

Choosing a probiotic

- Probiotics are sold as supplements, so the FDA does not check them for safety or health claims the way they do for drugs. However, some of them have been studied and are reported to have health benefits.
- The label should tell you the specific bacteria and amount of bacteria in the product.
- Package should indicate the product contains live and active bacteria.
- Product should have at least 1 billion colony forming units (CFU) (more is better)
- Ideally, look for probiotic that has been tested for issue you are trying to address.
- Consuming both probiotics (the beneficial bacteria) as well as prebiotics (the 'food' for the beneficial bacteria) is ideal. If it's hard to incorporate prebiotic foods into the diet, you could try a supplement such as Benefiber. Benefiber comes in a couple forms, including fruit flavored gummies, and a powder that is tasteless, odorless, and dissolved into liquid. See example of prebiotic foods in article below.
- Store product it in the way the packaging specifies; some probiotics need to go in the fridge
- A popular option is Visbiome, which has been researched quite a bit. (This was originally sold as VSL3 but is now manufactured by the brand "Visbiome." See this link for more info: <https://www.visbiome.com/pages/visbiome-vs-vsl3>)
- A gradual increase in probiotic use may be helpful as some GI symptoms may occur initially.
- Although many probiotics do not require a prescription, it's recommended that they be taken under medical supervision, so I would reach out to a trusted physician before starting one.

Helpful articles on probiotics:

- <https://gastro.org/practice-guidance/gi-patient-center/topic/probiotics/>
- <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-pick-the-best-probiotic-for-you/>
- <https://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/pick-right-probiotic>
- https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/best-probiotic-supplement#TOC_TITLE_HDR_6

Prebiotic Foods:

- <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/probiotics-and-prebiotics#prebiotic-foods>

Disclaimer: The information is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or treatment and before undertaking any treatment or intervention.