



The Ultimate Probiotics Buyer's Guide

Choosing a probiotic supplement can be a challenge, with so many options available. Different probiotic supplements are everywhere in our favorite health stores and online. Prescription probiotics, different strains, potencies, brands, it can all be so confusing!

A major component of your digestive system is bacteria. The colon harbors trillions of bacteria, and the flora of your gut can change daily depending on your diet. Probiotic bacteria in particular help keep opportunistic bacteria and yeast in check by lowering the pH of the colon and by producing antimicrobial agents to help keep your digestion healthy.

Taking a probiotic supplement when needed can improve digestive health for mostly everyone. However, with so many confusing choices out there how can you make sure you find the right probiotic

Here's what To Look For In A Probiotic Supplement

1. PROBIOTIC STRAINS

When deciding on a probiotic supplement it is always best to go with a supplement that discloses their probiotic strains so you can choose which supplement is perfect for you. **With most probiotic supplements, diversity is crucial.** A probiotic supplement with many different genus and species can have a multitude of effects on your digestive tract. Here are some strains that I recommend looking for in a probiotic supplement:

- Bifidobacteria longum – probiotic bacteria that are one of the first to colonize our digestive tracts when we are born. It is important to the metabolism, fermentation, and digestion of carbohydrates. The bacteria can also ferment and break down amino acids and bile salts. This bacteria has been shown to be beneficial for anxiety and depression.
- Lactobacillus acidophilus – one of the most widely known probiotics and is a big part of our gut flora. It can inhibit the growth of opportunistic bacteria in the colon by lowering the gut pH. *Avoid if you have gas or bloating as it can make it worse!*
- Lactobacillus plantarum – a type of Lactobacilli found in fermented foods like sauerkraut. It has been shown in many clinical studies to help the sufferers of IBS as well as weightloss.
- Lactobacillus reuteri – a type of Lactobacilli that is natural gut flora and can be found in human breast milk. It can help prevent opportunistic infections in the colon, stimulate the immune system, and reduce populations of H. pylori colonies in the stomach. It along with L rhamnosus are important vaginal flora for women preventing yeast, bladder and vaginal infections.
- Saccharomyces boulardii – a strain of probiotic yeast that is a soil-based organism found living on lychee fruit. S. boulardii has been shown to help people suffering from food-borne diarrhea and C. difficile infections. This is an absolute must when you are taking antibiotics as S boulardii is resistant.

2. POTENCY

The amount of probiotic bacteria in a supplement is measured by **CFU's or colony forming units**. Depending on your specific medical condition, a higher or lower CFU might be needed for optimal health. In general, look for your probiotic supplement to have at least **10 – 25 billion CFU**. Some of the more expensive

specialty probiotic supplements might even have 500 billion to 1 trillion CFU's per capsule.

3. SUPPLEMENT QUALITY

Probiotic supplement quality matters when you are trying to improve your digestive health. Most high-quality **probiotic supplements should be refrigerated** when you purchase them. If the probiotic supplements are not refrigerated, they should state on the label that the bacteria would survive the full shelf life of the supplement without refrigeration. You do not want most of the bacteria from the supplement you ingest to have already perished.

Here are some ideas to help you select quality probiotic supplements:

- CFU – look for probiotics that claim the amount of CFU's in the supplement is certified to survive to the end of the products shelf life compared to certification of how many units are alive at the time of manufacture. Probiotics perish if they are not manufactured or stored properly, you want to make sure that the supplier believes in their product enough that you will get the amount you paid for upon digestion.
- Enteric coated – make sure that your probiotic supplement is enteric coated because stomach acid can reduce the amount of CFU's you ingest from your probiotic supplement.
- Prebiotics – some probiotic supplements come with prebiotics that can feed the probiotics to help them propagate once they reach their prime location, the large intestine. Some standard prebiotics found in probiotic supplements include potato starch, FOS (inulin,) MOS (mannan-oligosaccharide,) and ISO's (isomalto-oligosaccharide.) Always check the source of the prebiotic in the supplement listing some prebiotics as ISO's are sourced from wheat and may contain gluten or cause issues in those who are wheat sensitive.

- Proper Labeling – avoid probiotic supplements that do not list individual strains that you may be ingesting. I would never take a probiotic supplement where I did not know what strains I would be ingesting are. I would also avoid probiotic supplements that contain bacteria that are not in the Bifidobacteria, Lactobacillus, E. coli, and Streptococcus genus because they might not be bacteria that have been discovered to be normal human gut flora.
- Refrigeration – buy your probiotics cold, refrigeration slows the growth and increases the life span of your probiotic supplements. Unless a probiotic states otherwise that it does not require refrigeration for stability, it is always best to go with a probiotic that is.
- Fillers – stay away from probiotic supplements that include many unnecessary types of filler. Some of the prebiotic fillers listed above are ok for supplementation. The fewer types of filler used the better. Definitely avoid supplements with artificial coloring (inks.)

4. Our Recommendations – Top 4 Probiotics Brands

1. Klaire Labs

- Lactoprime Plus:** IBS, general health
- Sacchromyces boulardii:** antibiotic health, traveler's diarrhea
- Thera-Biotic Women:** vaginal health
- Thera-Biotic Metabolic:** weightloss, diabetes
- Abx Support:** pre and post antibiotic health

2. Metagenics

- Ultraflora Immune booster:** allergies, immunity
- Ultraflora Balance:** general health

3. Pharmax/ Genestra Seroyal

- Genestra HMF Multi Strain:** acne, general health
- Pharmax HLC products:** various health conditions

4. Pure Encapsulations

- Probiomood:** for anxiety and depression