**Healthy people who drink probiotic drinks full of 'good bacteria' wasting their time, according to report**

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* **By** Tony Whitfield

**A new Danish study has found that the 'good' bacteria and yeast actually has very little effect on the gut in healthy adults**

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Drinking probiotics was not shown to have health benefits in ordinary people

Healthy who believe consuming yoghurts, drinks or pills containing "friendly" bacteria in the belief they are [good](http://www.mirror.co.uk/all-about/immune-system) for them may be wasting their time, a study has found.

It has long been believed probiotics have various health benefits such as boosting the immune system, reducing stress, improving sleep and helping with weight loss.

But a new Danish study has found that the 'good' bacteria and yeast actually has very little effect on the gut in healthy adults.

Researchers found that probiotics did some work in helping restore the natural balance of bacteria in the gut in people who had suffered illness or disease.

But the proibiotics did little to change the bacteria composition in the stools of otherwise healthy people.

Researchers at the Novo Nordisk Foundation Centre for Basic Metabolic Research at the University of Copenhagen carried out a systematic review of seven randomised controlled trials.

These investigated the effect of probiotic products on the gut flora of healthy adults by testing their stools.

They looked the number of species present, the evenness or distribution of species within the populations and whether participants who took probiotics had different changes in bacteria living in their gut than those who did not.

PhD student and junior author Nadja Buus Kristensen said: "According to our systematic review, no convincing evidence exists for consistent effects of examined probiotics on faecal microbiota composition in healthy adults, despite probiotic products being consumed to a large extent by the general population.

**Read more:** [What does your gut do and how can you keep your digestive system healthy?](http://www.mirror.co.uk/lifestyle/health/what-your-gut-how-can-6164204)

They looked at the relationship between probiotic products and the composition of the faecal microbiota in healthy people using explicit, systematic methods, ensuring the highest level of evidence."

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Yoghurt comes with 'good' bacteria that claims to restore the balance of the gut

The study analysed seven original trials of healthy adults aged 19 to 88, each of which examined between from 21 to 81 individuals, who ate probiotic biscuits, milk-based drinks, sachets, or capsules over three to six weeks.

Only one observed significantly greater changes in the bacterial species composition of the faecal microbiota in individuals who consumed probiotics compared to those who did not.

Previous studies had suggested common disorders like obesity, diabetes, or bowel cancer unbalances the faecal microbiota.

While their effectiveness in metabolic and gastrointestinal disorders can be measured for example against body mass index, insulin resistance or the severity of gastrointestinal symptoms, measuring the effect of probiotics in healthy individuals was more difficult.

Yet the study noted because of the small number of participants, the effect on individuals, differing strains and diet may have masked the true impact of probiotic intake.

Senior author Professor Oluf Pedersen said: "While there is some evidence from previous reviews that probiotic interventions may benefit those with disease-associated imbalances of the gut microbiota, there is little evidence of an effect in healthy individuals.

"To explore the potential of probiotics to contribute to disease prevention in healthy people there is a major need for much larger, carefully designed and carefully conducted clinical trials.

"These should include ideal composition and dosage of known and newly developed probiotics combined with specified dietary advice, optimal trial duration and relevant monitoring of host health status."

The study was published in the journal Genome Medicine.