

## FACT SHEET

### Probiotics

*Within a healthy gastrointestinal tract there are millions of bacteria and other microbes, these are known as 'friendly bacteria' and go by the term probiotics. Their ecosystem within the tract has great influence over the body's metabolism and physical health.*

At their optimum numbers within the digestive system, intestinal flora will help to maintain normal pH levels, stimulate the formation of antibodies, aid in the production of vitamins and enzymes and contribute to the removal of toxins.

The gastrointestinal tract absorbs nutrients into the body for energy and repair, but it also defends against bacterial infection. At its ideal pH the whole digestive system performs very efficiently, but it is a fine balance and is easily disturbed by:

- Stress
- Antibiotics, radiation and chemotherapy
- Poor diet
- Pesticides
- Chlorinated drinking water
- Water therapies (enemas and colonic irrigation)

These are all known to contribute to depletion in the numbers of friendly bacterium within the tract. Though there are few specific illnesses attributed to low numbers alone, it can aggravate other ailments and make them more virulent. More often it is seen as diarrhoea due to the lack of absorption of the meal by the bacterium.

#### Acidophilus

Lactobacillus Acidophilus is the most common variety of the acidophilus bacteria. These bacteria are attracted to acid and so one of their main jobs is pH maintenance; found in the small intestine they are an important line of defence against infection entering with food. It can enhance the digestion of milk sugars (lactose) and helps in the control of yeast overgrowth such as Candida. It also aids in the production of vitamins and enzymes.

#### Bifidus

Bifidobacterium bifidum inhabit the large intestine and assist in the reabsorption of water and the processing of waste. They inhibit gas and bloating whilst promoting regular bowel movements. Support of the pH level within the large intestine is aided by the bifidus bacterium plus they manufacture specific B-vitamins.

Probiotics have been found to be extremely beneficial to sufferers of:

- Diarrhoea
- Vaginitis
- Yeast infections

And can go some way to alleviating symptoms of:

- Canker sores
- Crohns disease
- Eczema
- Food allergies
- Immune functions
- Infections
- Ulcerative colitis

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Once the bacterium numbers increase any of the following may be observed:

- Increased energy
- Improved digestion
- Normalised bowel movements
- Reduced constipation/diarrhoea
- Reduced allergies
- Reduced halitosis and body odour
- Reduced blood pressure
- Weight loss
- Increased immune function
- Lowered cholesterol
- Reduced yeast infection

Probiotics can be found in Live Natural Yoghurt, goat source preferably, and it is safe for this to be fed to puppies. However, adult dogs generally lose the ability to digest milk products, thus a capsule or powder form, available from pharmacy or health food shop is advised, it can then be sprinkled onto their meals. Look for single strain products as those fortified with additional vitamins and minerals may upset an otherwise balanced diet.

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