up to be on a hair-trigger, ramping up too quickly and aggressively. Kids need to get dirty to grow up healthy :-)

This is an excellent book, with a background on the science of bacteria, how they evolve and respond to our use of antibiotics, how we are now threatened by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, techniques for reducing risks from disease-causing bacteria, a survey of probiotic developments and research, and discussion about where we are headed. Well written and engaging, highly recommended.

really interesting

While I have a science background, I have not been very interested in biology and knew very little about microbes. This is a great introduction to the world of microbes. Well you think, so what. But trust me, the microbial world is in short amazing. I highly recommend this book if you have an interest in science and do not know much about microbes. It will change the way you see the world.

A well written book that surprised me at how readable it was. I thought I would be crawling with bugs when I finished but not so. On the contrary, I was enlightened.

This book is a good read for those interested in a light history of how scientists came to understand some of the more well-known bacteria that affect us. It also provides a glimpse into the lives of those affected by bacterial infections.

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