

# PROBIOTICS

Many of us automatically think "bad" when we think "bacteria." After all, many bacteria cause serious infections. But that notion may not always be true for your digestive tract, which contains a vast number of bacteria and has evolved to use "good" bacteria for several of its important functions.

Your digestive tract is host to hundreds of different types of bacteria and yeasts. Among these, *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and numerous other microbes are crucially important to your health. **"Good" bacteria are considered "probiotics" because they help maintain digestive health and serve as a natural antibiotic against potentially harmful microbes.**

**Probiotics are used to treat and prevent digestive disorders, allergies, urinary tract infections, vaginal infections, and many other immune system imbalances.** Probiotics are often recommended as a safeguard during antibiotic therapy, which suppresses

beneficial bacteria and may trigger yeast infections. Several studies show that **probiotics enhance overall immunity**, thereby helping preventing chronic colds and flu's and preventing food allergies/sensitivities.

Long valued for its therapeutic and nutritional benefits, **yogourt is a food source of probiotics; however, there are wide variations in the quality and quantity of good bacteria** found in yogourt, and some brands contain none at all, making it difficult to get reliable amounts. **Probiotic supplements are an effective alternative if they contain quality concentrated human probiotic strains.** As with yogourt, the quality of different probiotic brands vary greatly, therefore it is important to obtain a product that has been well tested. As well, different strains of probiotics are more applicable for certain health concerns. For the most appropriate strain for you, speak with your naturopathic doctor or family doctor.

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