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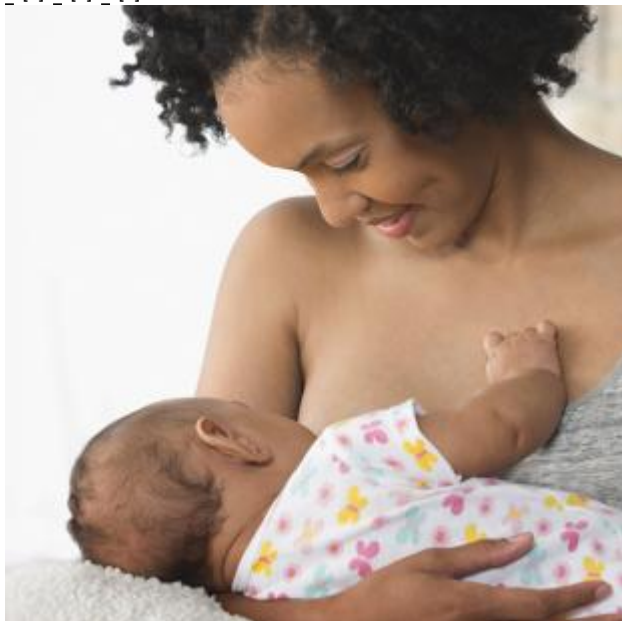


Sources of probiotics

By Charlotte Geroudet, Registered Dietitian

<https://www.nestlebaby.ca/en/probiotics/what-are-best-sources-your-infant> [1]

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An infant's gut naturally contains hundreds of species of good bacteria, more commonly referred to as the gut flora. This gut flora ensures that your baby's digestive and immune systems ^[6] work properly so that he or she stays healthy.

Why are probiotics important for my baby?

Several factors such as changes in diet, physical and emotional stress, weaker natural immunity, infections, or antibiotic treatments can upset the balance of your baby's gut flora, leading to digestive discomfort or colic. Probiotics ^[7] are good bacteria that help restore your child's gut flora. ^{[i],[ii]}

Probiotics are safe and beneficial for healthy babies and can be especially helpful for babies who are born by C-section, who are not exclusively breastfed, who are given antibiotics, or who tend to have tummy troubles. According to some studies, the gut flora of infants suffering from colic contain less good bacteria than the gut flora of other infants. The gut flora may even contribute to the development of colic, because lower levels of good bacteria (lactobacilli) have been observed in colicky infants. ^{[iii],[iv]} Looking for more information on colic? See managing colicky babies ^[8].

Where can we find these good bacteria?

Your breast milk ^[9] is very high in good bacteria (bifidobacteria) and fibre (oligosaccharides). This means that babies that are breastfed have more bifidobacteria and lactobacilli in their gut flora than babies fed with regular formula. The ever-changing composition of baby's gut flora ^[10] will continue to mature as their diet expands to include new and different foods. ^[v]

Probiotic supplements for infants and children are also available. They can be used to support and improve a baby's gut flora, which is beneficial for boosting immunity and fighting bad bacteria and toxins. ^[vi] For more information, see what to look for in infant probiotics products ^[11].

If you would like to give your baby probiotics, contact your family physician, pediatrician, or pharmacist for the right advice.

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Charlotte Geroudet is a member of the Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec. She has a degree in nutrition from Université Laval and a certificate in dietary techniques from Cégep de Limoilou. In 2010, she founded Nutrition Québec, a company that specializes in healthy weight management, child nutrition and the prevention of chronic illnesses. Charlotte is regularly asked by the media to discuss various nutrition topics; she is also a blogger, columnist, lecturer and co-author of two successful books. Her philosophy is to make principles of healthy eating accessible and appealing.

[i] Savino F, Bailo E, Oggero R et al. Bacterial counts of intestinal Lactobacillus species in infants with colic. *Pediatr Allergy Immunol* 2005;16(1):72-5.

[ii] Savino F, Cresi F, Pautasso S et al. Intestinal microflora in breastfed colicky and non-colicky infants. *Acta Paediatr* 2004;93(6):825-9.

[iii] Savino F, Bailo E, Oggero R et al. Bacterial counts of intestinal Lactobacillus species in infants with colic. *Pediatr Allergy Immunol* 2005;16(1):72-5.

[iv] Savino F, Cresi F, Pautasso S et al. Intestinal microflora in breastfed colicky and non-colicky infants. *Acta Paediatr* 2004;93(6):825-9.

[v] <https://www.cps.ca/fr/documents/position/probiotiques-au-sein-de-la-population-pediatrique#ref1>

[vi] <https://www.cps.ca/fr/documents/position/probiotiques-au-sein-de-la-population-pediatrique#ref1>

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