



# Probiotics: Facts, Myths and Women (Part 1)

Did you know that our bodies contain approximately ten times more bacteria than they do human cells? Our “microbiome” includes all of the microorganisms, both beneficial and harmful, that live in or on our bodies. Most of the discussion of our microbiome usually focuses on the gut microbiome. Let’s talk about some common myths and facts around that microbiome.

Constantly replenishing the beneficial bacteria in our gut is a crucial part of maintaining a healthy immune system. Replenishing these bacteria can be done with fermented foods like sauerkraut, yogurt, tempeh, miso and kimchi. We can also choose a daily high-quality probiotic. It’s important to understand that all probiotics are not created equally. There are actually only a handful of probiotic strains that have been clinically proven to support human health. An example of this would be *L. rhamnosus* GR-1 and *L. reuteri* RC-14 which are shown to specifically target a woman’s vaginal tissue.

Higher quality probiotics do require temperature-controlled environments. Probiotics are sensitive to heat and moisture, so they need to be protected from direct sunlight and should be

packaged with desiccant packets to reduce moisture from the environment.

One of the most important things I discuss with clients regarding probiotics is the fact that it’s not just about the higher potency or total numbers of microorganisms that make a probiotic beneficial. It is most important that the potency or total number of colony-forming units (CFUs) is specific to a person’s particular health needs and that the product has demonstrated clinical efficacy for those particular health benefits. Does your probiotic do that?

Lastly, it’s important to know that probiotics can die over time depending on manufacturing, shipping and storage processes. Can your probiotic guarantee potency at the time of expiration? If we are buying probiotics from a retail warehouse, then how do we know how and where they store their supplements?

The bottom line is that we all need to replenish our microbiome on a daily basis with a high-quality, clinically-proven probiotic. It really does matter. Check out Part 2 of our probiotic discussion later this month.

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