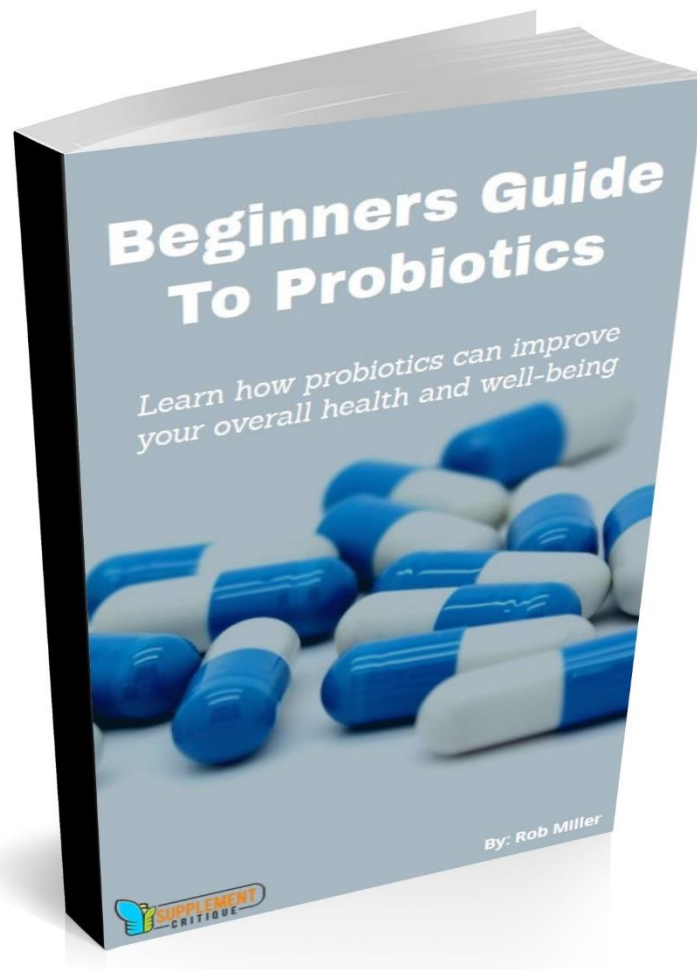




Beginners Guide to Probiotics



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The information provided in this ebook is intended as a guide to help you understand what probiotic supplements are, where they come from, their wide array of benefits, and more.

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Intro to Probiotics

While traditional Western medicine still dominates the healthcare industry in the United States and the rest of the developed world, there's been an infusion of the more Eastern philosophy of treating the patient rather than the disease into the mainstream.

To put it very generally, **there's a tendency in Western medicine to focus on ailments and the symptoms they cause**, paying less attention to the holistic notions of lifestyle and wellness.

Of course, focusing on diseases is important for developing the cures and vaccines that save lives, there's also room to factor in total body wellness.

In recent years, it's become more and more widely accepted that digestive health plays a big role in overall wellness.

Many alternative medicine experts believe that most health begins with gut health. **This is where probiotic pills come in.**

Since they have become so popular recently, there's certainly no shortage of probiotic pills being sold in stores like GNC, Walmart, Walgreens / CVS, and others.

I've personally reviewed (and even tested) many of them, and it's really opened my eyes to their potential.

First we're going to take a quick look at what probiotics are, why you should take them, where they come from, and what to look for when choosing the right pill for you.

We'll also discuss some of the more frequent myths associated with Probiotics, as well as examine some frequently asked questions I've personally gotten.

What Are Probiotics?

It's normal to think of bacteria as harmful to your body.

After all, we take antibiotics to kill off harmful bacteria when we're sick. But there are good bacteria as well, and your body is full of both kinds.

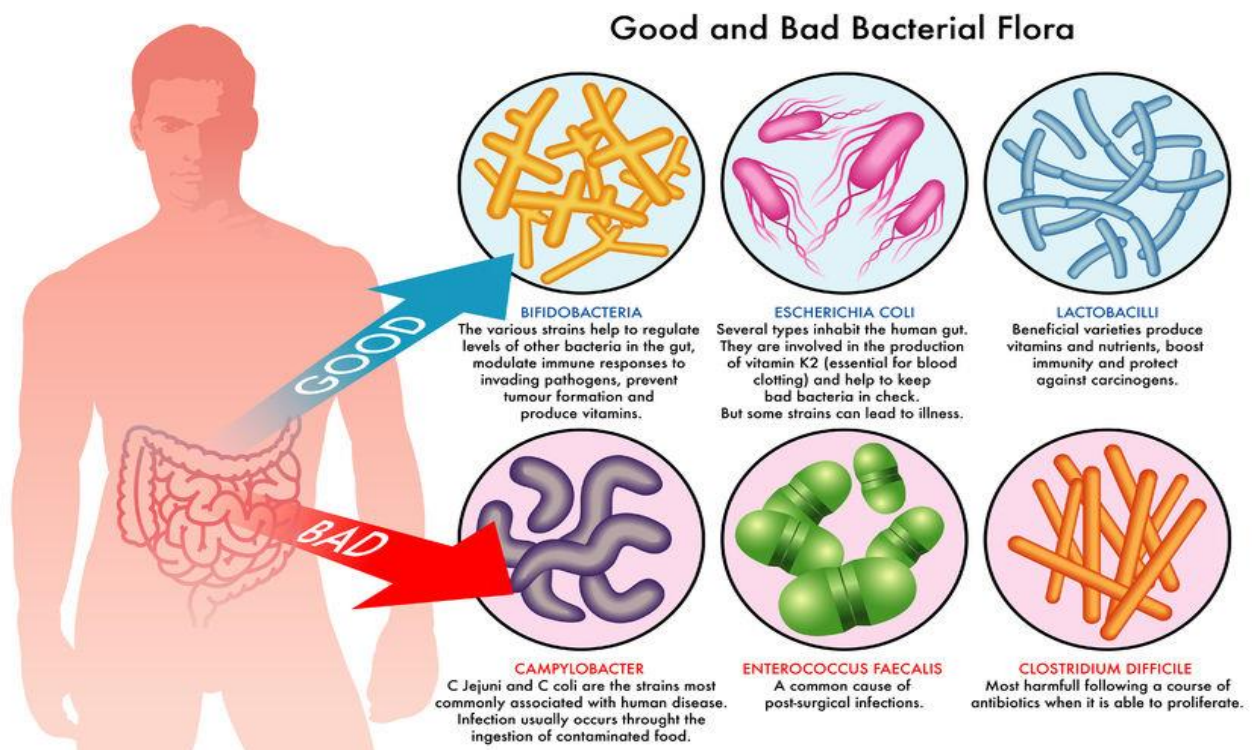
Sometimes the balance between good and bad changes, and you end up with a weakened or compromised digestive and/or immune system.

Taking antibiotics to treat an infection is a common cause for this unbalance.

When this is the case, probiotics can replenish and [bolster your supply of good bacteria](#), and you may be healthier as a result.

Probiotics are essentially live bacteria and yeasts that are good for your digestive system. ([Source](#))

You can find probiotics in some foods, and in a wide variety of over the counter supplements.





Why Take Probiotics?

Within your gut, there are trillions of bacteria – both “good” and “bad”. It’s believed that the correct balance is 80%/20% Good/Bad.

Probiotics can help maintain that balance.

Balancing and improving your gut health, it’s believed that you can improve your overall health and well-being, as well as target specific areas of concern, such as:

- Can help prevent and treat diarrhea, especially when taking antibiotics ([Source](#))
- Can improve some mental health conditions, especially depression ([Source](#))
- Improve heart health ([Source](#))
- Reducing the severity of certain allergies and eczema ([Source](#))
- Can help reduce symptoms of certain digestive disorders, especially Chron’s disease and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). ([Source](#))
- May help boost your immune system ([Source](#))
- May help aid in weight loss and reduce belly fat. ([Source](#))

The most common use for probiotics is to improve digestive health.

The gut is the key location of interaction between your body and what enters it from the outside world.

Populating it with good bacteria can ward off potential dangers before they get past this first line of defense.

Obesity is yet another condition that can be helped by adding good bacteria to your gut.

[Recent studies](#) show that obese people tend to have less diversity of gut flora than lean people.

A 2013 study determined that thin people have 70% more gut bacteria than overweight people.

This is a case as well where particular strains of bacteria are involved. Increased Firmicutes and decreased Bacteroidetes tend to be linked with obesity.

[Animal studies](#) show a connection between gut flora and mood.

It's not clear yet if this holds true for humans as well, but changing the composition and ratio of good bacteria to bad bacteria in mice changes their mood and their levels of anxiety.

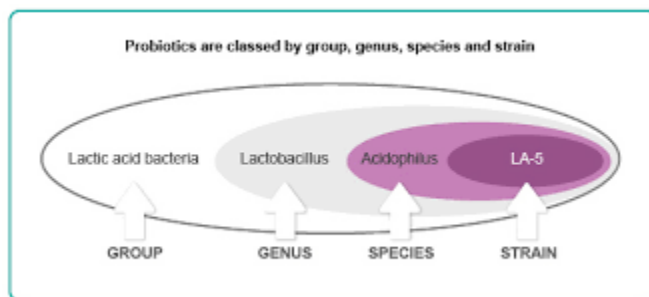
Skin conditions are also showing to be related to gut health.

The studies in this area are still very preliminary, but they have shown improvements in patients having acne issues after drinking a probiotic-rich drink, as well as a lessened chance of babies developing eczema when taking probiotics.

There are other conditions that can benefit from an increase in good bacteria in your gut.

This is just a small list of the most commonly discussed ones. Now let's talk about popular probiotic sources.

Where Do Probiotics Come From?



You can get probiotics either from food or from supplements.

When you think of [probiotics](#) in food, you probably think of yogurt (especially Greek yogurt) which is by far the most common food source.



Look on the label for words like “Active Yogurt Cultures” to indicate that probiotics are present.

Other foods that contain probiotics are Kefir (a cultured mild drink), certain aged cheeses, sauerkraut, some pickles, and soy based foods such as miso.

One of the problems with getting your probiotics from food is that the strains can be limited.

The different strains determine what particular conditions can benefit.

A supplement – if you choose the right one – can cover all the necessary bases far more easily than trying to get all the different strains from the food you eat.

What To Look For In A Probiotic Pill

Strains

When probiotic supplements first became popular in the mid to late 1990s, the most important factor in choosing a supplement was how many billions of bacteria were in the pill.

The term used is CFU ([Colonies Formed per Unit](#)).

Generally speaking, the more CFUs, the better.

These days, it's not uncommon to see numbers as high as 40 billion CFUs CFUs per capsule, or more.

But more recently, another number has taken precedence over, or has at least become as important as, just how many millions of bacteria there are.

This is the number of strains a particular pill has.

As we touched upon briefly above, different bacterial species and strains tend to be of benefit in different areas of health.



If you're just looking to improve overall health, you'll want to look for something with at least 3 different strains, probably more, covering different species to basically cover your bases.

Certain bacteria tend to live in certain sections of your gut, so by making sure you include several strains, you'll ensure a higher degree of effectiveness.

- The most common strain within the most common species is the **L Acidophilus strain in the Lactobacillus species**. This is the one you'll find in most yogurts with active cultures. It protects the walls of the intestines to ensure proper digestion and absorption of nutrients. This is most commonly used to ease digestive discomfort like gas, bloating, and diarrhea.
- **B Longum** is another common bacteria. The B indicates that it belongs to the **Bifidobacterium species**. It helps protect the gut walls which is an important defense against so many issues, and it searches out and rids your gut of toxins.
- **B Bifidum** lives in both intestines and is important for proper digestion of dairy products as well as carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. By breaking down foods into smaller components, the body is better able to absorb and use them.
- **L Rhamnosus** can be useful when you're traveling to a foreign country. It helps prevent diarrhea and other stomach discomfort brought on by "strange" foreign bacteria that's often introduced to your system during travel.
- **L Fermentum** is a Lactobacillus strain that helps contain some of the after effects of digestion. Certain byproducts can cause issues if not addressed. This is what L Fermentum takes care of.

There are tons of other strains to consider, most of which address particular concerns, so make sure to include them as factors in your choice.

Delivery Method

You can get probiotics from the foods you eat, and when you're starting out trying to increase your good bacteria, eating more probiotic rich food is a good place to start.

But making sure the probiotics you ingest are alive and active by the time they're in your gut can be a little tricky.

In the old days, you'd have to refrigerate your probiotics to keep them alive.

This is not usually necessary now, though you'll still want to protect your pills from exposure to light and heat.



At this point, the most widely preferred delivery mechanism is by capsule.

This method keeps the live bacteria safe from stomach acid so they can reach your intestines in their live state.

Prebiotics

Several of the newer formulations include prebiotics which essentially are food for probiotics.

They're fiber, and are generally supplied by the food you eat. But if you're not getting enough, it's possible to increase your intake by taking a probiotic pill that includes prebiotics



Probiotics Facts and Myths

The science and research behind probiotics and their symbiotic role with the biology of humankind has accelerated at a tremendous pace.

Specifically since the late 1990s, clinical trials of different strains of probiotics increasingly demonstrated positive results.

This core concept of immunology rewrote itself into the treatment of many different conditions, ranging from irritable bowel syndrome to depression.

In fact, [recent studies have shown](#) that over 80% of the human immune system actually originates from the intestinal flora.

This is populated with the traditional “bad” bacteria that we think of when we think of “antibiotics,” as well as these beneficial probiotics.

The balance of these different organisms is tantamount to good health.

These many trillions of living cellular entities coexist in a delicate balance that has implications system-wide inside the human body. It only makes sense, then, that it is very important to maintain a healthy balance of probiotic organisms in one’s intestinal flora if one wishes to reap the benefits that these bacteria have to offer.

Myth #1: All probiotics are the same

False. In fact, theoretically every single probiotic supplement you see on the shelves could be as unique as a snowflake. As a result, they can impact your overall health a number of different ways.

Does that mean you need to try out 3 dozen probiotic supplements to find which one is right for you?

Of course not.

But just know that you will experience a subtle (and sometimes dramatic) difference between probiotic supplements.

Myth #2: Yogurt is a good source of probiotics

False. In some cases this is true, but in many other cases the yogurt you have stocked in your fridge may not even contain ANY probiotics.

We talked about this earlier in the ebook, but it definitely needs to be further reiterated.

To find out if the yogurt you have been consuming for the last year has any probiotics, it should say something like “live and active cultures” on the ingredients label.



In many instances you can be doing more harm than good, as yogurt manufacturers will typically dump a ton of sugar into their supplements.

Myth #3: You don't need to supplement probiotics. You can just get them from your diet.

This is just patently false.

It's true that [there are several foods](#) that contain a good dose of probiotics.

As we mentioned earlier, foods like yogurt, sauerkraut, kimchi, and even pickles are a good source of probiotics.

However, the probiotic levels will vary wildly from batch to batch.



Unless you know exactly how the food was grown, there's no way to tell exactly how much you're getting.

All the more reason why you should take a probiotic supplement to be sure you're getting the proper amount.

Myth #4: You shouldn't take probiotics while taking Antibiotics

I'm bound to ruffle a few feathers with this one, but this is false.

The one thing that is true is that certain types of probiotics are killed by antibiotics, rendering them useless.

However, certain strains (namely *L. rhamnosus* Rosell-11 and *L. acidophilus* Rosell-52) CAN thwart any attack by anti-biotics.

This will help to reduce (or in some cases eliminate) any antibiotic associated diarrhea, especially in children. ([Source](#))

You just need to be sure you're taking in the *right* types of probiotics.

Again, this will take careful inspection of the label and any other resources you can find.

Myth 5: Probiotics Can Replace Medicine

This myth is just downright dangerous.

The fact that some nutritionists recommend this sometimes just straight up grinds my gears.

The whole purpose of a probiotic (or really any supplement) is to do just that....

Supplement your body with the things it may be missing from diet and environmental factors.



It's never recommended to completely replace a medication with probiotics, so don't even try it!

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Probiotics

Probiotics can be confusing to some. Here are a few of the most common questions we're asked about them.

Are Probiotics safe?

Probiotics are actually one of the most under-studied compounds. In terms of scientific evidence, there hasn't been a conclusive answer to this.

For example, in [a systematic review of 384 trials](#) of probiotics, prebiotics, and synbiotics, researchers found that:

- There was no harm related data reported for 106 trials.
- Safety results were not reported for 142 trials
- The number of serious adverse events per study group was not given for 309 of the studies.

Translation: *There isn't a wide swath of info available on the potential harms of probiotics.*

With that said, there is a TON of anecdotal evidence that suggests they're completely safe.



Are Probiotics good for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)?

Since there aren't a lot of treatment options for IBS, many turn to probiotics as a natural alternative.

While still skeptical, most doctors will recommend probiotics to their IBS patients, mainly because they don't seem to do any harm.

And the science to back up its potential is starting to appear in legit medical journals.

For example, [one study noted](#) a reduction in pain and global relief of IBS symptoms when compared to a placebo.

Translation: *It's worth giving them a shot.*

Can I take Probiotics if I'm pregnant or nursing?

Generally speaking, probiotics are considered safe to take while pregnant or nursing. With that said, if you experience any discomfort or side effects while taking a probiotic, it's best to discontinue use and check with your doctor to be totally sure.

Reference: <https://www.babycentre.co.uk/a1025252/probiotics-and-prebiotics-in-pregnancy>

Can I take Probiotics if I have high or low blood pressure?

There should be no issues with that. In fact, probiotics have shown promise in actually lowering blood pressure in some studies. ([Source](#))

If you're taking medications to treat low blood pressure, you should definitely monitor things to make sure your blood pressure doesn't drop too low.



Can I take Probiotics if I have diabetes?

In general, yes. There should be no issues taking probiotics if you have diabetes. In fact, one study conducted recently found that taking probiotics (along with a suitable diet) can actually lower your A1C by as much as 8.9%. ([Source](#))

Can I lose weight with Probiotics?

In short, it's possible. It's thought that certain types of probiotics can actually inhibit the absorption of dietary fat, and increase the amount of fat that you end up pooping out. ([Source](#))

Additionally, they can also help reduce the number of calories you take in by affecting your appetite and fat storage.

Can I take Probiotics with alcohol?

While it's best to avoid alcohol when taking nearly any supplement, you should be fine consuming a glass or two of wine or beer while taking probiotics.



Popular (and effective) Probiotic Supplements Sold In Stores

Now that you're armed with all the background information to make the right choices when selecting a probiotic, let's take a look at some of the most effective probiotics sold in stores.

Note: *I'm not associated with ANY of these supplements, and no one paid me to include them here.*

They're all included because I spent 2 weeks reading through countless reviews of probiotics sold on Amazon and other places.

Store #1 – GNC

It's often the first store we think of when we think about looking for a supplement, so it's a logical first choice here as well. After visiting my local store, here's a list of 4 top Probiotic pills at GNC.

Peptiva

Peptiva is actually a product [that we've personally tested](#), with great results.

It's actually a blend of probiotic and sleep aid, using a probiotic matrix of 26 billion cfu, as well as ingredients like GABA, Valerian root extract, immediate release melatonin, and delayed release melatonin.

Why did they do that?

Here's the story we got from Brandon Adcock, one of the founders of Peptiva:





“The project started as a blank slate for Dr. Katz to create the optimal probiotic. His thesis boils down to everyone is taking probiotics at the wrong time.

They’re taking them in the morning then dumping junk food, soda, stresses of the day, and everything else into their system which isn’t creating the optimal environment for the probiotic to work. So after further research, we found that one of the most common reasons people have trouble sleeping is because gut and intestinal issues.

Two of the most common items purchased at GNC with probiotics are melatonin and stress relief ingredients.

We decided that people didn’t even realize the connection and we need to pair the 2 together.

By combining the two, we can ensure the consumer is put into a restful state to create the optimal environment for the probiotic to work. The byproduct of this is that you also get a great night’s sleep.

The product made an in ultra-high end facility in the UK that uses a patented freeze drying process to lock in the stability of the probiotics.

Most probiotics labels their CFU count as “time of manufacturing”, which essentially means that when you buy it there is no guarantee about what you’re going to get.

On top of the sleep angle and that we’re using clinically studied probiotic strains at the specific clinically studied dose, we guarantee a CFU count, at the time of expiration (18 months), even at room temperature storage.

This requires a lot more investment and drives up the price of the product. If you look at all of the large low cost probiotic brands, they are all labeled as “time of manufacturing”.

We don’t believe in this want to guarantee a standard that our customer will get. Based on storage, timing, and heat conditions, those probiotics may only have 10% of label claim left when a customer buys them.

This a huge problem with probiotics that most consumers don’t understand.”

Where To Buy Peptiva

You can find Peptiva for sale on their official website, www.Peptiva.com, or in GNC.

On their website, you can pick up a 1 month supply for \$49.99.

At GNC, it retails for around \$59.99.

Clearly ordering off their site is going to be the cheaper option, and they also offer discounts for larger orders

GNC Ultra Probiotic Complexes

Rather than being just one supplement, this is a line of supplements.

GNC appears to have taken the approach that different customers are looking for different things.

While it might be best to offer one supplement that does it all, this is a valid approach as well.

It allows customers to make smart choices in terms of what's valuable to them.

Among the choices included in this line are:

- **GNC Ultra Probiotic Complex 25** contains 25 billion CFUs, so it's decent number but not incredibly high.



It contains 2 strains – Acidophillus and Bifidobacterium, so they're at the bare minimum there for improved digestive issues.

This one would be best for someone just getting their feet wet with probiotics.

It's enough to be beneficial, but won't really target any serious issues. It



costs \$34.99 for a 30 day supply of 30 capsules.

- **GNC Multi-Strain Probiotic Complex 10 Billion CFUs** is another version of an entry level formula.

The price is much lower at \$39.99 for a 3 month supply of 90 capsules, due to lowering the total number of CFUs to 10 billion, while spreading it out among different strains, realizing that some people place a higher importance on the number of strains than on the number of bacteria.

It uses 8 different strains, including L Acidophillus and B Bifidum, as well as several other members of the Lactobacillus species to focus on improved digestion.

- **GNC Ultra 25 Billion CFUs Probiotics Complex Multi-Strain** combines the best of both worlds with a higher CFU number along with the same multiple strains as the 10 Billion CFU version.

The regular price is not much more than the 10 Billion CFU Multi-Strain so it would seem to be a no brainer to upgrade to this one if you want to go multi-strain, especially considering that right now there's a sale that brings the non-member price all the way down to \$31.99.

- **GNC Ultra Probiotic Complex 100** has the highest CFU number and a bit of multi-strain action as well. It's got Acidophilus and Bifidum, as well as a smaller multi-strain blend of L Sativarius, B Lactis, and L Rhamnosus. It comes in very expensive at \$49.99 for just 20 capsules.

These are the main GNC named formulas that come in capsule form.

They have a few other options as well, designed to address specific issues, like lack of energy and immune system support.

The additional benefits don't come from additional probiotic strains or species though. They come from different herbs and nutrients, like Vitamin B12 and Guarana in the case of the Energy Formula.

There are also different delivery forms, like chewable and powder packets, but I'd recommend sticking with the capsules for now to make sure you get all the benefit you can from live bacteria.

ProbioSlim

Made by the same company that promotes the Force Factor line of supplements like [Force Factor 2](#), [Test X180](#), and [VolcaNO](#), Probioslim is one of the most popular probiotic pills sold in GNC.

This one is a little different in that it doesn't list CFUs when it comes to its probiotic content.



Its formula is a proprietary blend that includes something called LactoSpore Bacillus Coagulans.

This is where the probiotic support comes from, but you can't really tell what that really entails as far as how much actual support you're getting.

The promo page talks about digestive support and relief from issues like gas, bloating, and diarrhea, along with weight loss support from Caffeine, Green Tea, and other Fruit Extracts.

In fact, it's very similar in nature to a completely different supplement [called Bio X4](#), by Nucific.

ProbioSlim sells at GNC for \$69.99 for a one month supply, **although you can actually find it MUCH cheaper** at Walmart for as low as \$19.88.

If what you're looking for is really a probiotic and not a weight loss pill, I'd choose something with a CFU and strain listing so you know what you're getting.

We have a [ProbioSlim review here](#) if you want more information on how it might be useful as a fat burner.

Renew Life Formulas Ultimate Flora MEGA POTENT 150 Billion

This one calls itself the most potent probiotic support available in a single capsule.

Its two primary focuses are digestive and immune support.

To accomplish this goal, it contains 150 billion live cultures spanning across 40 strains, mostly but not completely in the Bifido and Lacto species.



It comes in an enteric coated vegetarian capsule for the best chance of survival all the way to your intestines.

The 30 count package will last a month and comes in at \$69.99.

All the prices I've given for GNC products are the Non-Member prices.

If you plan to buy from GNC with any regularity, you should consider paying the \$15 a year to become a member.

You save about \$5 on each of the products we've talked about here.

Store #2 – Walmart

Walmart is easy, cheap, and convenient for almost everyone, so it would be a mistake to skip over it when looking for a viable probiotic supplement or two.

Most of the choices are on the low end of the price scale, but don't be surprised if you find the occasional higher end probiotic.

The below probiotic pills at Walmart are some of the most highly rated and reviewed, and we chose them for their apparent effectiveness.

Related Article: [14 Best Weight Loss Pills At Walmart](#)



Align Probiotic Supplement Capsules

Align is one of the best known probiotic brands, and this product is the flagship original product.

It's pretty weak compared with some of the options at GNC with only 1 billion CFUs, and they're all of the strain B Infantis which is supposed to provide excellent digestive system support.

At \$35.24 for a 6 week supply, the price is right.

However, I think this one needs to revamp its formula and increase both its strains and its CFUs to keep up with the latest products out there.

Florastor

Florastor is another popular choice available at Walmart.

In fact, it's the number one probiotic supplement worldwide.

It provides 5 billion CFUs, and it's all one strain – *Saccaromyces Boulardii*, which is known to support the digestive process.

The recommended dose is 1 capsules per day, so the 50-count package will last a little more than a month and a half if you take it as recommended.

It costs \$42.78.

It's widely recommended by doctors and gets very good reviews.

TruBiotics One A Day



TruBiotics is an especially inexpensive option from Walmart.

Its CFU count is low at 1.5 billion, but it spreads it out between the popular L Acidophilus and B Bifidum for optimal digestive health.

The recommended dose is 1 capsule per day, but at the price, you might want to consider doubling up on that dose to get greater benefit.

A 30 day supply at the recommended dose is \$14.97.

Even if you did double your dose, the price would come in at just about \$30 a month.

Because the price and the CFU count were so low, I checked the customer feedback, and it's almost all positive.

Reviewers talk mainly about relief from gas and bloating, as well as all types of stomach pain.

The biggest issue I have with the Walmart choices is:

- They don't talk about CFUs and strains, or
- If they do talk about them, they're very low compared to what's available out there, like at GNC for instance.

It could be that until more of the population catches on to the potential benefits of probiotics, these Walmart options may continue to rule the market.

Store #3 – CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, and Grocery Stores

We lumped this group of stores together because in most cases, they all provide the same options.

They don't tend to be the highest end products; they're more inclined to sell the most popular, and at prices somewhat higher than what you'll find at Walmart.

Phillips' Colon Health

You can get Phillip' Colon Health at CVS and RiteAid in particular for about \$24.99 for a 60-count which should last 2 months.

That's based on the recommended dose of just 1 pill a day.

It's got 1.5 Billion CFUs across 3 strains – Lactobacillus Gasseri, B Bifidum, and B Longum, all good for digestive health and issues like diarrhea, constipation, gas, and bloating.



CVS and RiteAid customers who offer feedback all give this one 5-stars, citing how fast it works, how healthy it's kept them, and how it just plain works.

Again, according to recommendations, the CFUs and strains are low, but perhaps there's more benefit than we realize from the lower dose options.

Nature's Bounty Probiotic 10 Advanced Ultra Strength Capsules



Nature's Bounty Probiotic 10 Advanced Ultra Strength Capsules ups the ante of the drugstore brands by providing 20 Billion CFUs over 10 different strains.

With that kind of power, the focus is split between digestive health and immune function support.

Unlike most probiotics, the recommended dose of this one is 2 capsules, which means the 60-count package for \$22.99 at Rite Aid will last 30 days.

This is probably the best price we've seen for this level of bacteria.

The 10 strain lineup is pretty impressive and includes L Plantarum, B Bifidum, L Rhamnosus, L Bulgaricus, L Saliarius, L Brevis, L Acidophilus, B Lactis, B Paracasei, and L Casei, most of which pertain to improved digestion with a touch of immune support as well.

Nature Made Digestive Probiotics Advanced



Nature Made Digestive Probiotics Advanced is at Walgreens and CVS.

Its claim to fame is that it works in both the small and large intestines using 12 Billion CFUs across 2 different strains: B Lactis and L Plantarum.

The capsules are vegetarian and gluten-free, and the recommended dose is 2 capsules per day, both at the same time.



That makes the 60-count package costing \$24.99 last a month.

Again, the reviews are good.

Customers are excited that they don't suffer with gas and bloating anymore, and when they compare it with eating yogurt, they say the effect is very noticeably different.



Conclusion / Recommendation

I hope you learned something from reading this guide. For the longest time, I was actually never a huge proponent of taking probiotics.

This was due to the fact that, most of the times I tried them, I would end up feeling sick, nauseous, and have an upset stomach.

It wasn't until after I learned that those effects I was feeling were actually proof that they were working did I change my tune.

If you have any questions on anything in this ebook, [feel free to email me here](#).

We're always here to help!