



Health Benefits of Probiotics Continue to Mount

By now you've probably heard the term "probiotics," the beneficial bacteria that make their home in and on our bodies to maintain our health. These "friendly" bacteria can actu-

ally help prevent or treat some illnesses and infections caused by more harmful bacteria and can also help with allergies, diarrhea, eczema, bowel disease — and so much more.

Reliv has always been at the forefront of nutritional ingredients and included probiotics in some of our products long before it became a consumer buzzword. A great source of probiotics is ReversAge®, which includes the beneficial microorganisms Bifidobacterium and Lactobacillus acidophilus. SoySentials® also includes Lactobacillus acidophilus.

Fiber and probiotics are key partners. A low-fiber diet can lead to overgrowth in the colon of the harmful, "bad guy" bacteria that release toxins. But a high-fiber diet promotes the growth of the probiotics in the digestive tract that keep harmful bacteria in check, aid in proper digestion and keep you healthy overall.

FibRestore® is loaded with 10 grams of soluble and insoluble fiber per serving to encourage probiotic growth. In addition, Relivables™ Healthy Snack Bars are a great source of both fiber and whole grains. The right combination of Reliv products provides both the probiotics and the fiber your body needs to stave off illnesses and promote good health.

To Your Health,

Dr. Carl W. Hastings
Reliv Vice Chairman and Chief Scientific Officer

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Probiotics for Prevention

Evidence shows probiotics' beneficial effects in preventing an array of conditions and in promoting good health.

Studies have shown probiotics can prevent various diarrheal illnesses, some allergies and can prevent and treat bacterial vaginosis and urinary tract infections. Additional studies are showing probiotics may prevent respiratory infections, dental cavities, and some issues with inflammatory bowel disease. They may also enhance growth in healthy as well as ill or malnourished children.

Probiotics also stimulate the immune system to help your body protect itself. Study data suggest that probiotics can keep kids and adults healthier in day care and work settings. A Swedish study found people who were given a probiotic missed less work due to respiratory or gastrointestinal illness than people who didn't receive the probiotic.

If you're a hay fever sufferer, probiotics also may bring relief. A study conducted at the Institute of Food Research found that people with an allergic reaction to pollen who were given a probiotic had a reduced allergic response.



Stressed? Your Gut Needs Probiotics

Chronic stress is linked to the development of irritable bowel syndrome and can worsen symptoms of inflammatory bowel disease, such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. This stress also makes the gut more sensitive, which can lead to development of allergies to certain foods.

That's where probiotics can make a difference. A study published in the journal *Nutrition Research* reported a specific blend of probiotics that included *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium bifidus* reduced the stress symptoms of abdominal pain and nausea/vomiting.

Research published in the journal *Gut* also showed probiotics can help reduce gut symptoms caused by long-term stress in rats. Stress increased the ability of harmful bacteria to stick to the cells lining the gut wall. As a result, the harmful bacteria entered the body and activated the immune system. But treatment with probiotics prevented the bacteria from sticking to the gut wall and blocked its movement to the lymph nodes that drain fluid from the intestine.

The study showed probiotics edged out the harmful bacteria on the gut wall and they toned down the body's inflammatory responses. The bottom line? These friendly bacteria help keep "bad" bacteria from gaining a foothold that could lead to illness or disease.

Probiotics 101: All About the Bacteria Within

Your body is crawling with microorganisms, including bacteria — in and on your skin, in the gut and elsewhere. In fact, about 400 different types of bacterial microorganisms live in your intestinal tract. But before you get grossed out and run for the nearest bar of antibiotic soap or colon cleanse, realize most of these microorganisms are health promoters. You need them and they need you.

These friendly bacteria, called probiotics, help develop and maintain your immune system to protect against other "unfriendly" microorganisms that could cause disease. Probiotics keep the unhealthy bacteria from taking over so you stay healthier overall. The good bacteria also aid in the digestion and absorption of food and nutrients.

Sometimes the complex ecosystem in your gut is thrown out of balance by things like antibiotics, some medications, stress, a poor diet, or unfriendly microorganisms such as disease-causing bacteria, yeasts, fungi and parasites. For

example, too much sugar in the diet combined with a high-stress lifestyle can throw off the pH in your intestines and let the bad bacteria proliferate and take over.

However, probiotics can restore balance and counter the effects of the unfriendly microorganisms.

Probiotics typically come from two groups of bacteria, *Lactobacillus* or *Bifidobacterium*, which each have subgroups of species such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium bifidus*. These species contain different strains. *L. Acidophilus* is present in the small intestine, while *B. Bifidus* makes its home in the colon.

Probiotics can be found in nutritional supplements, such as Reliv's Reversage® and SoySentials®, or foods such as yogurt, fermented and unfermented milk, miso and some juices and soy drinks. Look on the label for a statement that the product contains "live and active cultures" such as *Lactobacillus*.

Sources:

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