



Gut Health: Probiotics & Enzymes

Digestive Enzymes:

Many with celiac disease, inflammatory & irritable bowel syndrome, chronic constipation or diarrhea, heartburn, bloating and gas, and/or abdominal pain & cramping suffer from too little good bacteria in their digestive tracts as well as poor digestion. Having inefficient digestive enzymes leads to gas, bloating, and pain---especially after meals and by the end of the day. Moreover, you won't break down food very well, which leads to poor absorption and vitamin, mineral, and amino acid deficiencies. So now you have constant discomfort on top of malnutrition and you wonder why you're so tired all of the time. On top of this, you're also more likely to gain weight and you'll be hungry more often. Since bad gut bugs tend to crave sugar and starchy snacks and foods, you're more likely to crave the foods that keep them alive and multiplying. Should you pursue a medical evaluation, you'll be diagnosed with IBS and told to increase your fiber and advised to accept it and learn to live with it. Still, probiotics and digestive enzymes are an easy and relatively inexpensive way to alleviate this problem by at least 50% to 75% or more.

The Super Digestive Enzymes (SDE) at Holistic Health are a great product & can easily be used with meals (at lower doses) and most people tolerate them quite well. However, they should be started at lower doses such as 1/8 cap or a sprinkle, especially for children & those with chronic gut issues. Occasionally, some people find that they cannot tolerate this product due to the higher focus on pancreatic enzymes for better digestion. This may be related to H. Pylori gut infections and/or very low stomach acid. In this case, consider the digestive enzyme you can tolerate. One alternative for very sensitive stomachs is Serenaid. SDE \$18.95/100 Caps or Serenaid \$51.90/180.

Probiotics:

Probiotics are good bacteria that help keep bad bugs under control. They have countless functions but are most known for balancing digestive tract health while improving nutrient absorption and boosting the immune system.

The two most frequently recognized probiotics include lactobacillus, which is found in the small intestine and bifidobacteria, which resides in the large intestine.

Helpful Hints

- For those that cost more use them for a week instead of 2-3 weeks and rotate the less expensive versions in sooner to stretch them out longer.
- To adjust to them, start at 1/8 to 1/4 of the ideal dose and gradually increase to 1/2 to 1 capsule every night, rotating to a new probiotic every 2-3 weeks.



- You can use ½ the dose for most of them in order to save money.
- To date, I have not found less expensive probiotics, particularly for the quality, than Holistic Health's. However, feel free to use any brands you prefer.
- All probiotics cause die off reactions. This means that bad bugs and yeast will release toxins and waste as they die off & for some, this can lead to uncomfortable symptoms. Start low, sometimes at a sprinkle & move up as tolerated.
- Please keep in mind that if you've taken a sprinkle of probiotics yet still reacted significantly to them, it might be helpful to get a comprehensive stool test. If any of the good organisms are found in high amounts (3-4+), particularly when you've not replaced them before as probiotics, they may be acting as harmful bacteria.
- Some of the brands not made by HHI may be on sale at their company websites.

Key organisms:

Bifidobacteria
L. Acidophilus
L. Plantarum
S. Boulardi

Examples of good broad-spectrum probiotics on Holistic Health's Website
www.holisticheal.com:

- ❖ **SupremaDophilus:** (Multiple flora) Start low at a small sprinkle as this is a very effective, potent combo, particularly for the price @ \$14.85/60 Caps
- ❖ **Lactobacillus:** (L. Plantarum, L. Salivarius, L. Rhamnosus). \$26.95/100 Caps. Start at a sprinkle to ¼ cap & gradually increase to ½ to 1 cap daily.
- ❖ **Lactobacillus Acidophilus:** (Lactobacillus blend) ¼ to ½ cap twice a day. \$7.95/100 Caps
- ❖ **Gut Health:** (L. Reuteri) Start at ¼ chewable daily & move up to 1 tab as tolerated. \$29.99 (particularly helpful with H. Pylori)
- ❖ **Ultra dairy Digest:** Assists with digesting dairy and provides beneficial flora. \$12.40/60 Caps. To take with any dairy or as a nighttime probiotic.
- ❖ **NutriClean Probiotics:** (Multiple strains plantarum, Rhamnosus, Bifido, etc). Start at ¼ dose. \$39.95/30 tabs.
- ❖ **Yeast Away:** (L. Acidophilus, L. Rhamnosus, L. Casei & Cellulase). ¼ to ½ cap twice daily. This is intended as a more intensive yeast/bad flora cleansing & is best used in conjunction with a low yeast diet; however, it may also be used as a nighttime probiotic. \$23.95/48 Caps.
- ❖ **Candisol:** Not a probiotic but destroys bacterial cell wall as well as Fungal/yeast so that good flora can take over more effectively. \$24.99 for 40 caps. You will need to add in good flora to take the place of those dying off!



- ❖ **Florastor:** (S. Boulardi) Start with ¼ Cap daily with goal of ½ to 1 cap. \$49.95/50 Caps.
- ❖ **Paradex:** Parasites and bacteria. May see more “die off” so start slow and go slow. \$17.95 for 90 caps
- ❖ **Prescript Assist:** (Also has strep in it) \$20.00 for 30 caps. I generally do not recommend but for those who have no strep issues at all, this is a good probiotic especially when you must use antibiotics.

***Probiotics should be taken with water on an empty stomach to avoid higher gut acid, which could easily disable the good flora you are trying to introduce. Typically, nighttime is best though anytime you’ve had an empty stomach for at least 2-3 hours is acceptable. It’s also best to space these apart from antibiotics or natural anti-bacterial herbs and supplements since these can kill off the probiotic’s good bacteria as well. Generally, you should always rotate several different strains (4-6) so that your bad stomach bugs do not acclimate to them. Use each for 2-3 weeks and then rotate to another probiotic/flora balancer. Always start at a sprinkle or 1/8 to ¼ of the dose that it says on the label. For some, the die off can be significant and many will experience some mild gas, bloating, nausea, or possibly, diarrhea, especially if the starting doses are too high or you increase them too quickly. Ultimately, many do well at just ½ of the regular dose so there is no need to try to get up to the highest doses.

Of course, it is most beneficial to limit sugars, carbs, & yeast when doing so and be aware that you may crave these foods while on probiotics. This is owing to the theory of survival of the fittest as the bad guys struggle to stay alive and stimulate your appetite. You often begin to crave the very substances that keep them alive & multiplying so it’s best to be prepared, having better choices for snacks and meals available in order to avoid this temptation.

Helpful websites: Digestive enzymes, probiotics, etc.

<http://www.ei-resource.org/treatment-options/treatment-information/probiotics-and-prebiotics/>

<http://www.enzymestuff.com/digestion.htm>

Stomach Acid:

Oddly enough, having too much stomach acid frequently has the same symptoms as having too little acid. This is a common reason many people are misdiagnosed with “dyspepsia,” “gastritis,” or “Chronic acid reflux,” yet do not respond to over the counter or prescription antacid therapy. In fact, this typically compounds the problem. They have also found that many of these acid reducers (Pepcid, Zantac, Nexium, Protonix) lower the stomach PH to such a degree that those taking them cannot absorb many dietary nutrients and unknowingly suffer from malnutrition and low bone density!



If you are in doubt about stomach acid, try the “baking soda” test in which you add ½ to 1 tsp of baking soda to a full glass of water first thing in the morning (on an empty stomach). If you belch within 2 minutes, you have too much stomach acid. For those who do not belch, your stomach acid may be too low or alkaline; in which case, the stomach PH RNA is not as beneficial. This RNA is meant to reduce the acidity in the gut by raising the PH to a more alkaline state.

If you consistently have too little stomach acid, using 1-2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar OR betaine hydrochloride (HCL) tablets with meals can help with proper digestion. However, betaine should be used in minimal doses (as found in most health food stores) or under the supervision of a health practitioner to avoid damage to the stomach lining. If you were to use this incorrectly when you have too much acid, it could lead to ulcers and other serious problems. Digestive enzymes and probiotics are necessary whether there is too much or too little acid.

Symptoms of too much acid:

This occurs when the body attempts to overcompensate for poor diets with too much fat, food processing and unfortunately, even cooking, which destroys the natural digestive enzymes normally contained in food. Prior to reaching the stomach acid, these natural enzymes should break down much of the food. Since most of these enzymes are now deficient, we need more stomach acid to take over and this contributes to the symptoms of acid reflux & heartburn as well as gas, bloating, stomach irritation, and diarrhea. Too much acid can also lead to stomach cancer and an esophageal cancer known as Barrett’s esophagus.

Symptoms of too little acid:

This often occurs with gallstones, influenza, gastroenteritis (stomach flu), antacid and/or prescription drug use, hormone replacement, birth control pills, and aging. Symptoms are very similar to excess acid and include reflux, heartburn, gas, and bloating yet there are more telling signs if one carefully evaluates for them. Many have allergies (environmental and/or food), acne, rosacea, eczema, earlier signs of aging, poor wound healing, fatigue, poor energy, and malabsorption & malnutrition due to loss of key vitamins and minerals. Many lose their appetite for high protein foods and don’t tolerate raw vegetables as well (since they are harder to digest). Other signs involve relief with eating (since they have at least some increase in stomach acid), bad breath, undigested foods in their stool and problems with candida (yeast) overgrowth in the digestive tract and throughout the body as well as bacteria, parasites, and other harmful overgrowths that would normally be destroyed with higher stomach acid. It is not uncommon to crave sugary or starchy, carbohydrate-rich foods that yeast and other parasites require for survival.