

Title: Probiotics Effective at Reducing and Preventing Antibiotic-Associated Diarrhea in Adults

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Abstract: Antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) has been recognized since the 1950s, with the introduction of broad-spectrum antibiotics. In a meta-analysis of six randomized placebo-controlled trials, probiotic treatment with *Lactobacillus* was shown to reduce and prevent the occurrence of AAD in adult patients in the inpatient and outpatient setting (RR 0.24; 95% confidence interval 0.08, 0.75; number needed to treat 6.05; absolute risk reduction 16.5%).

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# Antibiotics and your health

- Patients often take antibiotics when being treated for various types of infections, and antibiotics are known to cause diarrhea up to 25% of the time.
- Doctors think that antibiotics cause diarrhea by removing some of the normal bacteria that lives in the gut. Without this bacteria, food can't be broken down as easily, and water isn't absorbed back into the body as quickly. Another complication (called C. Diff) occurs when harmful bacteria take over where the normal bacteria used to be.
- When beginning a course of antibiotics, taking a probiotic at the same time can help keep good bacteria in the gut and prevent diarrhea. Probiotics are available in capsule or liquid form and are also found in certain brands of yogurt. The chance that one particular person could benefit from this treatment is 1 in 6, or one person will reduce their chances of getting diarrhea by 17%.

Image courtesy <http://w7worldwide.com/v7blog/>

You are more likely to develop diarrhea from antibiotics if you:

- Are < 6 years old or > 65 years old
- Have chronic diseases such as chronic disease of the intestine, have a weakened immune system, or have had diarrhea with antibiotics in the past
- Have recently stayed in a hospital or nursing home
- Have recently had intestinal or other major surgery
- Use a feeding tube through the nose
- Have prolonged use of antibiotics, repeat courses of antibiotics, or combinations of antibiotics



Image courtesy <http://blog.comerstorckhabygifts.com/>

For additional information, see:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/antibiotic-associated-diarrhea/DS00454>

[http://www.uptodate.com/patients/content/topic.do?topicKey=~0598/ummi\\_fni3&selectedTitle=2%7E31&source=search\\_result](http://www.uptodate.com/patients/content/topic.do?topicKey=~0598/ummi_fni3&selectedTitle=2%7E31&source=search_result)