



Probiotics in the Dairy Aisle *“The Role of Probiotics in Yogurt”*

Probiotics are live cultures or “friendly” bacteria that, when consumed in sufficient quantities, can provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition. They can be found in a variety of fermented products, including probiotic yogurts and dairy drinks. Information about the benefits and role of probiotics in dairy products is found below.

Probiotics: Food vs. Supplements

There are several reasons why probiotic foods are the preferred choice for getting probiotic bacteria. Probiotic supplements have beneficial bacteria, but not necessarily some of the much-needed nutrients found in a probiotic conventional food. Additionally, probiotic supplements do not offer the beneficial compounds that food with probiotic cultures produce during fermentation. Fermented dairy products, like yogurt, are also often good sources of calcium, riboflavin, vitamin B12, potassium and certain amino acids, all nutrients that are critical for good health. In addition, during the fermentation of dairy foods, new products such as functional peptides are often formed, which research shows may have beneficial effects.

Dairy foods can help protect the probiotic bacteria as it travels through the digestive tract. Although some bacteria are more resistant than others to this stress, consumption of probiotics with food, including milk, yogurt and other dairy products, buffers stomach acid and can increase the chance that the bacteria will survive into the intestine.

Fermentation of Yogurt

Fermentation has been used in food preparation for at least 15,000 years. Microorganisms such as bacteria and yeasts are added to raw ingredients and set aside to ferment. During the fermentation process, the microorganisms break down complex carbohydrates and proteins. Fermentation can make foods more digestible while enhancing their flavor and extending their shelf-life. Yogurt, cheese and fermented milk drinks are produced using bacteria, while bread, wine and beets are fermented with yeasts.

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Dannon Probiotics Center

Digestible information on healthy bacteria

Probiotic Strains in Yogurt

Two species of bacteria, *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*, are found in almost all yogurts. Varying amounts of these bacteria, sometimes with other bacteria, give differences in taste and texture. Not all yogurts contain live bacteria, as some are pasteurized after production to result in a longer shelf-life. Yogurts labeled with the “Live and Active Cultures” seal have viable bacteria. Some yogurts contain additional strains of bacteria, or probiotics, usually added after pasteurization to provide additional benefits.

To learn more about probiotics, visit www.ProbioticsCenter.com or contact Beth Heller at beth.heller@edelman.com or 212.704.8161.

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