

# Friendly Bacteria - Probiotics

## Key Points

- > Probiotics what are they?
- > Are you taking the correct ones?
- > Who needs to take probiotic supplements?
- > Checklist on page 4 back page.

## Your Health Starts in Your Gut

A healthy 'gut' or digestive system is a key factor in a healthy body. Many people already know that eating foods containing 'friendly' bacteria or taking a probiotic supplement are good for you.

Probiotics are 'friendly bacteria' that live in your stomach and intestines. While many people understand that probiotics are important, few people realise just how important these "friendly bacteria" really are.

Scientific evidence has shown that ensuring a good balance of 'friendly' bacteria in your stomach and intestines has a number of health benefits including aiding in maintenance of a normal

healthy immune and gastrointestinal system.

Normally we associate bacteria with infections (e.g. the infamous "golden staph"). But did you know that your stomach and intestines contain over 400 different species of bacteria?

In fact, it is estimated that you are outnumbered cell-for-cell, about 10 to 1 by the bugs in your gut!

The reason you have these enormous numbers of bacteria inside you is not because you have been infected, but because humans have developed a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship with them.

We give the bacteria somewhere to live, and in return they help us digest food, make certain nutrients for us that we cannot make ourselves (such as vitamin B12), and help maintain our immunity, gastrointestinal health and general wellbeing.

The amazing thing about all of this is that this enormous zoo of different bacteria can be kept in balance by ensuring just two types of bacteria are dominant: Lactobacilli and Bifidobacteria.

There are many factors that can affect the balance of these friendly bacteria, read on to find out more.....

ited Bowen practitioner. Energy medicine techniques are simple, relaxing and great for both adults and children. It can help you resolve past and present emotional issues in a safe and non-threatening way.

## What's New in March 2007

Tracey Lee Morley is now available for consultation at Wauchope at 'Essential Being' Centre at 30 Hasting St on Fridays. Call the Port Macquarie clinic if you would like an appointment.

Sue Pattinson is now available for consultations at the Holistic Health & Wellness centre every second Thursday. Sue specializes in Energy Medicine which helps emotional and stress problems. She is also an accredited



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**Not All Friendly Bacteria are truly 'friendly'**

There are many different types of probiotics. It is not only the type of probiotic but the strain of the probiotic that is important.

Types of friendly bacteria are;

Lactobacillus acidophilus primarily populates the small intestine and is one of the best known "friendly bacteria". But while a number of products claim to contain it, relatively few strains of Lactobacillus acidophilus have substantial

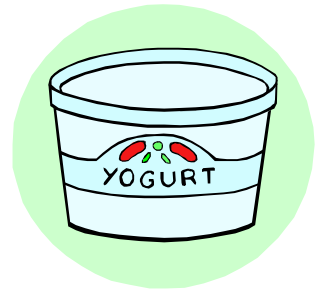
scientific evidence that supports their effective health benefits.

There are different STRAINS of the same bacteria and many companies quote effects of the tested strain BUT use a complete different strain in their products. Often these other strains do NOT have the health benefits.

So just because a product says it have over 20million lactobacillus acidophilus doesn't make

it a great product. It is the STRAIN of the lactobacillus acidophilus that is important (this also applies to all other probiotics)

The type of strain is usually written at the end; the one I commonly recommend is lactobacillus acidophilus NCFM. The strain is the NCFM. This is Metagenics Ultraflora or from the health food shop Inner Health.



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**While a number of probiotic products claim to contain it, relatively few strains of lactobacillus acidophilus have the effective health benefits. Look for lactobacillus acidophilus NCFM (i.e. the strain is NCFM)**

**The Friendly Bacteria 'killers'; Stress**

Stress in all forms (physical, emotional and mental) causes an alteration in the bacteria balance of your digestive system or gut.

Long term stress leads to a reduction of the 'friendly' bacteria and an increase in the 'unfriendly' bacteria of the digestive system.

Anyone who is under stress especially if it is prolonged needs to take a friendly bacteria (probiotic) supplement.

A poor diet is another lead cause of low levels of 'friendly bacteria'. If you eat on the run or do not eat properly then a probiotic supplement is recommended along with your multi-

vitamin and mineral and fish oils (and changing your dietary and lifestyle habits).

These above three supplements are a base for long term on going wellness and are important for most people in our society to take every day (even if you do eat well).

**Children and Babies**

Babies are naturally born predisposed to allergy, because of protective changes to their mother's immunity during pregnancy.

In order to reduce this predisposition, and to develop the capacity to combat microbial disease (viruses bacteria and fungi), children need exposure to microbial antigens. As safe way, is by ensuring they have a healthy gut flora.

Young children who are kept in a 'too clean' environment are more prone to developing allergies. Let them play in the dirt now and then!

Babies born via caesarean section and/or bottle fed babies often require a children's probiotic supplement to help correct gut flora balances.

Because a child's digestive system is still developing, they need lower doses of probiotics

than adults, and immunological support from colostrum, phytosterols and the amino acid glutamine.

This is especially important in children with a family tendency to or have allergies, asthma or eczema.

Children with recurrent colds/coughs and allergy problems also require probiotic supplement to help balance gut flora and improve immune function.



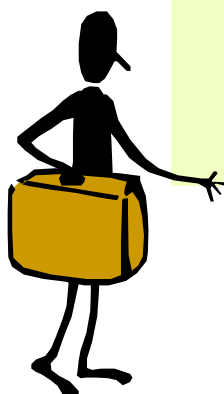
## Hormones, Antibiotics and Travelers

Hormonal replacement therapy and the oral contraceptive pill alters the balance of the friendly and unfriendly bacteria in the gut. If you are taking these hormones then it is important to consider all of the extra nutrient requirements. your body needs to maintain health and wellness. I often recommend a probiotic supplement along with a multi B with adequate B6, checking your zinc levels using zinc tally, these are some of the main ones.

Antibiotics not only 'kill off' the bad bugs but they also kill off the friendly bacteria. If you are on antibiotics then you need to take a probiotic that is not destroyed by the antibiotic. Take an antibiotic resistance probiotic during the course of antibiotics and then continue for at least a few weeks after you have finished the course of antibiotics.

Repeated antibiotic use has been linked, in some studies, to an increased incidence of allergies and lower immune function in the long term.

For travelers who want to help reduce the risk of diarrhea and other gastrointestinal infections then I recommend a probiotic AND and prebiotic starting the week before you travel and during, with Vitamin C 4000mg a day.



## Low Immunity & Allergies; (hayfever, asthma, eczema and food allergies)

Allergies are an ever increasing problem especially here in Australia. We have one of the highest asthma rates in the world.

People with allergies often have an increased requirement for Vitamin C, Magnesium and Zinc. They also require an improvement in the bacteria flora of the gut.

The best form of probiotics for

low immunity (recurrent infections) and allergy problems (ranging from hay fever, asthma and eczema to a range of food allergies often causing digestive upsets, migraines, tiredness etc) is a strain of probiotics that also contains lactobacillus rhamnosus (HN001 strain).

These probiotics can also be

taken by mothers who are breastfeeding their baby to reduce the incidence of allergies in the child. Plus a good quality fish oil, and multi vitamin and mineral.

**If you have digestive problems or/and allergies a test with ARL pathology called a CDSA is the best 'check up' of your digestive health. It will give an accurate level of your 'friendly and unfriendly' bacteria level in your gut. Ask Tracey for more information**

## Prebiotics

Prebiotics are substances that support probiotics. Often a prebiotic is important to take WITH the probiotic to improve it's effectiveness.

A colostrum derived antibody concentrate can assist the immune system in eliminating bad organisms from the gut while promoting the adhesion of "friendly bacteria" (such as Lactobacillus acidophilus and Bifidobacteria) to the gut wall.

Colostrum can also directly inhibit the growth of harmful organisms such as Candida.

One of the best types of prebiotic are Arabinogalactans. A soluble vegetable fibre from the Western Larch tree, this fibre feeds good bacteria and reduces harmful organisms in the gut such as Candida. Unlike other soluble fibres. Arabinogalactans also have the added advantage of not causing bloating.

**Breastfeeding mothers can reduce the tendency to allergies in their babies by taking the correct probiotic supplement during pregnancy and while breastfeeding**

In 'stubborn' cases of lower immune function, allergies or gut dysbiosis I often recommend a prebiotic with the probiotic to improve it's effectiveness and health benefits.

A CDSA test from ARL pathology is a thorough check up of your digestive function and will indicate if you need a pre and probiotic supplementation.



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**Ask Tracey Lee as to which probiotic suits your individual health requirements. There are many different types and strains, don't waste your money on one that is not right for you.**

### Who needs to take probiotics?

If you have any of the following then you may need to take a probiotic supplement. Ask Tracey Lee as to which product suits you.

- Are you on the contraceptive pill or HRT?
- Do you have digestive complaints - bloating, diarrhoea or constipation?
- Do you have irritable bowel syndrome?
- Are you stressed?
- Do you have intestinal inflammation?
- Do you want to reduce the risk of traveler's diarrhoea?
- Have you taken antibiotics recently or are on antibiotics?
- Do you have a poor diet?
- Do you suffer from candida (thrush)?
- Do you suffer from allergies including asthma, eczema or hayfever?
- Do you have low immunity and suffer from recurrent colds/cough or have had or have viral infections (e.g. glandular fever, Ross River fever, cytomegalovirus)

### **Type of Friendly Bacteria continued from page 2**

2. Bifidobacteria such as Bifidobacterium lactis (BBL), comprise approximately 90% of the beneficial bacteria in an adult's large intestine (in breast-fed infants they account for 99% of all beneficial flora).

3. Another species of Lactobacillus that has recently received a great deal of attention is Lactobacillus plantarum. A particular strain of this (designated 299v) has been found to reduce inflammatory processes in the gut, as in medically diagnosed irritable bowel

syndrome and inflammatory bowel disorders like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

4. Lactobacillus rhamnosus (HN001 strain) and Bifidobacterium lactis (HN019 strain). Both these strains have been demonstrated to be beneficial for immunity, allergies and mucosal integrity.

5. We also have a non-pathogenic yeast, Saccharomyces boulardii, which has been shown to prevent and treat infectious diarrhoea, post-

antibiotic diarrhoea, yeast overgrowth and dysbiosis.

**In summary** there are different STRAINS and types of lactobacillus bacteria and other friendly bacteria. I use one of over 8 different products to suit the individual needs of each client. Each one has been shown to be effective in certain health problems. What suits one person doesn't suit another.

You need to ensure that the friendly bacteria you are taking (or eating) is the RIGHT one for you.