

## **Probiotics Help Bolster Immunity, Repair Intestinal Health, and Support Healthy Pregnancy**

*By Katherine Leonard MS, NC, NaturalNews.com*

The microflora in the gut is intimately linked with the health and immunity of individuals of all ages, health statuses, and environments. Hundreds of different species (both beneficial and pathogenic) live symbiotically in the colons of humans. The beneficial microbiota are known to produce vitamin K and B vitamins, aid in digesting foods, help neutralize toxins, and preventing the pathogenic bacteria from dominating. Now, researchers are showing how supplementing with probiotics can bolster immunity, improve intestinal health, and support a healthy pregnancy.

One recent study showed college students who supplemented with probiotics for 12 weeks saw significant bolstering of their immune system. All students caught colds, but those taking probiotics experienced shorter duration of symptoms, 34 percent less severity of symptoms, and a higher quality of life during the illness. If an individual resorts to antibiotics, probiotics can still be used to reduce the negative side effects of those antibiotics.

Probiotics can also reduce the risk of diarrhea caused by antibiotics. RAND, a non-profit research organization, pooled results from studies that examined whether probiotic use can prevent and treat antibiotic-associated diarrhea, and found that probiotic use resulted in a 42 percent lower risk of diarrhea. This is good news for the 30 percent of antibiotic-users that commonly experience diarrhea while taking the drugs.

If intestinal integrity is weak from food allergies, toxins, malabsorption disorders, inflammatory conditions, or antibiotics, taking prebiotics too can help regrow a new and better gut. A study recently conducted by researchers at the *University of Illinois* demonstrated that supplementing the diet with prebiotics (fibers that beneficial bacteria use as food) called fructooligosaccharides will support intestinal healing and repair.

The research also demonstrates the supportive effects of probiotics during pregnancy. Supplementing with probiotics during the last trimester of pregnancy is associated with an increased immunity and anti-inflammatory effect. Probiotics can change the internal environment of the mother and may even prevent pre-term birth. Furthermore, a baby's exposure to beneficial bacteria may even lead to better immune function and overall health over that child's lifetime.

The microflora in the intestine has even been collectively considered an organ because of their ability to support the immune system, regulate intestinal health, support healthy metabolism, and contribute to overall health and wellness.

**Sources for this article include:**

<http://www.vitasearch.com/get-clp-summary/40470>