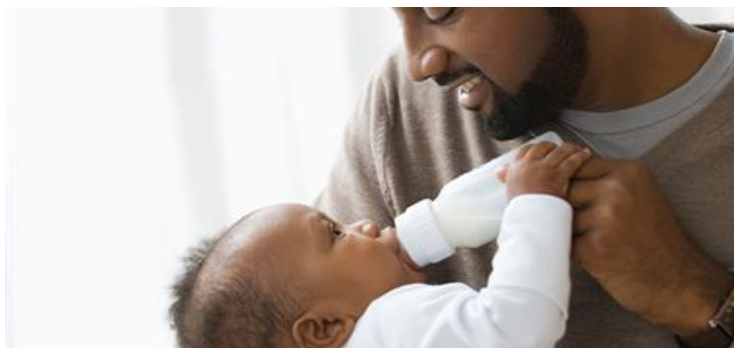




Probiotics in Infant Formula

"Probiotics" (meaning "for life") is a word you may see when shopping for infant formula (</English/ages-stages/baby/formula-feeding/Pages/choosing-an-infant-formula.aspx>) and supplements. Some formulas are fortified with these probiotics, which are types of live bacteria. Doctors may also recommend probiotic drops or powders for breastfed infants. These are "good" or "friendly" bacteria already present at high levels in the digestive system of breastfed babies.

In formula-fed babies, probiotics in formulas promote a balance of bacteria in your baby's intestines, and offset the growth of "unfriendly" organisms that could cause infections and inflammation.



Increasingly, parents can find probiotic supplements outside of formula, including for breastfed infants. Research on the benefits of probiotics is ongoing, with some pediatricians embracing their use for infants delivered by C-section or those whose mothers are given antibiotics during labor.

Possible health benefits of probiotics

The most common types of probiotics are strains of bifidobacteria and lactobacilli. Some research has shown these probiotics may prevent or treat disorders such as infectious diarrhea (</English/tips-tools/symptom-checker/Pages/symptomviewer.aspx?symptom=Diarrhea>) and atopic dermatitis (eczema) in children. Other possible health benefits are being studied as well, including the possibility of reduced risk of food-related allergies and asthma, prevention of urinary tract infections, and relief of symptoms of infant colic (</English/tips-tools/symptom-checker/Pages/symptomviewer.aspx?symptom=Crying+Baby+-+Before+3+Months+Old>).

More research is needed

With many of these health conditions, the evidence confirming any positive effects of probiotic use is limited and more research is needed. At this time, benefits appear to occur only as long as probiotics are being taken. Once your baby stops consuming probiotic-fortified formula, intestinal bacteria levels return to previous levels. This is different from in breastfed infants, where the bacteria in the gut resulting from breastfeeding (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/Breastfeeding-Benefits-Your-Babys-Immune-System.aspx>) are more resilient and set the stage for healthier outcomes.

Remember

Before giving your child infant formula fortified with probiotics, discuss the issue with your pediatrician

More information

- Choosing a Formula (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Choosing-a-Formula.aspx>)
- Probiotics and Prebiotics in Pediatrics (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2010/11/29/peds.2010-2548.abstract>) (AAP Clinical Report)

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