

What Are The Signs Your Probiotics Are Working?

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Probiotics are one of the most talked about topics in health and wellness. These beneficial microorganisms are recommended for everything from stomach issues to supporting your mental health. Although they naturally occur in many fermented foods like yogurt and sauerkraut, people often increase their consumption through supplements. Like with many supplements, however, it can be difficult to tell if probiotics are actually working.

Key takeaways:

Probiotics are beneficial bacteria and fungi that help support the overall gut health of the body.

Some ways to tell if your probiotics are working are improved cognition and brain health, better sleep, and reduced gastrointestinal symptoms. If your probiotics aren't working it could be because they weren't stored properly, you aren't taking them consistently, or you don't have the right kind for you.

The best probiotics for most adults contain around 50 billion CFUs of various lactobacillus strains of bacteria.

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How do probiotics work?

Packed in your neat little pill or capsule is anywhere from 1 to 10 billion CFU of probiotics – that's the unit used to estimate the number of microbial cells present. Probiotics are **live bacteria and fungi that help repopulate the gut microbiome**, offering a wide range of health benefits when consumed.

Your gut microbiome comprises good bacteria and fungi (flora) that **help maintain balance in your body by supporting the cells that line your gut**. Gut flora is responsible for fermenting fiber that reaches the gut, creating short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). These SCFAs are essential for regulating inflammation, and metabolism, and preventing disease.

When you take probiotics or consume them through food, you're helping to promote overall balance in the body – but how do you know if probiotics are helping?

Signs your probiotics are working

Because probiotics are beneficial for many different systems and parts of the body, there are several ways you can tell whether or not your probiotics are working. Some people turn to probiotics as a way to help treat many different conditions, including:

- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- Diarrhea and constipation
- Eczema
- Allergies

Improvement in these conditions or other ones you may be experiencing is a good sign your probiotics are working. Probiotics don't just help with preexisting conditions; **they also help support your overall health and well-being**.

You can look towards some other key areas to tell if your probiotics are working.

Improved gut health

One of the most obvious ways probiotics can support your body is by promoting good gut health. This is thanks to their ability to help improve digestion.

Gastrointestinal issues like bloating, constipation, diarrhea, and stomach aches can stem from all sorts of things, including stress, food intolerances, and underlying conditions. Probiotics can help reduce these symptoms and more.

They have also been shown to help acute cases of gastrointestinal issues. Probiotics may reduce the risk of antibiotic-associated diarrhea by 51%, as well as reduce symptoms of infectious diarrhea.

Enhanced brain health

A tell-tale sign your probiotics may be working is if you feel a difference in your cognition.

Cognition includes any **mental processes that involve learning and understanding**.

Enhanced cognition means you may notice a difference in your attention, memory, thinking, and reasoning. Cognition isn't the only part of brain health that probiotics can support.

Improved mood

When talking about brain health, you can also examine mental health and overall mood. The gut produces some of the same neurotransmitters as are made in the brain. An estimated 95% of the body's serotonin (the happy chemical) is provided by the gut.

Many people also notice a difference in their mental health when taking probiotics.

Studies have shown that consuming probiotics can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Better sleep

Brain health and sleep tend to go hand in hand. It's another area of your health that can improve when taking probiotics.

Recent research shows that taking probiotic supplements may help enhance sleep quality. Also, people with insomnia may have an easier time sleeping thanks partly to probiotics.

Feeling more energized

Your energy comes from food. When your gut microbiome is out of balance, it can be difficult for your body to get the nutrients it needs and use food efficiently to keep you feeling your best.

By balancing your microbiome, **probiotics can help you properly absorb nutrients** so that you feel more energized throughout the day.

Better stress response

Stress is a part of life, but you can change how you respond to stress. People with [symptoms of leaky gut](#) may have a difficult time responding to stress because of its link with inflammation in the brain.

Taking probiotics can help improve the communication between your gut and your brain, reducing inflammation, so that you can better manage stress and anxiety.

Clearer skin

Your skin is a reflection of what's going on inside your body. Gut imbalances and other health issues can contribute to acne, rashes, and other skin conditions.

[Probiotics](#) not only affect your gut microbiome but can also change the bacteria on your skin. This means if you see things like rosacea, eczema, or acne start to clear, it's a good sign that your probiotics are doing their job.

When will your probiotics start working?

It's understandable to want immediate results, especially when you spend money investing in a new product, or if you're trying to treat an issue that is impacting your daily life.

The time it takes for your probiotics to start working depends on a lot of factors:

- What you're trying to treat (if anything)
- Underlying health issues
- The quality of the probiotics
- If the probiotics are the right strain for you
- Your overall health
- Your diet and other lifestyle factors

All that being said, many people notice a difference in their digestion and other symptoms in as little as one to two weeks. People with diarrhea may notice a difference in as little as a few days.

Why your probiotics may not be working

As with most supplements and lifestyle changes, it can take time to notice the effects. How long does it take probiotics to work? It depends on the person, your overall health, diet, and what you're trying to address by taking probiotics.

Still, it can be frustrating to spend time and money on a new supplement, only not to notice a difference in your health. **Here are some common reasons why your probiotics may not be working:**

- The microbes in your probiotics are dead
- You don't take them regularly
- The strain of probiotics isn't right for you
- The strains aren't surviving in your digestive system
- You have unrealistic expectations

What can you do if probiotics are not working

You know how beneficial probiotics can be and want to try to make them work. Luckily there are some ways you can troubleshoot your probiotics and try to get them to work.

Give it time

The amount of time it takes for probiotics to work depends on your body and what you're trying to address. If you're not noticing improvements in symptoms, **you may need to give your probiotics a bit more time.**

Some people notice improvements in gastrointestinal issues within a few days; for others, it may take a few weeks.

Change your diet

Taking probiotics is effective, but **they're not miracle workers that can make up for a poor diet.** A diet high in processed foods, added sugars, alcohol, and refined oils can deter the effects of probiotics.

On the other hand, **certain foods can be used to help activate probiotics.** These are called prebiotics and are found in fiber-rich food like greens, bananas, asparagus, and oats.

Store your probiotics properly

Another potential issue with probiotics that aren't working is that the microorganisms in them have died. This is usually due to improper storage.

Be sure to read the storage instructions for your probiotics. Some that are freeze-dried can be stored generally at room temperature; many, however, need to be refrigerated and kept out of humidity.

Side effects of probiotics

On the other hand, some might wonder if you take too many probiotics. While an overdose is highly unlikely, people may experience unpleasant side effects if they take more than the recommended dose, have a sensitivity to them, or if you take probiotics on an empty stomach. Do probiotics cause gas? They certainly can be for some people, along with other potential side effects like bloating, diarrhea, or allergic reactions. This is usually because **the body may need an adjustment period after introducing a new or increased number of bacteria** to your gastrointestinal system.

Most side effects subside within a week. If you're experiencing side effects from your probiotics you can try taking it with food, taking it every other day, and seeing if there may be a contraindication with any other supplements or medications you're on.

Probiotics and food

Supplements aren't the only source of probiotics. Thanks to the food you eat, you probably consume more of these beneficial bacteria than you realize.

People dealing with constipation may reach for a well-known bubbly drink – kombucha. Does kombucha make you poop? The combination of probiotics and water may certainly help!

Kombucha isn't the only probiotic-rich food available. Some of the foods highest in probiotics include:

- Yogurt and kefir
- Miso and tempeh
- Sourdough bread
- Kimchi
- Certain cheeses.

The best probiotics for you

So how do you find the best probiotic supplement for you? A lot of that depends on your age and gender.

Children will do best with a lower dose probiotic, somewhere between 500 million and 5 billion CFUs, that contains a wide range of strains of bacteria. Females and males under 50 generally do well taking a probiotic containing around 50 billion CFUs of several strains of

lactobacillus. [Synbiotic by Ritual](#) offers an optimal dose of 11 billion CFUs, which is suitable for most people without serious digestion concerns.

A huge hormonal change happens for women during the 40s or 50s – [menopause](#). What is the best probiotic for women over 50? Again it's a probiotic with **30 to 50 billion CFUs** of a variety of strains of *lactobacillus*. The same is true for men over 50.

While many people can benefit from your standard *lactobacillus* probiotic, others may need different strains to help address specific health issues. If you're unsure what probiotic to take or why yours still aren't working, be sure to consult your healthcare provider.

FAQ

How quickly do probiotics start working?

Probiotics affect people differently, and it depends what you're looking to treat – if anything. When addressing symptoms like diarrhea, **people may notice a difference in a few days**. Other people see changes typically in **one to two weeks** when taking a high-quality probiotic.

What will I notice when I start taking probiotics?

One of the first things people notice is more regular bowel movements. You may also see a **reduction in symptoms like fatigue, gastrointestinal issues, anxiety, and skin conditions**. People who take probiotics also may benefit from better mental health and cognition, enhanced sleep, and the ability to better manage stress.

Do probiotics work permanently?

Taking probiotics is a great step in improving your gut and overall health, but for a lasting change, you need consistency. If you want your probiotics to continue to work, **you need to take them on a regular basis** along with making lifestyle changes.

What are the symptoms that probiotics are detoxing your body?

Consistent exposure to food contaminants can lead to issues like inflammation, gut disorders, and oxidative stress. Taking probiotics can help

detox these contaminants, which may lead to **symptoms like stomach aches, gas and bloating, nausea, and rashes**. Eating food with your probiotic can help minimize detox symptoms.