

## Use of Probiotics in Atopic Diseases

### Question

Recently, a lot has been written about the benefits of probiotics in preventing atopic diseases. What type of lactobacillus is found in yogurt? Is it the same as lactobacillus GG? Would early feeding of yogurt help in inducing Th1 response?



### Response from James E. Gern, MD

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Although the types of bacteria found in yogurt can vary, the traditional yogurt starter cultures consist of *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* subsp. *bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*.<sup>[1]</sup> These bacteria are distinct from the probiotic lactobacillus GG. Some studies have compared the immunomodulating activities of probiotics and yogurt. For example, one controlled study found that oral consumption of lactobacillus led to a small reduction in the number of potentially pathogenic bacteria in the nasal cavity, and this effect was not seen with yogurt.<sup>[2]</sup> There is currently great interest in the potential for probiotics and/or fermented foods, such as yogurt, to promote immune development, and also as a supplementary treatment for a broad range of infectious and inflammatory diseases.<sup>[3]</sup> The greatest potential for benefit appears to be in the areas of infections or inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract, and for the prevention of allergic disorders. A number of clinical research trials are now ongoing, and these new efforts should help to determine whether these agents, which are generally regarded as safe, truly have health benefits.

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### References

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2. Gluck U, Gebbers JO. Ingested probiotics reduce nasal colonization with pathogenic bacteria (*Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, and beta-hemolytic streptococci). *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2003;77:517-520. [Abstract](#)

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