



HEALTHY EATING

New food claims: Listen to your gut

*Intestines are
in the spotlight*

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BY CHERYL TRUMAN
McClatchy-Tribune

It's not all in your head. These days, it's all in your gut.

Twenty years ago, oat bran was the food that was going to put us all into a state of high-fiber, clear-hearted bliss.

Now the food trend is lower in the body. You want to be healthy in 2008? Ponder your intestines.

Dannon sells Activia yogurt, which promotes bathroom regularity. It also hawks mini-smoothies called DanActive, that claim to boost immunity. You didn't know? Much of

your immunity lies in the foot after foot of epithelial cells lining your intestines — a kind of spongy exchange center where nutrients are absorbed and wastes are expelled.

Kraft sells "probiotic" cheese and cottage cheese. Planters has introduced a "digestive health mix" that includes "prebiotic" high-fiber items including granola, almonds and dried cherries.

There's even a new book, "Health Begins in the Colon" (Ulysses Press, \$19.99) by Edward Group. Says Group of his epiphanic moment: "I never hear anything in the medical community about the intestinal tract."

Group says part of our problem, not to put too fine a point on it, is tran-

sit time: how long it takes for what you ingest to do its body business and exit you. People in good health should have a bowel movement two or three times a day, Group says. An ideal transit time for food to get in, break down and be on its way? Ten to 18 hours.

To get an idea of how the intestines work, Group says, consider mixing up everything you eat and drink in a day and smearing it on your skin: After a few hours, it's going to get pretty vile.

That's the other part of the intestinal-health equation: urging the toxins in our food to move on out. Or, with Group's dietary recommendations, never eating them in the first



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The soluble fiber in oatmeal might help lower levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol.

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