

# PROBIOTICS

This is a guide to probiotic use and also to clear up some misconceptions or confusion regarding common recommendations.

## Can Probiotics Permanently Colonize my Gut?

No. At least not at this stage. Oral probiotics will stay anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of weeks in the digestive system before being passed out. Poor quality probiotics will not even stay for a day and passes straight through. This is why it is important to make probiotic foods part of your daily diet. Every person's gut bacteria is unique (like a fingerprint) and will not change on a permanent basis by taking oral probiotics.

## Should I Take Probiotics While I'm on Antibiotics?

Yes, Yes and Yes! Contrary to popular belief that antibiotics destroy probiotics which results in a waste of money, numerous research studies have shown that it is very important to take probiotics with any antibiotic protocol in order to minimize common antibiotic side-effects. It is probably still best to take them a little apart (2 hours or so) but definitely take them.

## Can Children or Babies Take Adult Probiotics?

Yes and no. There is no such thing as 'baby probiotic strains'. This has all to do with marketing. However, while the probiotics are not necessarily the problem, different brands may contain excipients (fillers, sweeteners, etc.) that may not be suitable for babies or very young children. It is more important to get the right strain and dosage, so please discuss this with your healthcare practitioner. Probiotics do enter the breastmilk so breastfeeding mothers who do not feel comfortable giving their newborns supplements should take these themselves to transfer benefits to their babies.

## Empty Stomach or With Food?

Probiotics are best taken with a large meal. They are sensitive to stomach acid and when taken on an empty stomach will be exposed to a pH of around 2 which might destroy them. Eating a large meal raises the pH to about 4 which greatly enhances the survivability of probiotics. Research also indicates that dairy or grain-based meals optimise survival of bacteria through the upper digestive tract.

## How Long Can They Be Kept Out of the Fridge?

Probiotics from reputable companies are quite stable and should not lose any of their potency for up to 14 days out of the fridge. They might still be vulnerable to extremes of temperature.

## Aren't All Acidophilus Bacteria the Same?

No! Lactobacillus is the genus name, Acidophilus is the species, and the number behind it (ie GG) is the strain. That's like saying all dogs are the same. They are all animals, but you won't use a rottweiler to herd sheep. Disturbing research has also shown that only about 4% of probiotic supplements independently tested actually contained what they claimed on their labels. Many of them had nothing in them! Only use reputable companies and be very sceptical of cheap brands.

## Which is Better – Probiotic Supplements or Probiotic Foods?

Food is always best. Authentic yoghurt, sauerkraut, kefir, etc. all have many more billions of bacteria than supplements, a bigger variety and also contain FOS or the food/fibres needed for bacteria to grow. Supplements are convenient and buys time for you to source properly made fermented foods or learn how to do it yourself.

Read more about what foods to eat and what to avoid to encourage the growth of healthy gut bacteria on our website by following the link below:

<http://shop.realizehealth.com.au/content/116-gut-bacteria-and-what-to-feed-them>