

Probiotic Benefits After Bariatric Surgery

Probiotics are live bacteria that help populate your gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Often referred to as “good” bacteria, these types of bacteria are not bad for you. In fact, these good bacteria are necessary for your GI tract to work properly. If you have too few of these in your GI tract, and too many of the “bad” bacteria, you’ll usually have symptoms like diarrhea and excessive gas.

To understand what’s going on here, imagine that the “good” bacteria and the “bad” bacteria are competing for a limited amount of space in your GI tract. If you have mostly “good” bacteria in your GI tract, you feel better. If you have mostly “bad” bacteria, you feel worse.

It’s a good idea for everyone to add some probiotics to their diet. There is even evidence that there are reduced complications and better weight loss among bariatric surgery patients who take probiotics regularly. Probiotics do many beneficial things other than just controlling the population of “bad” bacteria. Probiotics help prevent GI infections, benefit the immune system, help break down and digest certain elements of your food, and help with symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome.

Common probiotics include *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *rhamnosus*, *casei*, *johnsonii*, *bulgaricus*, and *baracasei*; *Bifidobacterium breve*, *infantis*, *longum*, and *bifidum*; or *Streptococcus thermophilus*.

Probiotics come in capsules, tablets, powders and liquids, as well as in some foods. Many foods are available with one or more of these probiotics, including yogurt, sauerkraut and soy sauce. Some milk, miso, tempeh, soy beverages, frozen yogurt, juices and cereals also contain live cultures.

Keep in mind that some preparations of probiotics need to be refrigerated, or the live bacteria will die and not be effective. Please refer to the package your probiotic came in to see if it needs to be refrigerated.

How much should you take?

- If you haven’t had bariatric surgery yet, it’s probably okay to take whatever the recommended amount and frequency are on the package the probiotic came in.
- If you haven’t had bariatric surgery yet, but you’re having diarrhea and/or excessive gas, you can try doubling the recommended dose, or doubling the recommended frequency (i.e. twice a day instead of once a day).
- If you’ve had bariatric surgery and you are having no problems with your GI tract, please take whatever the dose and frequency are on the package. If you can’t find a recommended dose on the package, take one serving size twice a day.
- If you’ve had bariatric surgery and you are having frequent diarrhea and problems with excessive or foul-smelling gas, please take twice the dosage on the package, or double the frequency on the package. Also, please call us, so we can go over your situation with you.

You can take too much of these, though. Consumption of excessive amounts of probiotics may result in gas and bloating, so try to find a good balance.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número siguiente 407-303-3025.

ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele nimewo ki anba an 407-303-3025.

What types of probiotics are good?

In general, the more types of bacteria contained in the preparation, the better. So, if there's only one type, say an Acidophilus, it generally won't work as well or as reliably as a preparation with five or six different types of bacteria. On the other hand, the more types of bacteria, the more expensive the probiotic.

We usually recommend a probiotic with at least three different types of bacteria to balance effectiveness with cost. Here are some of the probiotics many of our patients use.

Yogurts With at Least Three Types of Live Active Cultures of Probiotics and No Sugar Added

- **Oikos, Chobani or other Greek Yogurts** - Plain
- **Oikos Triple Zero or Dannon Light and Fit (Greek only)** – (two live cultures) – any flavor
- **Stonyfield Organic Probiotic Fat Free or Low-Fat Yogurt (six live active cultures)**- plain only
- **Publix No Sugar Added Yogurt (blue writing on the label)** – (five live active cultures)
- **Dannon Light & Fit Icelandic Style** – (four live active cultures) - any flavor
- **Siggi's No Added Sugar** – (five live active cultures) – No Sugar Added only available in two flavors

Supplements can be in tablet, capsule, powder, liquid or chewable form.

- Bariatric Advantage has capsules and strawberry-flavored chewables.
- Celebrate Vitamins Celebrate Balance capsules – available at AdventHealth Celebration pharmacy
- Garden of Life Probiotics caplets, Once Daily Men's or Women's tablets (made with soy)
- GNC stores and online have a large selection of probiotic supplements.
- Phillip's Colon Health and others are available in most pharmacies.
- BioGaia Gastrus - Lactobacillus reuteri Gastrus <https://www.biogaia.com/health-areas/probiotic-gut-health/>




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