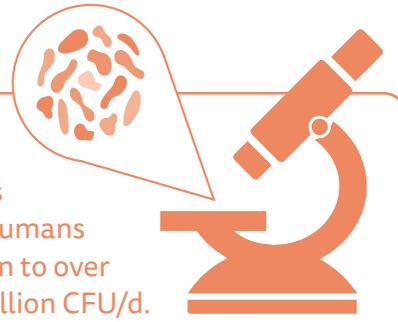


Probiotics: Dispelling Myths

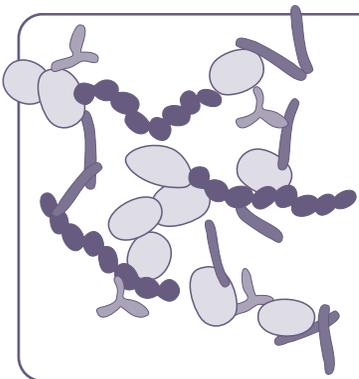


IS MORE BETTER?

Not necessarily. A greater number of colony forming units (CFU) does not always equate with enhanced effects. The best dose is the one that has been tested in humans and shown to provide positive outcomes. These levels can range from 100 million to over a trillion CFU per day. Most probiotics have been tested at levels between 1-10 billion CFU/d.

ARE A GREATER NUMBER OF STRAINS BETTER?

It depends on the science. Some studies support the benefits of a single-strain probiotic product, while some studies show that specific blends of probiotics strains have a positive outcome. Simply having lots of strains is not a guarantee of a more beneficial product.

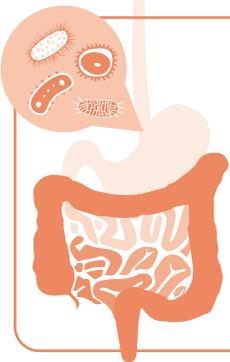


DOES STRAIN SPECIFICITY MATTER?

Scientists agree that not all probiotics are the same. Choose a strain or strain blend backed by science supporting the benefit you are looking for. (See <https://isappscience.org/resources/> for links to guides listing tested probiotic products). Many different probiotic strains have been shown to be beneficial, so if your goal is to simply add live, potentially beneficial microbes to your diet, then choose a product that fits with your lifestyle and diet; you may choose high dose, multi-strain probiotic supplements or fermented foods that retain live microbes.

IS THE SUGAR IN MY PROBIOTIC DRINK OR YOGURT BAD?

Most research examining the health benefits of probiotics in yogurt have been conducted on sweetened yogurts/drinks. Therefore, the sugar does not negatively impact the effects of the probiotics. We can all have too much of a good thing – including sugar. It is important that added sugar intakes are within recommendations and are part of a healthy, balanced diet.



DO PROBIOTICS HAVE TO ALTER MY MICROBIOTA TO BE EFFECTIVE?

A common misconception is that to be effective a probiotic must impact the composition of your gut microbiota. Probiotics typically do not take up residence in your gut and may not evoke any detectable change in the microbes that are normally present. As they pass through the gut, probiotics (and the substances they produce) interact with immune cells, our gut cells, dietary components in the gut and the microbes that live in our gut, and that's how they exert their benefits.

ARE ALL FERMENTED FOODS PROBIOTIC FOODS?

Fermented foods are made when live cultures, through their growth and metabolism, transform a food into a fermented food. Some of these fermented foods are consumed with no further processing, but others are processed by pasteurization, baking, smoking or filtering. These added processing steps can kill or remove the live cultures in them, leaving the fermented food unable to provide live microbes. Further, even if a fermented food provides a source of live microbes, it may not have been tested for health benefits. In contrast, probiotics are live microbes that have been shown to have a health effect when delivered in adequate amounts. So although fermented foods can be healthy foods and may be a source of live microbes, they may not reach the bar required to be called 'probiotic'. When a fermented food contains a studied probiotic at a dose that can confer a benefit, then it is correctly designated as a probiotic.

