

# Uncovering probiotics: what to look for on a label

Are all probiotics the same? No! Here's how to decode probiotic products.

*Probiotics are live microorganisms that may have health benefits when consumed in certain amounts. There are many different strains of probiotics, and each strain can have a different effect on your health. Clinical research is needed on each specific probiotic strain to understand its unique health benefit.*

## Understanding probiotic labelling

The three main things to look for when purchasing a probiotic are:

### The probiotic strain

1

The strain of probiotic should be listed on the product. This can be recognised in different ways, such as:

***Lactobacillus rhamnosus* (LGG®), *Bifidobacterium* (BB-12®), *Lactobacillus paracasei* (L.Casei431®)**



### A description of the associated health benefit

2

A product should have details of the specific probiotic strain and the health benefit/s it has been studied for. There is usually a footnote referencing how the claim has been substantiated.

**e.g. Probiotics to support gut health**



### The amount of probiotics contained in each serve

3

This may simply be 'Billions of probiotics' or a number written on the nutritional panel. Most probiotics require at least one billion colony-forming units (CFUs) per serve to provide a health benefit. The dose required to attain the health benefit should be listed.





# Probiotics Myths and Misconceptions

Probiotics are live bacteria that provide a specific and clinically demonstrated health benefit when consumed at the right quantity<sup>1</sup>

## MYTH:

### Are all probiotics the same?

## FACT: No.

The health benefit of a probiotic product is specific to the particular bacterial strain it contains, not the more general bacterial genus and species.

For example, a product may be labelled *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* (the genus and species), but whether the strain is the *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, LGG<sup>®</sup> probiotic is not known.



## MYTH:

### Are more probiotics better?

## FACT: Not necessarily.

A probiotic product with more bacteria does not necessarily have more of an impact than a product with less bacteria. The amount of probiotic bacteria needed to be consumed depends on the specific strain and the associated health benefit demonstrated in clinical studies.



## MYTH:

### Do all fermented foods contain probiotics?

## FACT: No.

Foods such as yogurt, kombucha, kimchi and sauerkraut and kefir are produced through a process called fermentation.

The bacteria used in fermentation adds flavour, texture and helps the product stay fresher for longer, but are not necessarily probiotic.



## MYTH:

### Do all yoghurts contain probiotics?

## FACT: No.

Not all yogurts contain probiotics. All yogurts are made through fermentation, however these live bacteria are usually not probiotic. Probiotic bacteria such as *Bifidobacterium*, BB-12, *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, LGG<sup>®</sup> or *Lactobacillus paracasei*, L. CASEI 431<sup>®</sup> can be added during the production of yogurt, making it a source of probiotic bacteria.



## MYTH:

### Do probiotic products with more than one strain work better?

## FACT: Not necessarily.

The best probiotic product is the one that contains a particular strain (or particular combination of strains) that has been studied and associated with a specific health benefit.



<sup>1</sup> Hill C, et al. Nat Rev Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2014;11:506. (PubMed)



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