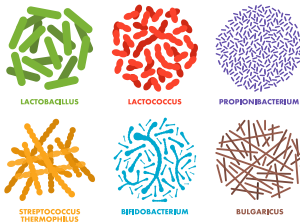


PROBIOTICS: WHAT ARE THEY? WHAT DO THEY DO?

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PROBIOTICS



Probiotics are the good “gut bacteria” that are made to be similar to the bacteria already in your digestive tract. Having too much of the “bad” bacteria in your body can cause an imbalance, leading to all types of health problems such as fatigue, constipation, diarrhea, weight gain, and all varieties of chronic health problems.

DIFFERENT PROBIOTIC FORMS

Probiotics come in several forms, including the more familiar form of nutritional supplement pills, but they also exist in probiotic food products such as certain type of yogurts, kefir, cheeses, lactobacillus milk products, cheeses, or fermented foods like sauerkraut, and kimchi.

A probiotic dietary supplement can aid your body in maintaining health in a variety of ways. However, not all probiotics are the same, and your body may respond to different forms of probiotics and different strains of bacteria in different ways. For example, if you’re lactose-intolerant, avoid taking probiotics in the form of dairy products. Common strains include Lactobacillus species, Bifidobacteria, Saccharomyces boulardii and Bacillus coagulans.

SAFETY OF PROBIOTICS

Probiotics are safe in the amounts you normally find in food. In general, most healthy adults can safely add foods or dietary supplements that contain probiotics to their diets. Some individuals might experience gas (flatulence), but that generally passes after a few days. Remember, probiotics are not all the same, and your body may react differently to different strains and how you ingest it.

WHAT DO PROBIOTICS DO?

Probiotics are believed to balance our digestive tract to keep a healthy balance between the good and bad bacteria. In our daily lives, many factors including stress, poor sleep, nutritional imbalance, antibiotic overuse, other medications, emotional and environmental stress can all cause a shift towards the bad bacteria predominating our digestive tract.

When our digestive tract is healthy, it does its job more effectively by filtering toxins, and eliminating harmful bacteria, chemicals, and other waste products more efficiently and promote healthy immune system and reduce some common health issues such as bloating, diarrhea, antibiotic-associated diarrhea, Helicobacter pylori infection and promote healthy gut transit.

Research on probiotics also has shown it may protect us from allergic reactions and autoimmune diseases such as Rheumatoid arthritis, Ulcerative colitis, Irritable bowel syndrome, and lessen opportunistic infections in general.

Talk to your family doctor if beginning a probiotic supplement is right for you. Your osteopathic physician can help in deciding the right form of probiotics, and guide you towards healthy digestive tract options.

SOURCE(S): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Medicinenet.com; MayoClinic.org

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