



## PROBIOTICS

The digestive system is home to more than 500 different bacterial species which help keep intestinal linings healthy and assist in breaking down food. These 'good' organisms are also believed to help regulate healthy immune response. When the balance of friendly bacteria in the intestines becomes disturbed, researchers believe that some digestive disorders result.

Common causes of the bacteria population decreasing include the use of antibiotics, the occurrence of an infection, or acute diarrhea. Even the antibiotics that are used in the production of non-organic meats can bring about a decrease in the numbers of bacteria present. Disruptions can also be caused by stress, disease, poor nutrition, toxins, and medications (such as antibiotics), immunosuppressants, and gastric acid inhibitors, resulting in intestinal and systemic health disturbances. Routine probiotic nutritional supplementation can support the body in restoring and maintaining a healthy, balances gastrointestinal microflora.

Probiotics are microorganisms such as bacteria or yeast that are believed to improve health. Probiotics help to maintain the numbers of 'healthy' bacteria in the colon (large intestine); these bacteria are necessary for the final stage of digestion of starchy foods, and they also produce some vitamins.

Consumers are most familiar with 'lactobacillus acidophilus', contained in live culture yogurt, but there are many other probiotics needed for good digestive health.

Good quality probiotic products contain live cultures of the friendly bacteria, which are temperature sensitive. Refrigeration is required for storage to maintain the integrity of the cultures. However, they will not lose their potency if maintained at room temperature for a week or two at a time. Rule of thumb-- if an individual is personally comfortable at room temperature, then the probiotics should maintain their full potency at this same temperature.

It is suggested that a supply can be removed from the refrigerated stock bottle and put into a smaller container for use away from the refrigerator (date the bottle for tracking). Pour the desired number of capsules into the bottle cap so that any extra can be put back into the 'home' bottle without handling to avoid introducing moisture present on the hands into the product.

When using powdered probiotics, always use a clean, dry spoon to measure. Use cold, room temperature, or slightly warm food or beverage for consumption within a short period of time.

For both capsules and powder, avoid mixing the probiotics with hot foods or liquids, as high temperatures will kill the microorganisms.

Probiotics' side effects, if they occur, tend to be mild and digestive (such as gas or bloating).

