



## Probiotics for Women



*This article discusses the general health benefits of probiotics, which are strain-specific, and is not meant to imply that Activia® provides the benefits mentioned in this article. Activia is a probiotic yogurt that may help reduce the frequency of minor digestive discomfort when consumed twice a day for two weeks as part of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. Minor digestive discomfort includes bloating, gas, abdominal discomfort, and rumbling.*

### Probiotics support healthy gut function and overall health

Intestinal bacteria are normal residents of the human digestive system and are important to overall health.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that approximately 100 trillion microorganisms live in a normal human gut.<sup>1</sup> Probiotics have been shown to provide strain-specific health benefits such as supporting gut and immune health. While probiotics generally do not colonize the gut, many do provide their benefits in the colon, having a beneficial impact on the bacteria already living there.<sup>2</sup>

Certain probiotics may help with digestive discomfort, such as bloating, gas, abdominal discomfort, and rumbling.<sup>3,4</sup> Other probiotics may help support general health (and women's health in particular) in different ways.

### Probiotic products may help support women's nutritional needs and overall health

Women have unique nutritional needs as they can experience pregnancy, breastfeeding, menstruation, and menopause. Overall, Americans consume too little calcium, potassium, dietary fiber, and vitamin D.<sup>5</sup> As a woman moves through her lifecycle, she may also require increased levels of certain nutrients. Also, as women experience major life shifts, such as family and career changes, they may experience stress and not always consume a well-balanced diet, which may lead to minor digestive issues. Some probiotic foods, such as Activia, help support digestive health and can provide some of the nutrients women need as they move through their lifecycle.

### Probiotics and bone health

Women may be at greater risk than men for brittle and broken bones.<sup>6</sup> One reason is that women tend to have smaller, thinner bones than men.<sup>6</sup> Also, estrogen, a hormone in women that protects bones, decreases sharply when women reach menopause, which can cause bone loss.<sup>6</sup> Recent research, in both animal and human models, suggests that some probiotics may play a role in helping to support bone health, especially bone mass density.<sup>7-12</sup> More research is needed to understand the mechanisms through which probiotics may have an effect on bone health.<sup>8-13</sup>



**Your Gut  
Is Where It  
All Begins**





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## The Gut-Brain connection

Women may be at greater risk for certain issues related to mood.<sup>13</sup> Research suggests there are links between the digestive system, mood, and health.<sup>14</sup> Our dietary choices have the potential to have positive effects on our thoughts and mood.

## Maternal gut bacteria may have effects on offspring

A woman's microflora comprises a unique community of bacteria that may affect more than just her own health. The bacteria living in and on a woman's body before and during pregnancy, during delivery of her child, and transferred to her child during breastfeeding, all have an influence on the child's own microbiota.<sup>15</sup> This means that the maternal gut bacteria may impact the child's overall health.<sup>15</sup>

## Support the gut with a healthy diet

The gut microbiome plays an important role in human health as it aids in nutrient metabolism, drug metabolism, prevention of colonization of pathogenic microorganisms and in intestinal barrier function.<sup>16</sup> While several factors impact the gut microbiome, diet continues to be the most important determinant in shaping the composition, diversity and richness of gut microbiota throughout adulthood.<sup>16</sup> One of the easiest ways to support gut health is by making healthy food choices. Encourage a daily routine incorporating a healthy lifestyle and a balanced, fiber-rich eating pattern which includes of a variety of fruits, vegetables, and fermented foods. In addition, regular consumption of specific probiotic strains is another healthy habit to encourage gut health.

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