

What else may probiotics do in adults?

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Probiotic bacteria, defined as living microorganisms that have beneficial effects on human health, have mostly been studied in the prevention and treatment of different gastrointestinal diseases and allergies. Probiotic products, however, are usually consumed by the general, healthy population but not much is known what kind of effects they have on the immune system in healthy adults. It is not clear how probiotics exert their health effects, but one of the most probable action mechanisms is the modulation of immune responses via the gut's mucosal immune system.

The study, performed by the groups of Dr Korpela, Professor Vapaatalo and Professor Julkunen, will be published on April 7, 2008, in the World Journal of Gastroenterology.

This study investigated the immunomodulatory effects of probiotics bacteria in healthy adults. It was found that probiotics have an anti-inflammatory potential seen as a decrease in serum CRP levels and as a reduction in bacteria-induced production of proinflammatory cytokines in peripheral blood mononuclear cells.

Understanding of the specific immunomodulatory effects of probiotics may help in designing future probiotics for targeted purposes. As the effects in the present study were investigated in healthy adults, the real impact of probiotics on inflammatory variables warrants further evaluation during inflammatory processes and in individuals suffering from various types of inflammatory or autoimmune diseases.

Source: World Journal of Gastroenterology

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