

WELLNESS review

The Battle of the Bugs

Did you know the adult digestive system is almost 11 metres long and contains an average of 2-3 kg of bacteria? Or that the number of bugs living in the average adults digestive system is 10 times more than the total number of cells in the body – now that’s a lot of bugs! One of the best things you can do to achieve and maintain great health is to take a ‘probiotic’ - the ‘good’ living bugs - to top up the health promoting bugs and keep the ‘bad’ bugs - which cause wind, diarrhoea and other troublesome symptoms - in check.

This is easier said than done when there are so many different probiotic strains to choose between. Fortunately there has been some research on how specific strains seem to help specific conditions. What we have found is that the best strain for you depends on your health concern and that taking the wrong strain can be a waste of money and time. In fact, some of the bugs that are used in yoghurt or some supplements have no health benefits at all.

Why the ‘Bad’ Bugs Reign?

The balance of ‘good’ bugs can over thrown by a wide range of factors including:

- The use of antibiotics, antacids, heartburn medications and the oral contraceptive pill;
- Excess alcohol, dietary fats and low fibre diets;
- Excess stress;
- Exposure to toxic substances;
- The use of antibacterial soap.

How’s Your Balance?

When the ‘bad’ bacteria thrive, problems such as these can appear:

- Acute diarrhoea (traveller’s diarrhoea or post antibiotic);
- Flatulence, bloating, cramping;
- Thrush;
- Gastric infections;
- Lactose intolerance;
- Urinary tract infections;
- Allergies, especially eczema and sinusitis;
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and inflammatory bowel disease, to name a few.

Choosing the right probiotic for your specific health concern will help to reduce the symptoms and manage the cause. Just to show you how complicated it can be, this list shows the specific strains and their benefits of the probiotics we use and recommend:

Probiotic	Major Uses
<i>Saccharomyces boulardii</i>	Yeast infections and traveller’s 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 upper digestive support – especially after antibiotics and the ‘pill’.
<i>Bifidobacterium lactis</i> BI-07	Providing general lower digestive support – especially after antibiotics and the ‘pill’.

Probiotics

So whether you would like assistance with digestive symptoms and IBS, managing allergies, dealing with thrush or preparing for a well deserved holiday to an exotic location, I have the probiotics to help. As your Healthcare Professional I can assist in helping you understand which suits and prescribe a high quality probiotic that will help you be your best and keep your bugs in balance.

