

Good Bacteria is Worth Having

Carmela Roush

Natural Solutions Vitamin and Herb Consultants

A division of Shear Design Salon

Phone 330-364-2511 email carmela.roush@sheardesignsalon.com

Similar article published in The Times Report on mm/dd/yyyy

Do you know what a probiotic is? When I think back to the first time I heard this word I did not know what it meant. I knew it had something to do with a health issue because at the time I was just beginning to study nutrition and healthy alternative. Had I not been studying these subjects I might have thought it had something to do with fitness.

Thinking probiotic had something to do with fitness was not really that far off base. Probiotics are responsible for the fitness of the colon. Yes, that is exactly what role a probiotic plays when it comes to keeping our colons balanced with the “good bacteria” we need to stay healthy.

Most of us think that bacteria causes disease. Well, a lot of bacteria does cause disease and we do all that we can to avoid bacteria. We have antibiotics that destroy bacteria. We cook our meats well, we wash our fruits and vegetables and most important we know we need to wash our hands a lot.

Did you notice that similarity in the words probiotics and antibiotics? This is the first key to recognizing why probiotics are good for us. The word “biotic” means, “relating to life”. “Probiotic” means for life and relates to life in our digestive track, the word “antibiotic” means against life.

Most of us know we take antibiotics when we have infectious diseases because we need something that can kill the bad bacteria or virus that has caused us to be sick. What most of us never realized is that we have a whole army of good bacteria that keeps us healthy and guards against bad bacteria. The good bacteria is functioning everyday twenty four seven to keep us healthy.

We are exposed to bacteria every time we eat most meats and foods that sit out. Thank goodness our digestive systems are designed to kill most of these bacteria. One of the most common bacteria that we are familiar with is E. coli (salmonella). There are many strains of E. coli. Sometimes salmonella bacteria gets into the colon and this is when we can get really sick.

Bacteria are every where!! We are so lucky that most of the time our bodies can fight off these invaders. One thing that really helps fight bad bacteria in our bodies is a healthy immune system and a strong group of “good bacteria” in our colons.

Here are just a few of the billions of “good bacteria” and microbes we have in our intestinal tract.

- B. Bifidus
 - Prevents invading pathogenic bacteria from attaching to the intestinal wall
 - Helps the body assimilate minerals.
- L. Brevis
 - Helps produce lactic acid and inhibit unfriendly strains of microorganisms.
 - Also, helps synthesize vitamins D and K.
- L. Bulgauicus
 - It helps digest lactase and improves tolerance to dairy products
- L. Plantarum
 - Another lactic acid producing stain

- B. Infantis
 - Helps stimulate the immune system.
- B. Longum
 - Helps normalize the intestinal microflora.
- L. Acidiphilius
 - One of the major bacteria in the intestinal micro flora. It helps breakdown and eliminate cholesterol. And helps reduce yeasts.
- L. Reuteri
 - Helps to inhibit the growth of many types of microorganisms and fungi. It helps growth of other friendly bacteria, while inhibiting other unfriendly organisms.
- L. Reteri
 - Is the most stable of all the bacteria and has been found to help with stomach ulcers and irritable bowl syndrome.

Things that can cause the “good bacteria” to get out of balance are: stress, antibiotics, alcohol, food preservative and /or cantaminants, infectious viruses, chlorine and other antibacterial chemicals in our water, all can cause your bacteria levels to fluctuate. If you have ever traveled out of the country and gotten that dreaded diarrhea it is because you where exposed to unfamiliar microbes in the food and water. By taking probiotics with meals when traveling abroad, many people have been able to prevent diarrhea from happening. You build up the “good bacteria” so they can beat up the “bad bacteria” Also, take your multivitamin and minerals, and a good immune booster like Echinacea before and during travel will help your system fight back.

Antibiotics are one of the worst culprits. Most women who have ever taken an antibiotic and gotten a vaginal infection are feeling the signs of destroyed “good bacteria”. Everyone who takes antibiotics should always take probiotics to put the balance of these good guys back into the intestinal tract. Keep in mind that if you eat meats that the animals are treated with antibiotics regularly and these can be a hidden source of antibiotics.

One last and maybe the most important reason for taking a good probiotic is this; healthy intestinal micro flora improve the body’s ability to digest fats and proteins and is important in weight management. Probiotics synthesize certain vitamins the body needs, including B1, B2, B6, B12, folic acid and biotin. These are all the good vitamins we need for a healthy nervous system and in today’s stressful world we need all the help we can get. Also, vegetarians need probiotic to help with the synthesis of B12 because they do not get enough in their diets.

In some of the latest research probiotics have proven to be the answer to many chronic health issues. If you suffer from athlete’s foot, jock itch, vaginal yeast infections and nail fungus you need to consider probiotics. People with weak immune systems, frequent respiratory infections and congestion, food or respiratory allergies, inflammatory bowel disorders, skin eruptions, constipation or intestinal infections may also see health improvements from taking probiotics.

So who should take probiotics? EVERYONE!! Probiotics should be considered as a help building supplement and are just as important for us as multivitamins.

How should you take a probiotic? It is usually better to take in the morning on an empty stomach, or on an empty stomach right before bed.