

Did you know?.....

.....Rx Information from Jenny

## PROBIOTICS—THE BOTTOM LINE

*(This is a follow-up to last edition's probiotics article)*

Probiotic supplements have gained popularity over the past few years and are often used to promote, improve, and maintain digestion. They also have been used to prevent or decrease the recurrence of vaginal yeast infections and treat conditions that may change normal intestinal flora (ex: antibiotic-associated, traveler's, and infectious diarrhea), inflammatory and functional bowel conditions (colitis), and to shorten the duration of an intestinal infection.

For healthy people, routine intake of probiotics to maintain a healthy digestive system (or strengthen the immune system) is unnecessary. For specific indications, such as to prevent antibiotic-associated diarrhea, probiotics may be useful. Probiotics only temporarily colonize the intestine. For chronic conditions (ex: irritable bowel), it is likely that probiotics must be taken for a long period of time to be effective.

Probiotics are regulated as dietary supplements and foods, which raises concerns about quality. *Culturelle* and *Florastor* are the best studied. These products are the best choices for preventing diarrhea caused by antibiotics. You can also try these products for prevention of traveler's diarrhea. Start taking them a few days before travel, and continue them for the duration of your trip. Yogurt is a source of probiotics, but not all yogurts contain the right kinds or organisms. Choose a product with the National Yogurt Association's "Live and Active Cultures" seal on the label (ex: *DanActive by Dannon, Yoplait*). You will need to eat about 8 oz. twice daily to prevent antibiotic-associated diarrhea. Expiration dates are particularly important for probiotic products. Some probiotic products, especially beverages and dairy products, have short shelf-lives. Carefully follow the package instructions regarding storage.

*Hope this helps clarify some confusion about probiotics. Call if any questions.*

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