



*Dynamic Chiropractic* – September 1, 1991, Vol. 09, Issue 18

## **How to Select an Acidophilus Supplement**

By S.K. Dash, PhD

There is a growing consensus on the beneficial attributes of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* in human and animal nutrition and health. However, it must be remembered that all acidophilus products are not alike and do not have similar nutritional and therapeutic values. For consistent and positive results one should try to know the source of the acidophilus product before using. Knowledge of product viability, implantation criteria and strain identification will help in the choice of the best available *Lactobacillus acidophilus* product.

### **Strain, Manufacturing Technique**

Since all acidophilus products are not alike, it is important that consumers select a strain that is stable and has good keeping properties.

Freeze drying is a process that improves the stability of an acidophilus product. Further, absence of oxygen is a desired condition for stability of acidophilus. It is a good idea to purchase an acidophilus product in which bottling containers have been nitrogen flushed.

### **Shipping, Handling, Storage**

It is necessary to ship the product in an insulated container to avoid exposure to heat. Shipping the product by air, and in insulated containers assures the viability of the product. However, it should be noted that acidophilus products will not be spoiled with short exposure to heat. It can stand room temperature for weeks and it can stand normal shipping and handling. However, its viability rapidly declines at 120 degrees F. Most manufacturers of acidophilus recommend that acidophilus be stored in the refrigerator. But some acidophilus products are listed as non-refrigerated products. Consumers should refrain from purchasing any acidophilus products not stored in the refrigerator.

Consumers of acidophilus ask if they need to refrigerate the acidophilus prior to opening the bottle. The answer is yes. Acidophilus supplements must be kept refrigerated under 40 degrees F at all times. Some consumers have reported that they freeze their acidophilus. The advice is -- do not freeze acidophilus. Freezing may affect it.

During trips, when refrigeration is not possible, store the acidophilus in a cooler with ice. If ice is not available, keep the acidophilus in the coolest part of the room, preferably near an air conditioner. Remember, acidophilus will not spoil in a day or two if kept at room temperature.

### **Glass Bottle vs. Plastic Bottle**

Glass bottles are better than plastic bottles as plastic bottles are porous to some extent. Acidophilus packaged in plastic bottles can lose its potency and quality to some degree. For this reason, packaging of acidophilus in glass bottles is recommended.

### **Which Form Is Effective?**

Another commonly asked question is which form of acidophilus is the most effective. The form is really not the issue, rather what you are getting in the supplement. For example, DDS-Acidophilus is available in capsules, tablets, and powder forms. All these forms have 2 billion colony-forming units (CFU) per gram. So they are equally potent. The question is what form the consumer prefers. The capsules are the most popular. Because the tablets can be chewed, they are preferred by children as well as by many adults. The powder form is preferred by some people. However, others find it difficult to measure exact dosages with the powder. In addition, each time the powder bottle is opened, the contents are exposed to atmospheric contamination. The powder is oxidized, and it gets exposed to humidity as well as the contaminants in the atmosphere. The spoon used to measure the powder may add to the contamination if it is not sterile, as well as adding moisture to the powder. As you see, there can be rapid deterioration of powder when compared to capsules and tablets.

### **Guarantee/Assay**

Consumers sometimes wonder about the acidophilus guarantee on the label. Some products do not have a guarantee, some range from thousands to billions. Acidophilus products with one to two billion CFU are usually good. Doctors normally recommend 1 to 2 capsules containing 1 to 2 billion CFU for daily use.

The CFU count guarantee is based on the assay at the time of manufacturing. Consumers should avoid products without any guarantees. Some companies who show higher counts combine acidophilus with other bacteria. Higher numbers look better to consumers, and this is used as a marketing technique. Acidophilus is a slow-growing culture. Combining acidophilus with other fast-growing bacteria gives higher total numbers with very little expense.

### **Single Bacterium vs. Multiple Bacteria**

Selecting acidophilus products should be done carefully. If one bacterium is good, two or more are not necessarily better. Compatibility is an important factor. If the bacteria are not compatible, the supplement may not offer any benefits when it is ingested. While certain bacteria may be compatible, all strains of these bacteria may not be compatible. There is a great risk in combining many bacteria in one product unless compatibility and mutation studies are worked out thoroughly. It should also be mentioned that the ratio of the bacteria in combination products must be totally acceptable to the body.

### **Enteric Coating**

During the past two to three years, consumers of acidophilus have been misled by reports that acidophilus products need to be enteric-coated to survive stomach acid. This is not true.

It is appropriate to mention that we have some acidophilus in our intestines naturally. Where does it come from? It comes from the food we eat. We do not eat enteric-coated food. This illustrates that acidophilus survives stomach acid.

The advice is, use an acidophilus that survives stomach acid, implants in the intestines and multiplies there. It should produce lactic acid, hydrogen peroxide, and natural antibiotics.

Consumers of acidophilus should be careful of companies who want to sell their products with misleading statements, advertisements, and marketing gimmicks.

### **When to Take Acidophilus?**

It is a good practice to take acidophilus before a meal (on an empty stomach) since the stomach acid is the lowest at that time. This aids the acidophilus in passing through the stomach and implanting in the intestine.

## **Dosage**

Consumers ask frequently about the correct dosage. It depends on who is taking the acidophilus supplement and under what conditions the acidophilus supplement is taken. For example, in the case of DDS-Acidophilus, an adult should take two capsules or tablets, or 1/4 teaspoon of the powder daily on an empty stomach, preferably in the morning. The children's dosage is based on age and body weight. Those who have a yeast infection, or candidiasis, must take more as per the advice of doctors and nutritionists. Higher doses are recommended under conditions of digestive disorders following antibiotic therapy and other conditions when supplementation of acidophilus is necessary.

## **Dairy vs. Non-Dairy**

Consumers want to know the advantages and disadvantages of non-dairy acidophilus. Those who are allergic to milk and dairy products should use a non-dairy acidophilus. Doctors who specialize in candidiasis prefer non-dairy acidophilus because they find it has a great advantage over dairy acidophilus when they treat their patients with candidiasis problems. Since 70 to 80 percent of females and 30 to 40 percent of males have some degree of yeast infection, and many are allergic to milk and dairy products, it is a good idea to use non-dairy acidophilus.

## **Clinical Reports**

Documented clinical studies increases the chances that the product works. Dr. Keith W. Sehnert, a well-reputed alternative health care practitioner in Minneapolis, and the author of books such as *The Garden Within* and *Stress Unstress*, has done studies on acidophilus and found it to be effective against candidiasis (yeast infection), digestive disorders, constipation, bad breath, and acne problems.

He has also found beneficial effects of acidophilus in traveler's diarrhea. In this particular study, the 70 participants received 2 acidophilus capsules per day, for a week prior to the trip and during their trip to Nepal, Mexico, and Guatemala. Only 2 of the 70 participants experienced any digestive disorders. The usual incidence of traveler's diarrhea is about 20 to 30 percent. It is a good idea to take acidophilus when traveling to places where food and water may pose health problems.

## **Benefits of Acidophilus**

The beneficial effects of acidophilus have been recognized since 1908 by the Russian scientist Metchnikoff. Reviews of further studies show acidophilus:

1. Produces B vitamins.
2. Produces lactase enzymes and helps digest lactose.
3. Helps digest food and corrects digestive disorders.
4. Prevents bad breath.
5. Produces lactic acid, hydrogen peroxide and natural antibiotics.
6. Possesses anti-cholesteremic factors to reduce cholesterol.
7. Inhibits and reduces candidiasis (yeast infection).

### **Yogurt and Acidophilus**

Even now, many people believe that if they eat yogurt they do not have to take acidophilus. I wish it were true. The commercial yogurt which sits on the grocery store shelves for days should not be considered as a source of acidophilus. First, yogurt is not usually a source of acidophilus. Secondly, when yogurt sits for days, it produces acids which kill bacteria. So the yogurt does not serve as a source of friendly bacteria. On the other hand, home-made yogurt is a good source of beneficial bacteria. However, the amount it provides does not normally serve the purpose. Therefore the need for acidophilus supplementation exists.

### **Acidophilus Milk**

Acidophilus milk is advertised on radio and television, and is sold in some grocery stores. Consumers complain about the taste of acidophilus milk. There is also some question about the stability of acidophilus in milk. Like yogurt, acidophilus milk may not meet the dietary needs of acidophilus, and it will not serve the same purpose as an acidophilus supplement. However, it is a good idea to drink acidophilus milk in place of regular milk.

### **Conclusion**

In our world of antibiotics, chlorinated water, processed junk foods, and polluted environment, it is highly recommended that an acidophilus supplement be taken daily. Since all acidophilus products are not alike, it is important to depend on a product that is proven and effective.

*S.K. Dash, Ph.D.*

*Minneapolis, Minnesota*



Page printed from:

[http://www.chiroweb.com/mpacms/dc/article.php?id=44536&no\\_paginate=true&p\\_friendly=true&no\\_b=true](http://www.chiroweb.com/mpacms/dc/article.php?id=44536&no_paginate=true&p_friendly=true&no_b=true)