

Probiotic prescriptions

To help you get the most out of this new area, I've developed a guide, in collaboration with colleagues Dr Dimidi and Dr Gill, describing the probiotic prescriptions you may like to consider for conditions where there is a body of evidence (i.e. there has been a supportive meta-analysis) suggesting at least some benefit. When considering taking a probiotic it's worth keeping in mind that even the area with the most convincing evidence (antibiotic-associated diarrhoea), following the prescription still doesn't guarantee it will work for you – it's up to you to weigh up the risk (typically financial cost) versus the benefit. If you are interested in giving it a try, remember to assess what you're looking to change, e.g. a symptom, before and then again after taking the specific probiotic for the duration outlined below. This way you can get a more objective idea of whether it is worth your time and money.

Condition	Prescription*
Irritable bowel syndrome (for overall symptoms, including tummy pain, bloating and flatulence)	Strain: <i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i> 299v Dose: 10 billion CFU per day Form: Capsule Duration: 4 weeks Timing:** Daily
Antibiotic Associated Diarrhoea	Strain: a) <i>Lactobacillus rhamnosus</i> GG or b) <i>Saccharomyces boulardii</i> Dose: a) 6 billion CFU, twice per day; b) 5 billion CFU, twice per day Form: Powder Duration: Whilst taking antibiotics, plus for an additional week after Timing: 2 hours after breakfast and dinner
Constipation	Strain: a) <i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i> LP01 and <i>Bifidobacterium breve</i> BR03; or b) <i>Bifidobacterium lactis</i> BS01 Dose: 5 billion CFU per day Form: Powder Duration: 4 weeks Timing: First thing in the morning
Respiratory tract infections e.g. Common cold	Strain: <i>Lactobacillus rhamnosus</i> GG and <i>Bifidobacterium lactis</i> BB-12 Dose: 2 billion CFU per day Form: Powder Duration: 12 weeks Timing: Once daily

*based on one placebo-controlled trial. Additional probiotic strains have also shown benefit, see usprobioticguide.com.

** Sometimes studies don't give the exact detail of when the probiotic was taken i.e. time and whether it's with food. In such case follow the instructions on the product label.

Condition	Prescription
H.Pylori infection (stomach infection) (alongside antibiotic therapy)	Strain: <i>Lactobacillus acidophilus</i> LA5 and <i>Bifidobacterium lactis</i> BB-12 Dose: 5 billion CFU, twice per day Form: 200 ml yoghurt Duration: 1 week (whilst taking antibiotics) and continued for 4 weeks post antibiotics Timing: 30min after antibiotic, twice per day
Preventing eczema in babies with a parent who has eczema	Strain: <i>Lactobacillus rhamnosus</i> HN001 Dose: 6 billion CFU per day Form: mother: capsule; baby: powder Duration: mother: from 35 weeks of pregnancy to 6 months postpartum (if breastfeeding); baby: from 6 days to age 2 years Timing: Once daily
Ulcerative Colitis (inducing remission in mild-moderately active, alongside standard medical therapy)	Strains: 8 strain combination trademarked as Vivomixx: 4 strains of Lactobacilli (<i>L. paracasei</i> , <i>L. plantarum</i> , <i>L. acidophilus</i> and <i>L. delbrueckii subsp. bulgaricus</i>); 3 strains of Bifidobacteria (<i>B. longum</i> , <i>B. infantis</i> , <i>B. breve</i>); 1 strain of <i>Streptococcus thermophilus</i> . Dose: 1.8 trillion CFU, twice per day*** Form: Powder, mixed with cold water or yoghurt. Duration: 12 weeks Timing: Morning and evening
Hayfever (allergic rhinitis) (alongside antihistamine)	Strain: <i>Lactobacillus paracasei</i> LP-33 Dose: 2 billion CFU per day Form: Capsule Duration: 5 weeks along with loratadine (antihistamine), plus an additional 2 weeks. Timing: With food

*** It's not a typo. This prescription is at a much higher dose than other conditions. There were no safety issues found in the study, other than 18 per cent of the probiotic group reporting some bloating in the first few days which resolved within a week.

Strain, the type of probiotic, i.e. microbe, shown to have a benefit.

CFU, colony forming units. This is the unit that bacteria are measured in, similar to how protein is measured in grams, bacteria are measured in CFU.