

Probiotics ease IBS symptoms

Although not much is known about the cause of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), treatment protocols are well established, and a good-quality, daily probiotic can help decrease the symptoms.



Professor Leon Dicks

Professor Leon Dicks, head of the probiotic and antimicrobial peptide lab in the department of microbiology at Stellenbosch University, explains that the micro-organisms found in probiotics support good gut flora. "IBS is characterised by a variety of symptoms including abdominal pain and cramping, bloating, diarrhoea and most cases of IBS go undiagnosed as sufferers would rather not consult their physicians about the symptoms. New research into the causes of IBS suggest changes to the brain-gut messaging; stretching and contractions of the muscles in the gut; and, a general increase in pain experienced."

Women are more likely than men to suffer from IBS and that the syndrome rarely occurs in people older than 50. "Those who have family members suffering from IBS should be cautious, as this may increase their risk of developing the syndrome.

IBS, in most cases, is a chronic condition and is rarely completely cured, although symptoms can become less severe if the correct treatment is undertaken, he explains. "The symptoms are not only physical, but can also cause stress as sufferers are in frequent pain or discomfort. The syndrome can also cause anxiety as bowel movements become unpredictable and difficult to control."

Research has established a link between a dysfunction of the bacteria in the gut, known as gut flora, and the onset of IBS. "Disruption to the fine balance between gut flora and the body may be caused by a number of factors, including the use of antibiotics or a bout of gastroenteritis."

"Although there are many probiotics on the market, it is important to ensure that you take a good quality probiotic which

treats and protects both the small and large intestine. Probiotics have no real negative side effects and are therefore a safe course of action in the management of IBS," he concludes.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>