

## Healing Arts Update

A guide for wellness.

June 2007

Did you know there are 20 times more bacteria than cells in your body? This may sound alarming, but many of these organisms actually are crucial for your good health. Gastrointestinal bacteria, for example, can help support your immune system, provide protection against pathogenic bacteria, supply nutrients and vitamins, facilitate mineral absorption, and metabolize cholesterol.

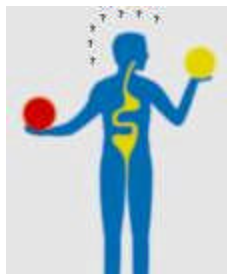
The term probiotics describes the living, beneficial bacteria that defend your body from harmful bacteria. This month we discuss probiotics and how they can help improve your overall health.

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### NUTRITION+YOU

The concept of probiotics and nutrition is not a new one. For hundreds of years dairy foods containing probiotics have been touted as having beneficial properties.



Ayurvedic texts dating back to 6000 BC state that "fermented milk leads to a long and healthy life" and as early as 76 AD, the Roman historian Pliny advocated the use of fermented milk for gastrointestinal infections.

In order for a beneficial bacterium to be classified as a probiotic it must be resistant to gastric, bile and pancreatic juices and reach the colon alive. The probiotics then attach to the intestinal wall to help increase the number of beneficial bacteria, fight against harmful bacteria and maintain a healthy balance. The term for the nutrients that enable the probiotics to grow and multiply is prebiotics.

Yogurt, of course, is the traditional source of beneficial bacteria. However, different brands of yogurt can vary greatly in their bacteria strain and potency. Some (particularly frozen) yogurts do not even contain any live bacteria at all. In fact, a recent study found that only 55 percent of the 11 dairy products tested contained the probiotics indicated on the label.

Other probiotic food sources include miso, kefir, tempeh, kim chi (fermented cabbage), sauerkraut and other fermented foods. Bananas, garlic and onions can help repopulate levels of good bacteria in the intestine as well.

### WELL BEING by John Patton, AP, LMHC



Your gastrointestinal tract is host to the most densely populated microbial ecosystem known. Comprised of more than 400 identified species, billions of bacteria (known as gut flora) can account for up to one pound of your body weight. For optimal health, balanced gastrointestinal microflora are vital and probiotics play a key role.

A Greek derivative, probiotics means "for life" (as opposed to antibiotics) and is typically used to describe the living, beneficial bacteria that defend your body from harmful organisms. Probiotics help balance intestinal microflora, promote good digestion, lower cholesterol and boost immune function and resistance to infection.

A healthy lower intestine should contain adequate beneficial bacteria to prevent the

Prebiotic food sources include oatmeal, flax seeds, barley, greens (especially spinach, kale, collard and mustard greens), berries (particularly blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries), and legumes.

For a healthier diet, try to include probiotic foods in your meals at least 3-4 times per week.

### Contact us

#### WE'RE GLAD YOU ASKED



**Q:** How do I know if I need probiotics? What are the signs?

**A:** There are many signs and they can vary according to your genetic makeup, diet and stress levels.

If you consume the typical American diet, experience excessive gas, acid reflux or unexplained fatigue, you most likely can benefit from taking a probiotic supplement.

Other indications that you may benefit from probiotic supplements include food allergies (especially lactose intolerance), bad breath and gum disease, chronic and unexplained fatigue, difficulty losing weight, frequent colds and flu, peptic ulcers, chronic yeast infections, poor sleep, acne and eczema.

If you suffer from diarrhea, constipation, gastrointestinal distress, and/or irritable bowel syndrome, you should consider taking a probiotic supplement. Women who experience chronic yeast and/or Candida infections also can be candidates for a probiotic supplement.

Probiotic supplements are especially beneficial when taken during and after antibiotic treatment or when travelling abroad where you may encounter bacteria that are foreign to your digestive tract.

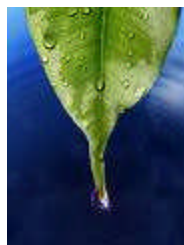
Before taking probiotic supplements, be sure to contact a healthcare professional who is familiar with such products for individualized recommendations.

### What's your question?

#### VIP (Very Important Product)

Long-term probiotic supplementation can be vital to the maintenance of balanced intestinal microflora.

A good probiotic supplement will contain millions of live bacteria to bolster and replenish levels of the health-promoting good bacteria in your digestive tract. Once there, these probiotic reinforcements join forces with the existing friendly bacteria to help inhibit the growth of more



colonization of disease-causing organisms such as E. coli and salmonella. However, research indicates that many US diets not only are deficient in key nutrients, but also lack the beneficial bacteria equally important for good health. It's possible for your colon to maintain its health with 15 percent unfriendly bacteria, if at least 85 percent of probiotic bacteria are present. Unfortunately, in the US this percentage often is reversed.

The problem does not lie with poor diet alone. Illness, stress, food poisoning, birth control pills and antibiotics also can disrupt the balance between beneficial and harmful bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract.

Other factors that can disrupt intestinal microflora include inorganic antibiotic residues in meat and dairy products, chlorinated and fluorinated water, diets high in sugar and simple carbohydrates such as fast food, estrogen replacement, exposure to radiation (CAT scans, excessive medical X-rays), and steroids.

Probiotics play a key role in keeping disease-causing bacteria in check and have been used effectively in the prevention of colon cancer and the treatment of diarrhea, tooth decay, canker

harmful microbes. This, in turn, helps improve your digestion and absorption of food and provides support for your immune system.

To help you replenish beneficial bacteria, this month we are featuring the **Healing Arts Center's Probiotic Plus**.

A high potency, synergistic formula, our Probiotic Plus is comprised of 12 strains of beneficial bacteria to help provide nutritional support for both the small and large intestines.

If you suffer with irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, lactose intolerance, allergic sinusitis, food allergies, diarrhea or constipation, Probiotic Plus can provide unsurpassed probiotic support.

Probiotic Plus also can be particularly beneficial if you have been taking antibiotics or are undergoing cancer chemotherapy.

**Place your order**

sores, Crohn's disease, eczema, food allergies, HIV support, immune function and ulcerative colitis. Probiotics also can be essential in the treatment and prevention of thrush, vaginal yeast infections and athlete's foot.

Studies show that people with flourishing intestinal colonies of beneficial bacteria are better equipped to fight the growth of disease-causing bacteria.

Scientists predict that probiotics may be a health tool as important in this century as antibiotics were in the last century.

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