



Dr. Drew Sinatra: In today's **Wellness Wisdom** segment, we're going to focus on probiotics. When patients see me in my practice, they often leave with a prescription to take probiotics. Probiotics are strains of bacteria that support your health. The term probiotic literally means “pro,” for in support of, and “biotic,” pertaining to living organisms. Probiotics help keep our gut microbiome in balance, and since gut health is directly related to so many other systems in the body, adding a probiotic to your daily routine just makes good sense.

But to get the full benefits of probiotics, you need to take the right ones in the right amount. But, when you walk into a store looking for a probiotic, it's hard not to feel overwhelmed as you look at the dozens of probiotics on the shelf, or in the refrigerator section. How do you know which one to pick? Which one would help you the most? And do the strains and dose really matter? Without knowing a lot about probiotics, it can be daunting trying to choose one that will work well for your individual needs.

And it's sad to say, but not every probiotic on the market is guaranteed to have high potency and research-driven strains available in each capsule, as probiotics differ tremendously in how they are produced, including: manufacturing practices, potency, CFU count, strains, and research claims. One may be very effective, while another may be a waste of money. So, here are some of my top tips for how to choose the right probiotic, without relying on marketing appeal — like how cool the bottle looks!

Live at production versus live at expiration: When a probiotic is manufactured, the CFU, colony-forming unit count, also known as probiotic count or potency, is either guaranteed at the time of production or the time of expiration. I suggest choosing a probiotic that guarantees the CFU count at the time of expiration, as this will give you more confidence knowing that the probiotic will still contain the CFU count listed on the label at the time of expiration.

Variety of species: There are three basic classes of probiotics to look for on the label, and I typically recommend the combination of all three: lactic acid-producing bacteria such as lactobacillus or bifidobacterium species; yeast-based probiotics such as *Saccharomyces boulardii* or *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*; soil-based organisms or spore-forming probiotics, such as bacillus species.

CFU, colony-forming unit count: I like to suggest a probiotic that contains at the very least two billion CFUs or organisms.

Alphanumeric strains: I suggest choosing a probiotic with letters and/or numbers following the strain, as this tells you that particular strain was used in research.



Guaranteed delivery: One option I like is the DRcaps Smart Capsules, delayed release delivery system, which protects the probiotics from the low acidity of the stomach and allows the probiotics to be more effectively delivered to the intestines, where they are needed.

Other ingredients: I suggest choosing a probiotic with the minimal amount of ingredients possible, like unnecessary dyes, colors, preservatives, sugar, or other compounds that may not be good for you.

Type of packaging and storage: You'll want to choose a bottle that is opaque. Clear bottles allow light in, which can damage the probiotics. Remember, probiotics are composed of live organisms, and factors such as light exposure can render them inactive over time. Also, I wanted to note that it's not necessary to pick a probiotic from the refrigerated section.

Hopefully these tips will help you narrow down the options, and choose the right probiotic for you when you head to the store.

Narrator:

Thank you for joining us for today's special **Be HEALTHistic**. Join us next week for more **Wellness Wisdom** from the Doctors Sinatra.