

# WELLNESS review



## Probiotics Essential "For Life"

The word probiotic actually means "for life". Probiotics are beneficial bacteria that live in the digestive system. Did you know that the human digestive system contains over 400 different species of micro-organisms? On average, an adult human carries approximately 1-2 kilograms of bacterial gut flora. This represents an enormous number of bacteria. The reason we have so many bacteria inside us is because we require them for many beneficial actions within the body. They help keep our digestive systems healthy, help us digest our food, make certain nutrients that we are unable to make ourselves and they help maintain a healthy immune system.

### Good Bugs vs Bad Bugs

In order for us to maintain a healthy digestive system we need to ensure that we have more "good" bacteria and less of the "bad". However certain factors, (eg: antibiotic therapy, antacids and gastric acid inhibitors, the effects of stress, a diet high in fat and low in fibre, excessive alcohol consumption) can all cause overgrowth of the "bad" bugs and contribute to an imbalance in the gut environment – often referred to as dysbiosis. By supplementing with "good" bugs, balance can be restored.

### Symptoms of an imbalance of the "good" and "bad" bugs

- Nausea
- Constipation
- Flatulence
- Vaginal thrush and candidiasis
- Infectious diarrhoea
- Diarrhoea
- Bloating
- Intestinal discomfort
- Immune dysfunction
- Urinary tract infections

### Not all bugs are created equally

Just as different breeds of dogs are bred to perform different duties, so are the different strains of bacteria in our gut designed to do different jobs. In my practice I use many different kinds of probiotics that I recommend for different conditions. Some particular probiotics produce excellent results if you suffer from Irritable Bowel Syndrome, others may play an important role in immune function.

The probiotics that this clinic recommends are all scientifically validated therapeutic human strains, that will survive the harsh journey through your gastrointestinal system. Many bacteria in yoghurts, for example, are what we call "transient". That is they do not live, or colonise, in your gastrointestinal system. These bacteria will not necessarily produce a therapeutic result. They may be helpful while they are there, but they don't stay for long.

The probiotics we recommend will adhere to your gastrointestinal wall and continue to grow. This will help keep you healthy from the inside out.

See table one for an outline of some of the bacteria that I recommend.

Probiotic	Major Uses
<i>Saccharomyces boulardii</i>	Yeast infections, traveller's diarrhoea and antibiotic-associated diarrhoea.
<i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i> 299v	Inflammatory conditions including IBS.
<i>Lactobacillus rhamnosus</i> HN001	Infections and allergies.
<i>Bifidobacterium lactis</i> HN019	Digestive immunity and allergies.
<i>Lactobacillus acidophilus</i> NCFM	Providing general digestive support – especially after antibiotics.
<i>Bifidobacterium lactis</i> BI-07	Providing general digestive support – especially after antibiotics.

Table one.

Probiotics may help to restore and rebalance your intestinal health if it has been disturbed by medications, diet or lifestyle. If you feel that some beneficial bugs may be just what you need, please come and see me and I will recommend a probiotic that meets your specific needs.

