

Probiotics



Knowledge is Power - Quality health care starts with You

Probiotics, as defined by the World Health Organization, are “live microorganisms which when administered in adequate amounts confer a health benefit to the host.” The word probiotic means “for (or pro) life,” and are the “good” bacteria within your intestines.

The origin of probiotics

The concept of probiotics started in the early 20th century. Russian scientist, Eli Metchnikoff, hypothesized fermented milk products could improve and elongate the life span of Bulgarian peasants.

Fermented milk plants friendly bacteria within the intestine and reduces the amount of bad bacteria within the gut. Metchnikoff later won the Nobel Prize for his work with probiotics.

Even Marco Polo, explorer and tradesman, used probiotics in the thirteenth century. He came across kefir, a fermented milk drink, on his travels to China and Mongolia and wrote about it in his travel journals.

How do probiotics improve your health?

Probiotics are not just for digestive health. Even today, research is continuing to determine how probiotics can protect against such conditions as cancer and heart disease.

Reasons why probiotics promote good health:

- Including probiotics in your diet helps to replenish good bacteria to keep the balance of good to bad bacteria at about 10 to 1.
- The good bacteria in your body

crowds out bad bacteria.

- Since 80 percent of your immune system is located in your gut, if your gut flora is balanced your immune system functions better.
- Studies are finding a link between taking probiotics and lower rates of allergies.
- Doctors within the United States are beginning to prescribe probiotics along with antibiotics in order to lower the rate of antibiotic-related yeast infections and diarrhea.
- Probiotics help prevent bad bacteria from entering the bloodstream.
- Reduces symptoms of constipation, bloating, gas and diarrhea.

What makes an ideal probiotic?

While research is continuing on probiotics, studies are showing some similar trends for what makes probiotic supplements beneficial.

There are tons of probiotic supplements on the market today, ranging from \$5 - \$80. One of the biggest differences in supplements is the capsule technology used. It is best to find a probiotic with stomach acid protection to ensure the most probiotics make it to the intestine as possible.

Researchers are still studying various strains of probiotics to determine which are most beneficial against different disease states. But collectively, studies have shown the more probiotics included, the better. Look for a supplement with multiple probiotics.

Probiotics + Prebiotics = Synbiotics
Prebiotics are dietary fiber that are insoluble, your body cannot dissolve and absorb this type of fiber. It also serves as “food” for the probiotics in the gut. Therefore, a probiotic that includes a prebiotic fiber provides both the good bacteria and the food supply to provide optimal gut flora support.

For more information on probiotics, read Dr. Challa’s most recent book Probiotics For Dummies, available in special edition for FREE download or in full version paperback in stores May 2012.

Additional Digestive Topics

- Celiac Disease
- Colon Cancer
- Constipation
- Crohn’s Disease
- Diarrhea
- Gas in Digestive Tract
- Gastro Reflux Disease
- Heartburn
- Hepatitis C
- Indigestion
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Ulcerative Colitis