

Probiotics: Drinks, tablets & powders – oh my!

For some of us, making a decision is never easy. Now that beneficial bacteria are sold in tablets, capsules, powders, yoghurts and fermented milk drinks – we're spoilt for choice, making the decision more difficult than ever.

What's disconcerting is many of these 'probiotic' products don't provide the benefits they promise. Failing to meet 'probiotic' criteria – these products don't necessarily contain a type of bacteria that's beneficial, while others contain too few bacteria to have any positive effect.

So, next time you're standing at the shelves pondering the selection of choices available, how will you know you're making the right decision? We try to make your decision a little easier by providing you with some facts.

PROBIOTICS

To be classified as a probiotic, the product must contain a *specific strain* of bacteria which is;

- Scientifically proven to reach the intestines alive,
- Scientifically proven to provide a beneficial effect, and
- Present in a product in sufficient quantities.

YOGHURTS

The production of yoghurt involves a bacterial culture of some kind, however the particular strain used is not necessarily a proven 'probiotic', and is often destroyed by the production process.

Selected yoghurts contain special strains of scientifically tested bacteria which are added at the end of the production. These can be identified by reading the label on the product - look to see if it contains a specific strain beginning with *Lactobacillus*, *Acidophilus* or *Bifidobacterium*.

Keep in mind these yoghurts generally contain far fewer bacteria than fermented milk drinks. This means you'd need to consume many tubs of yoghurt to get the same amount of beneficial bacteria as drinking one fermented milk drink.

POWDERS & CAPSULES

Capsules and powders contain freeze dried probiotic bacteria. At first glance, they contain much higher numbers of bacteria than those available in yoghurts and fermented milk drinks – but don't be fooled, 'more' isn't necessarily 'better'.

Research has shown that for similar numbers of bacteria to reach your intestines alive, you'd need to consume 100 times more freeze dried bacteria than live bacteria.

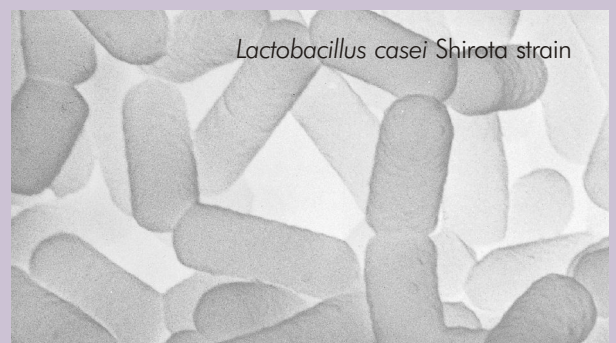
Powders and capsules are a good alternative for those who travel frequently and can't rely on refrigeration.

FERMENTED MILK DRINKS

Fermented milk drinks contain *live*, beneficial bacteria and are an easy way to incorporate probiotics into your diet; delivering large amounts of bacteria to your intestines in one small, refrigerated drink. Their milky base provides the best environment for live bacteria to thrive.

Unfortunately, many fermented milk drinks on the market contain few bacteria and lack scientific proof that their strains are beneficial or reach the intestines alive. Many are manufactured overseas and imported to Australia frozen.

Yakult is in a league of its own. With the benefits of the exclusive *Lactobacillus casei* Shirota strain supported by research, this genuine probiotic is proven to reach the intestines alive. Better yet, Yakult is made daily in Australia and delivered fresh to a store near you.



Lactobacillus casei Shirota strain

Your questions

What does CFU mean?

CFU stands for 'Colony Forming Units', a measurement of the number of live, active bacteria present in a solution. Yakult contains approximately 1×10^8 cfu/ml, meaning there are 100 million beneficial bacteria in every millilitre of Yakult.

How much bacteria do I need?

It is generally accepted in science that a probiotic product must contain a minimum of 1 million CFU in order to have a beneficial effect. Yakult has 100 times this amount, meaning each little 65ml bottle contains 6.5 billion beneficial bacteria.

Inside Markets

Same product... new look!

Yakult has been on sale in Australia for more than 12 years. During that time, Yakult's price has never increased (except for the mandatory introduction of the dairy levy and GST) and our packaging has also remained the same... until now.

In order to give our products a new look and to reflect our sponsorship of the FINA Swimming Championships in Melbourne in 2007, new packaging has been created for both the 5 and 10 packs.

It is expected that product packed in this sleek new wrap will leave our production lines during the beginning of July. So keep a look out in the refrigerated aisle of your local supermarket.

Yakult - Ensuring a high quality product!

By *Fiona Morrison BSc. MNutrDiet. MDA.*



Comprehensive Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA) programs are employed at Yakult to ensure that the quality of our products meet the highest specifications. This enables us to guarantee that Yakult contains a concentrated amount of one type of bacteria - the *Lactobacillus casei* Shirota strain.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance measures are documented procedures with specific standards existing for personnel and factory hygiene, equipment cleaning, processing methods and product handling.

QUALITY CONTROL

Quality Control activities confirm that the QA measures in place have been effective. For every batch of Yakult produced, more than 150 samples are collected and analysed, including samples taken during the production process and of the final product. More than 200 different tests are performed to check microbiological quality, composition, physical attributes and taste.

'**Lactobacillus Enumeration**' is performed to measure the *Lactobacillus* bacteria to indicate the number of Yakult bacteria in the product. '**Titrateable Acidity**' is used to determine acid development in the product which provides an indication of the growth of the *Lactobacillus casei* Shirota strain.

To ensure there are no contaminants in the final product, agar plates are checked for the potential presence of undesirable non-*Lactobacillus* bacteria. These plates are also checked for undesirable yeasts, moulds and coliforms. This ensures that only one type of bacteria, the Yakult bacteria, is in every bottle.

Individual bottles are inspected for adequate sealing, undesirable markings and incorrect printing. Packaging is checked to make sure it is not broken or off-centre.



10 pack



5 pack

Editor's word:

Since probiotics were originally introduced into Australia with Yakult's launch in 1994, many other 'probiotic' products have followed in our footsteps.

This issue of Inside Matters is designed to make choosing a probiotic easier by helping to differentiate between the wide varieties available.

In 'Tips from our Nutritionist', Fiona provides an insight into our on-site quality control laboratory by outlining the procedures followed at Yakult to ensure that we consistently provide our consumers with the highest quality product time and time again.

As always, we are dedicated to providing you with up-to-date information relating to our products and their role in your diet. If you have any enquiries about Yakult or any ideas for future issues of Inside Matters, please contact the Public Relations Department at our Melbourne Office.

We can be contacted on the Freecall number 1800 640 023 or via our website at www.yakult.com.au

Enjoy! *Tania O'Brien, Editor.*



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