

Protect your immune system with probiotics

With sudden spurt of advertisements about health supplements available in the market, probiotic drinks are one of them. Probiotic drinks are full of 'good' bacteria and act as an immunity booster with several health benefits.

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WHEN we talk about bacteria, it certainly triggers a fear of many diseases associated with it. Dr SK Thakur, consultant, Gastroenterology, Institute of Gastrosciences from Moolchand Hospital said, "The intestine has the 'good' bacteria and the 'bad' bacteria. It is extremely important to keep a balance between these two for maintaining good health. There are many factors that can disturb the balance between these two as it helps in keeping diseases at bay. Probiotics are a source of 'good' bacteria for the human body." The beneficial bacteria play an important role in maintaining overall health by:

- Promoting a healthy digestion
- Decreasing the production of harmful substances or toxins
- Ensuring proper absorption of nutrients
- Producing vitamins.

One of the most famous probiotic drinks that have become extremely famous amongst masses is Yakult. It is a probiotic fermented milk drink that contains a special strain of beneficial bacteria called Lactobacillus casei strain Shirota that reaches the intestine



to help improve intestinal function and build immunity. It contains skimmed milk powder, carbohydrates in the form of sugar, natural identical flavours and 6.5 billion Lactobacillus casei strain Shirota.

Role of probiotics

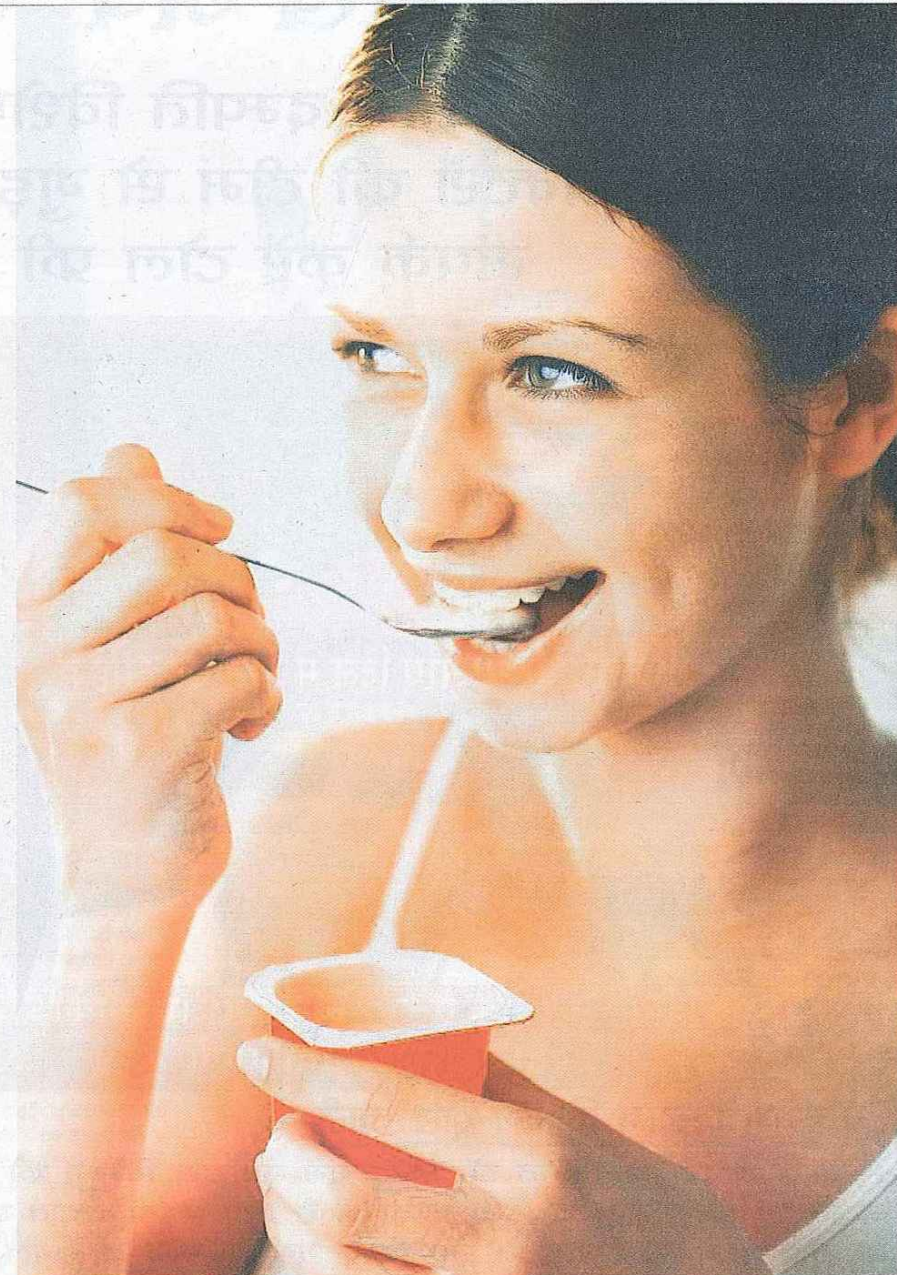
Dr Neerja Hajela, PhD, Head science at Yakult Danone India (P) Ltd said, "A healthy intestinal system is the key to good health and longevity. However statistics show that one-third of the urban Indian population is prey to digestive disorders and various lifestyle ailments. Ever increasing stress, irregular eating habits, excessive travelling, indiscriminate

use of antibiotics, high alcohol consumption, high intake of packaged and processed food and pollution are all factors that contribute to this alarming trend.

Benefits

Regular consumption of probiotic foods and drinks benefit in the following ways:

- Restore the balance of the intestinal flora
- Strengthen the intestine for better digestion of food
- Absorption of nutrients
- Building of defense system
- Protects from diseases and infection



Points to remember

With more than 70 % of the immune cells located in the intestine, they also play an important role in building immunity and protecting us from infection. Therefore an appropriate balance of the intestinal flora is crucial for good health. But one has to map

the consumption limit as well as too much of anything spoils the broth. Dr Neerja added, "One bottle per day is recommended, however children enjoy the taste and sometimes consume two or three bottles also. Yakult has no side effects and is backed by more than 75 years of scientific research for its safety and efficacy."