



Health Bulletin



Probiotics 101: Using Healthy Bacteria To Our Benefit

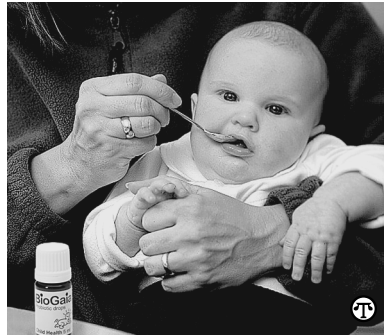
(NAPSA)—In recent years, researchers have been examining probiotics as a treatment for a number of health issues, including gastrointestinal disorders. Probiotics, or “good bacteria,” are defined as microorganisms that provide health benefits when taken in specific quantities.

But all probiotics are not alike. And with the increase in products that claim to provide probiotic benefits, it's important to look for those strains that have been thoroughly researched and proven to be effective. These strains can help to restore the body's natural balance, boost overall health and strengthen the immune system for individuals of all ages—from infancy to old age.

One example is *Lactobacillus reuteri* (*L. reuteri*), a probiotic strain that occurs naturally in the human gastrointestinal tract. *L. reuteri* is one of the few probiotic strains to undergo rigorous testing, including 37 clinical studies involving 3,000 patients, and has been shown to be both safe and effective for all ages, including infants.

Another important characteristic of *L. reuteri* is its ability to bind easily to the gastrointestinal lining, where it attaches and grows on the intestinal wall. Here, it begins to “defend its territory” by fighting off harmful bacteria.

As additional proof of *L. reuteri*'s health benefit for



With the help of the probiotic *L. reuteri*, parents may be able to reduce the symptoms of infant colic.

infants, a recent study is showing promising results in reducing the symptoms of colic.

Probiotics And Colic

Colic affects as many as 25 percent of newborn children and is characterized by episodes of intense, excessive, inconsolable crying—totaling more than three hours a day—without an identifiable cause.

Although the underlying causes of colic have remained unclear, advances in recent technology have shown that most cases may be caused by gastrointestinal issues, such as infant acid reflux.

A study published in the January 2007 issue of the journal *Pediatrics* showed that babies given the probiotic *L. reuteri* reduced

their crying time significantly.

The study compared two groups of infants—one was given drops of the probiotic *L. reuteri*, and the other, drops of simethicone, the ingredient found in most over-the-counter colic drops. After 28 days, the babies given *L. reuteri* significantly reduced their crying times—from 197 minutes to just 51 minutes a day. By comparison, the crying time of the babies given simethicone decreased from 197 minutes per day to 145. Ninety-five percent of the babies given *L. reuteri* responded positively in terms of reduction in crying time (a reduction of 50 percent or more) vs. just 7 percent of the babies treated with simethicone.

“This study suggests a potentially exciting role of *L. reuteri* as a new therapeutic approach to gastrointestinal disorders characterized as colic,” says Bryan Vartabedian, M.D., pediatric gastroenterologist and author of the book “Colic Solved.” “The safety profile of *L. reuteri* makes it a favorable consideration for parents of newborns diagnosed with colic.”

Parents can get *L. reuteri* to help treat their colicky infants from BioGaia Probiotic Drops. BioGaia is a Swedish company that exclusively manufactures the probiotic. To learn more, visit www.probioticscience.com.