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Is Your Flora Set To Replace Probiotics As The Best Way To Improve Gut Health And Boost Immunity?

Your health is largely dependent on good digestion – and good digestion in turn depends on a healthy gut. In fact your gut is believed to be responsible for as much as 80 per cent of your immune system response.

Good digestion is closely linked to the balance between 'good' and 'bad' bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract, particularly in terms of making sure that the latter do not dominate at the expense of the former. This delicate balance can soon become upset by several factors including the use of antibiotics, poor nutrition and stress. This can result in digestive problems such as bloating, gas, abdominal pain, diarrhoea and/or constipation.

Probiotic supplements, which contain live preparations of beneficial gut bacteria, can help re-establish the right balance of beneficial organisms in your gut and alleviate digestive problems. However, the probiotic you're taking may not be in tune with what your body needs, as each one of us has our own unique intestinal balance of bacteria and yeasts; a living ecosystem which is continually evolving and adapting to its environment. As a result it is difficult to predict exactly what specific strains your body requires.

Some people take large doses of probiotics with the aim of populating the gut with 'friendly bacteria'. However, quality – not quantity – may be the key factor. And large doses of bacteria are unlikely to survive in an environment that does not support them; they might even displace some of the more delicate and beneficial microflora and upset the balance still further.

But if the environment is healthy for micro-organisms to thrive, just a few bacteria can quickly become trillions. One of the most effective approaches to supporting your individual and complex microflora is to consume fermented foods like kefir, sauerkraut, miso and tempeh – which contain naturally-evolved bacteria in a wholefood environment that helps them grow and thrive. But getting enough of these foods in your diet is not always easy.

Fortunately, a new microbiotic supplement called Your Flora, from Living Nutrition, contains a blend of all-natural ingredients that naturally adapt to and support your individual ecosystem and promote gut health. The formula contains fermented organic nutrients – including artichoke leaf, baobab, chicory root and soya bean – in addition to eight strains of health-giving live micro-organisms: *Lactobacillus kefir*, *Lactobacillus lactis*, *Lactococcus lactis*, *Leuconostoc mesenteroides*, *Acetobacter aceti*, *Kluyveromyces marxianus*, *Saccharomyces unisporus* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*.

Your Flora is created using a traditional 'batch fermentation' process

The organic nutrients in Your Flora are mixed together and then fermented using kefir grains – a combination of lactic acid bacteria and yeasts in a matrix of proteins, lipids and sugars. Kefir fermentation has been used for its health-giving properties for centuries and is claimed to be much more potent than simple bacterial fermentations such as yoghurt.

Kefir fermentation produces micro-organisms that can prevent gut inflammation^{1, 2} and can significantly increase the number of lactic acid bacteria and other beneficial microbes.^{3, 4}

The Your Flora fermentation process can take up to a month and is closely monitored to ensure that the

finished product is packed full of healthy microflora, enzymes and nutrients. To preserve this living complex of micro-organisms, the ingredients are freeze-dried. This keeps everything fresh and the delicate nutrients intact. The finished product is encapsulated and bottled avoiding any heat or pressure on the ingredients. And nothing else is included in terms of preservatives, fillers, binders or additives.

Nutritional therapist Graham Botfield, founder of Living Nutrition, says: “This synergistic blend of micro-organisms within a fermented matrix of wholefoods offers a healthier and more natural alternative to the standard mega-dose probiotics using synthetically grown bacteria.

“Our processes capture the living essence of foods, creating bioactivated nutritional complexes that the body intuitively recognises and utilises to maximum effect. We believe only nature provides the active nutrients the body recognises and responds to. All ingredients come from real foods and each manufacturing process follows traditional methods. The most potent benefit is that the product is literally alive.”

Fermented organic nutrients combined with 8 ‘beneficial’ strains of bacteria set the stage for total gastrointestinal health

There is a growing body of evidence that fermented soya, like that contained in Your Flora, can increase the diversity of all live ‘beneficial’ micro-organisms by 10 times or more. Better still, soya combined with kefir has been found to significantly increase the numbers of bifidobacteria and lactobacilli in the gut and appears to enhance resistance to gastrointestinal infections.⁵

Artichoke has been included in the formula as it encourages liver function and bile flow. Bile can break down the defences of harmful pathogens such as *Candida albicans* and *E. coli*. The bitters in artichoke, which are even stronger when fermented, encourage all digestive processes, including enzyme production – enzymes help your body break down and absorb health-giving nutrients from the food you eat.

Baobab has long been prized in Africa for its nutritional content and has recently been touted as a super food and with good reason... it’s a rich source of antioxidants and other health-giving nutrients. Fermented baobab complements the other ingredients in Your Flora by preventing damage to the intestinal wall and encouraging a healthy environment in which the micro-organisms can live and flourish.

Chicory is a prebiotic. It contains inulin and fructooligosaccharides, which foster the growth of probiotic ‘good’ intestinal bacteria and inhibit potentially ‘harmful’ bacteria. Chicory helps the eight beneficial strains of ‘good’ bacteria included in Your Flora to survive their journey to the gut and to thrive in their new location.

What to take for best results

The recommended dose for Your Flora is one to two capsules a day.

Your Flora is free from wheat, gluten and dairy and is suitable for vegetarians and vegans. It has no known side effects or contraindications.

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5. Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture 2006