

YOUR SIMPLE GUIDE TO PROBIOTICS

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WHAT ARE PROBIOTICS?

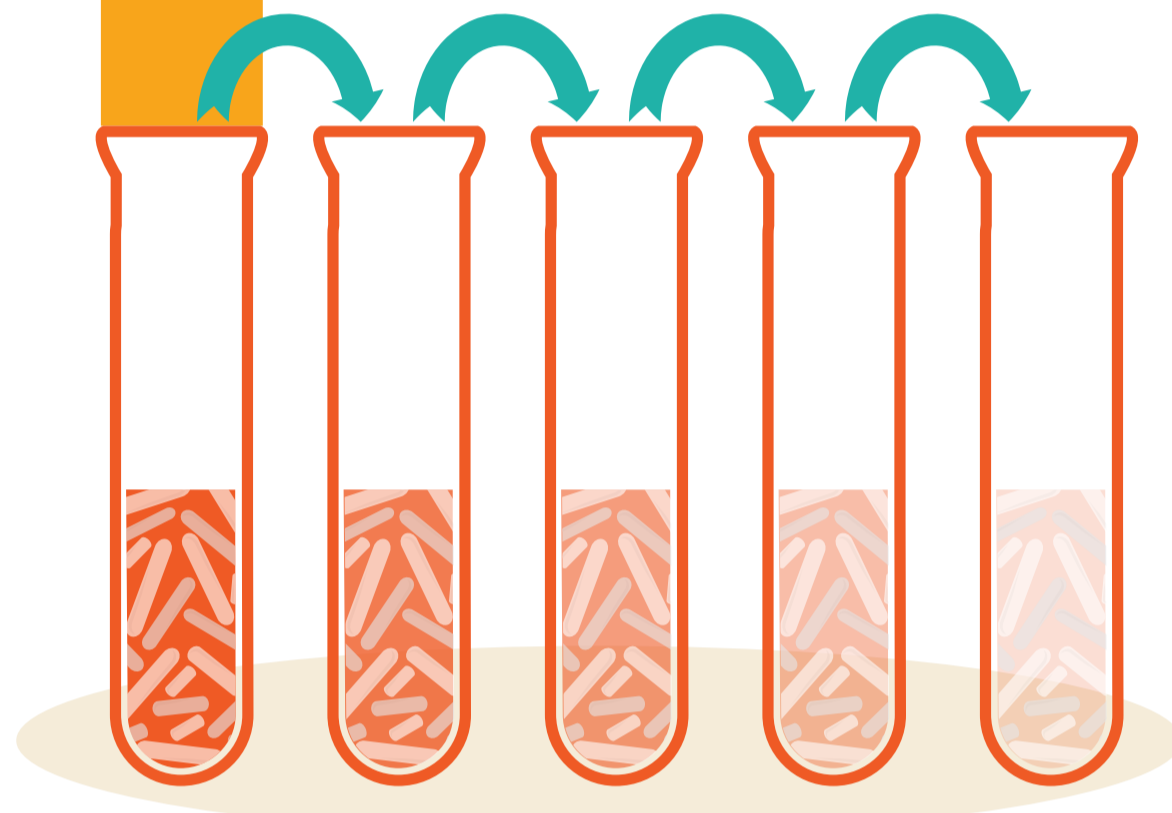
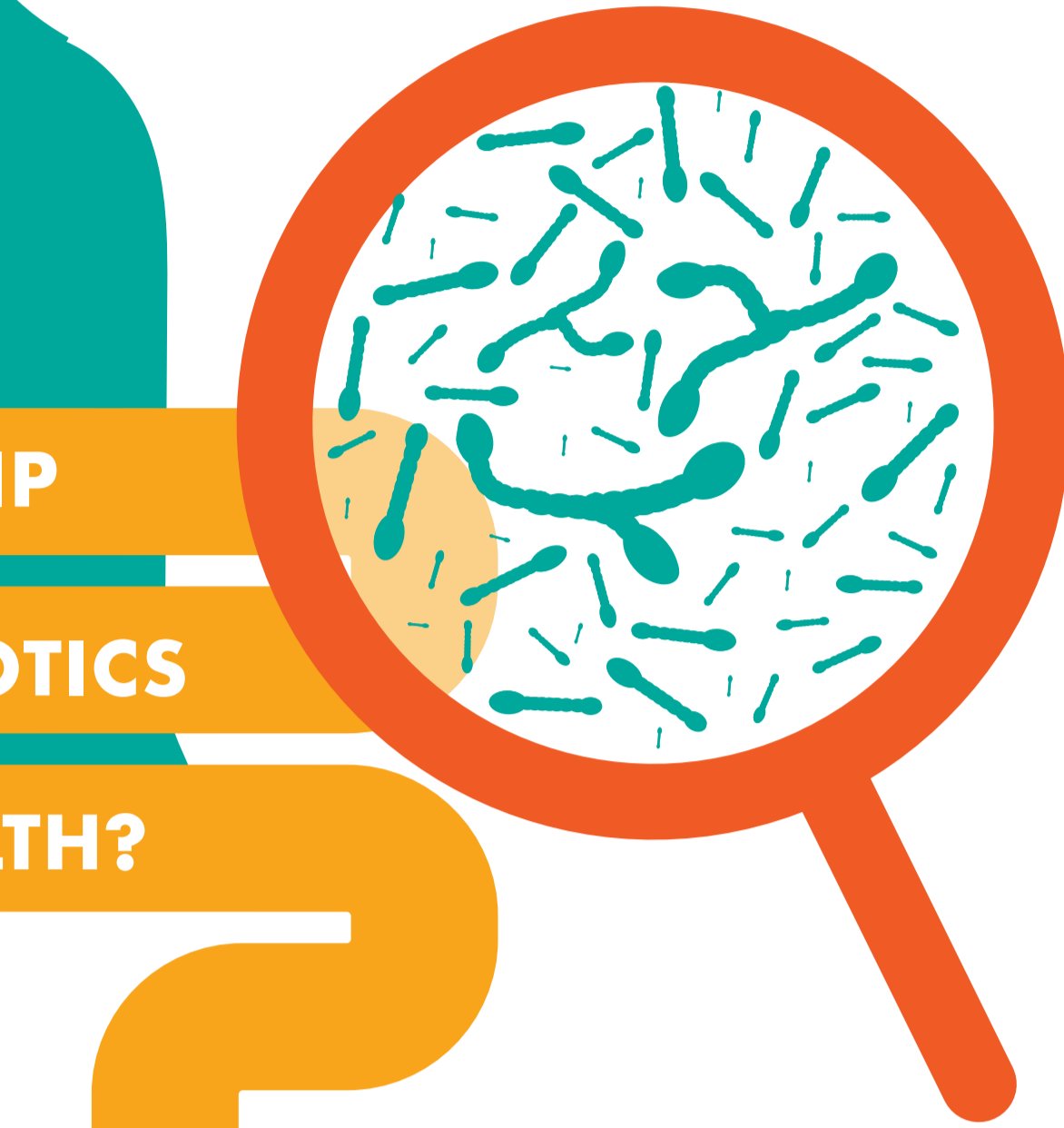
Probiotics are live microorganisms that naturally occur in the body and can be found in certain fermented foods, like yogurt, or in nutritional supplements.¹ Probiotics have demonstrated health benefit when consumed in specific amounts.²

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROBIOTICS AND "GUT" HEALTH?

The gastrointestinal (GI) tract is home to a complex ecosystem of microorganisms, known as microbiota, that are key to digestion, gut function, and overall immune response.³ Probiotics support the GI system by reintroducing native or "good" bacteria into the body and supporting balance to the microbiota.⁴

WHAT ARE CFUs AND HOW MANY DO WE NEED?

The term "CFU" stands for "colony forming unit" and refers to the number of live and active microorganisms provided in a single dose or serving of a probiotic product. As different probiotic strains have shown to be beneficial at different CFU levels, a higher number of CFU's doesn't necessarily translate to greater effectiveness. The best dose is one that has been clinically studied in humans and found to provide health benefits. Most probiotics have been tested at levels between 100 million - 10 billion CFU/dose.⁵



STRAINS EXPLAINED: CHOOSING THE ONE THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

There are many types of probiotic strains, each with unique properties and functions. When considering a probiotic, the best approach is to research the strain, or blend of strains, that most closely fits with your lifestyle and your desired health benefit(s). While probiotic foods and supplements are generally considered safe,⁶ you should consult your doctor before taking probiotics if you are pregnant, have a major underlying condition, have a compromised immune system and before administering to an infant. Always follow product restrictions and dosage instructions before taking probiotics.

SINGLE STRAIN VS. MULTI-STRAIN PROBIOTICS

Probiotic supplements are available in two different varieties: single-strain or multi-strain. Single-strain probiotics are formulated with one strain targeting specific benefits while multi-strain probiotics are comprised of several strains aimed at delivering a broad spectrum of support. Scientific studies support the value of both single-strain and multi-strain probiotics;⁷ the important factor in determining effectiveness is whether the product formulation – single or multi – matches the research demonstrating its benefit.⁸

PROBIOTICS FROM SUPPLEMENTS VS. FOOD

There isn't necessarily a right or wrong answer here as human trials have shown a benefit to both food and supplements as effective sources of probiotics.⁹ The most important thing to remember when considering whether to add probiotics to your diet is to use a product that matches your lifestyle, diet and desired benefit.¹⁰

DOES FERMENTED FOOD = PROBIOTIC?

Not all fermented foods can be considered probiotics.

Only products that contain a studied probiotic strain at a dose that's shown to provide a health benefit can be labelled as a probiotic.¹¹

SHOPPING FOR A PROBIOTIC? THINGS TO LOOK FOR

Shopping for a probiotic may sound complicated but it doesn't have to be. Below is some information to look for when considering what product to buy.

- **CFU (Colony Forming Unit) and Suggested Serving Size:** This indicates how many colony forming units or live microorganisms are contained in each serving (food) and dose (supplement) of the probiotic. Suggested serving size or dose should be clearly marked.
- **Expiration Date:** Bacteria do not live forever, so a quality probiotic should always display an expiration date. Some probiotics will indicate how many CFUs are in each serving or dose through the expiration date (as opposed to the time of manufacturing).¹²
- **Microorganism:** This indicates what specific organism is inside the product. The genus, species and strain should be labelled in that order (e.g. *Bifidobacterium lactis* BB-12[®]).¹³
- **Health Benefits:** The product should explain its intended health benefits. Be sure the claims match the benefit you're seeking.
- **Storage Instructions:** Probiotics should be kept in certain conditions to maximize their effectiveness and viability. For example, some probiotics need to be refrigerated, but not all.¹⁴ The label should indicate how, where and at what temperature to store your product.
- **Contact Details:** Probiotic labels should clearly indicate who manufactures the product and how consumers can get in touch if they experience issues or need more information.

¹ Binns, Nino. [2013] Probiotics, Prebiotics and the Gut Microbiota. International Life Sciences Institute Europe (ILSI). Retrieved from <https://ilsieurope.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/05/Probiotics-Probiotics.pdf>
² Probiotics: [2019] International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/for-consumers/infographics/>
³ The Gut Microbiota: Our Microbial Partners. [2017]. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/for-consumers/infographics/>
⁴ The Gut Microbiota: Our Microbial Partners. [2017]. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/for-consumers/infographics/>
⁵ Probiotics: A Consumer Guide for Making Smart Choices. [2016, May 3]. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/for-clinicians/resources/>
⁶ Probiotics: [2019] International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/for-consumers/infographics/>
⁷ Probiotics: Dispelling Myths. [2018]. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/infographic-dispelling-myths/>
⁸ Probiotics: A Consumer Guide for Making Smart Choices. [2016, May 3]. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/for-clinicians/resources/>
⁹ Sanders, M.E., et al. Probiotics for human use. [2018, Aug. 10]. Nutrition Bulletin. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nbu.12334>
¹⁰ Probiotics: A Consumer Guide for Making Smart Choices. [2016, May 3]. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/for-clinicians/resources/>
¹¹ Probiotics: Dispelling Myths. [2018]. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/infographic-dispelling-myths/>
¹² Probiotics: A Consumer Guide for Making Smart Choices. [2016, May 3]. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Retrieved from <https://isappscience.org/for-clinicians/resources/>
¹³ Sanders, M.E., et al. Probiotics for human use. [2018, Aug. 10]. Nutrition Bulletin. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nbu.12334>
¹⁴ Sanders, M.E., et al. Probiotics for human use. [2018, Aug. 10]. Nutrition Bulletin. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/nbu.12334>