

THE

ANSWER

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VAGUS

Massage stimulates the Vagus nerve, Its name derived from the Latin 'vagary' - meaning wandering, It is sometimes referred to as the wandering nerve, as it is the longest cranial nerve and has the widest distribution in the body.

The vagus nerve starts at cranial nerve ten in the brain and then literally wanders, it travels up to the eye and then down both sides of the neck and on through the torso, it branches off in various places along the way. It innervates the pupils, oesophagus, lungs, digestive organs, bladder, kidneys, and much more. Previously it wasn't thought that it goes as far as the pelvic region but research has now discovered that it goes to the female reproductive organs. It could be thought of as the superhighway that connects your body to the brain. This is the most obvious physical representation of the mind-body connection.

The vagus nerve has a great effect and health benefits on most of the body systems. It is one part of the autonomic nervous system, the parasympathetic nervous system also known as "rest and digest" the other half which works in opposition to this and also in conjunction, is the sympathetic nervous system "fight or flight".

The vagus nerve provides a whopping 75% of all parasympathetic outflows. The parasympathetic nervous system is responsible for maintaining homeostasis (balance) in the body's various systems; it decreases heart rate, relaxes muscles, and increases secretion

of digestive juices and saliva, contracts the bladder, sends messages to the brain to produce/release Oxytocin (feel-good/bonding hormone) reduces anxiety and depression, reduces stress and inflammation, increases immunity.

Stimulation of the vagus nerve can increase the production of stomach acid and bile by 30%. When we make more acid we can digest our proteins more completely and when we increase bile production we digest and absorb fats more effectively. Increased stomach acid also improves methylation, which plays a critical role in killing any mold, bacteria, or parasite that tries to call your gut home.

One branch of the Vagus travels to the gastrointestinal tract, where it facilitates the release of food absorption hormones like insulin and glucose. That's one reason the massaged preemies in the Touch research Institute studies gain weight faster. "They aren't eating any more formula than non massaged babies," says T. Field "but their food absorption is more efficient."

Phrases like "I have a gut feeling" have been in our language for many years, we now know that the vagus acts as a message translator between your gut and your brain, the vast majority of these messages go from the gut via the enteric nervous system in the digestive tract to your brain, so in essence, your belly really does tell your brain how you are feeling.

The gut micro-biome plays a critical role in an organism overall health, the vagus nerve reads the micro-biome and initiates a response to modulate inflammation based on whether or not it detects pathogenic versus non pathogenic organisms.

Even in the absence of overt inflammation the vagal pathways mediate signals that can induce both anxiogenic (anxiety causing) and anxiolytic (anxiety reducing) effects, depending on the nature of the stimulus. This further illustrates the important role that the gut micro-biome and vagus nerve play on mood.

The vagus nerve gathers information from all the organs, It is always on a reconnaissance mission to the presence of inflammatory like cytokines. It then alerts the brain, which in turn responds by sending out anti-inflammatory neurotransmitters. This underscores the fact that inflammation is meant to be temporary; once it's done it's job, such as promoting healing necessary for an injury, it needs to be "shut off." The vagus nerve performs this vital action.

Vagal stimulation decreases migraines. In a recent study, scientists demonstrated that stimulation of the vagus nerve reduced the frequency of migraine headaches by over 50% as well a marked reduction in epileptic seizures.

The incredible benefits of the vagus nerve stimulation seem to be endless, future research will shed more light on this in years to come.

There should be no doubt in your mind about the amazing contribution that the vagus nerve has to your health and wellness.

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