

Probiotic What works and what does not

Intestinal micro-flora is important for nutrition and digestion but the most important function is helping protect the body from bad bacteria! There is a constant bacterial fight of good versus evil going on in the gut. If the good bacteria do not win, the body may absorb bad bacteria or viruses causing illness.

70% of the body's immune system is in our gut and for good reason!

Good Bacteria!

Born sterile, the gut is seeded with good bacteria from mom shortly after birth. Mom's cleaning and mothering starts the transfer of good bacteria to the neonate. Nursing and continued cleaning by mom repeatedly adds bacteria that aids in digestion and intestinal health throughout the nursing period. Using a safe disinfectant such as [Chlorhexidine](#) around the babies keeps environmental bacterial and fungal infection in check. Less exposure helps prevent bacteria from affecting the babies in a negative way.



Healthy bacteria are constantly killed and quickly replaced in the normal gut. Stomach acid, antibiotics, products that contain alcohol or just stress can upset bacterial balance in the gut. There is a constant struggle for good bacteria to keep the bad bacteria from dominating and causing disease. Some bad bacteria will get swallowed, especially with pets that like to chew, and the GI immune system must deal with them.

Stomach acid will kill most of the bacteria consumed as a first line of defense. In the intestine, good bacteria form part of the mucosal barrier of the intestine and if adequate, leave bad bacteria with no room to live. After that, the immune system will have to deal with the infection but the goal is to prevent the need for that immune response. That is where Probiotics can help.

Probiotic use: Love them or Hate them!

Hate them:

Used on every kitten or puppy we can see little effect! A healthy litter with no issues cannot get healthier. It is not wrong, it is just difficult to measure the benefit.

Making a litter healthier is not a good use for Probiotics. Using probiotics in situations that support the immune function and prevent the body from getting sick is the goal.

Love them:

Supporting the GI tract or protecting it when a stressful issue is going to happen is a good use for Probiotic.

- Sick and on an antibiotic – Probiotic hastens recovery from GI upset caused by illness and oral antibiotic use.
- Weanling transferring to solid food. Allows for a smooth and diarrhea free transition.
- Before shipping to assure control of diarrhea due to stress.

- If they are not right and you are not sure what the issue is don't wait. Give probiotic and help the neonate fight whatever it is even when we do not know the cause!
- Orphan being bottle fed – mom is not there giving probiotic so you need to replace her. Use probiotic in the milk twice a day for first two weeks to improve digestion. (Usually stops “bottle fed diarrhea” in 48 hours).

What not to use:

Sometimes it is easier to say what not to use! Here is a general guide:

- Food with bacteria added is usually dead bacteria, and of no use.
 - If it was live bacteria the food would likely be digested and rotten by the time you wanted to feed it or eat it yourself.
- Whole live culture bacteria.
 - Most of these will be killed by the stomach acid and never get to the intestine.

What probiotic works:

- Bacterial spores that will pass the stomach acid and become active in the gut.
- Treated products designed to pass the stomach acid.

Prebiotic Vs Probiotic:

Prebiotics are products that promote good bacterial growth but not pathogenic (bad) bacteria. Prebiotics are an energy source that the good bacteria can use, but they are not available to the bad bacteria. Much research is being put into how this works and the benefit of using Prebiotics with Probiotic.

Beta glucans (bgmos®) is the Prebiotic in Doc Roy's GI SYNBIOTICS. Bgmos® not only fuels the good bacterial growth, it binds bad bacteria into clumps making them easier to spot and remove by the immune system. You can see how Prebiotics can be beneficial to the GI of an upset pet.

Many new ones are on the horizon so stay tuned to this new area of research.

New Science:

[Doc Roy's® GI SYNBIOTICS GRANULES](#) are formulated to bypass the stomach acid delivering more active bacteria to the intestine. Synbiotic fuels the growth of good bacteria, while supporting the removal of bad bacteria using prebiotic science.

Our pets carry good bacteria that help digestion and their immune function. You can help the gut by adding good bacteria at times when the bacteria balance is upset and the tummy has issues.

-Dr. B

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