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Candida and Probiotics

This site has been posted by [a patient](#) to provide information about chronic candida, a group of symptoms which appears to be caused by the overgrowth of the yeast *Candida albicans* in the gastrointestinal tract. The patient database lists symptoms and treatment results submitted by visitors to this site.

Information on Chronic Candida:

1. [Candida albicans](#) described.
2. [Candida-Related Complex\(CRC\)](#) described; also known as the yeast syndrome and chronic candida.
3. [Small Bowel Bacterial Overgrowth\(SBBO\)](#), a condition similar to chronic candida.
4. [Somatization disorder](#), a diagnosis often applied to individuals with the symptoms of chronic candida.

Probiotics information:

1. [History of probiotic research](#)
2. [Summary of probiotic strains](#)
3. [Lactobacillus GG](#), the probiotic strain with perhaps the most medical support.
4. [Lactobacillus plantarum 299v](#), another strain with proven benefits.

Research issues on chronic candida:

1. [An unambiguous definition of chronic candida](#)
2. [Research done on chronic candida](#), and what needs to be done.
3. [The Food and Drug Administration](#) and their role in investigating reports of adverse drug reactions to antibiotics, such as chronic candida.

Patient Database:

1. [Submit your profile](#) -- if you have tried anti-candida remedies to treat symptoms, please share your experiences(successful or not) with others. If you already have a profile, you can [update it](#).
2. [Patients Table](#) -- view the age, sex, and comments of those who have entered information into the database
3. [Symptoms Table](#) -- view a list of all the symptoms visitors have reported
4. [Antibiotics Table](#) -- view a list of all the antibiotics visitors report having, taken prior to becoming ill
5. [Medications Table](#) -- view a list of prescription and non-prescription medications visitors report having taken to treat their symptoms, and their results
6. [Practitioners Table](#) -- view a list of practitioners(physicians and others) visitors have

reported seeing for their symptoms

7. [Diet Table](#) -- view a list of foods visitors have eliminated tried eliminating from their diet, and their results

What is Candida?

Candida is a yeast-like fungus that causes superficial [infections](#) of the mucus membranes, such as vaginal yeast infections. It can cause more serious, systemic infection when a person's immune system is compromised by diseases such as cancer and AIDS. Candida infections are more common following use of broad-spectrum antibiotics, as these can kill off the normal microflora (bacteria) in the gastrointestinal tract, which (when present) confer a natural colonization resistance to overgrowth by candida. *Candida albicans* is the candida species most likely to cause candida infection.

Candida a normal resident of the human gastrointestinal(GI) tract, present in small numbers with no negative health effects.

What is "chronic candida"?

[Chronic candida](#) was first written about in 1983 by C. Orian Truss in his book "The Missing Diagnosis". It is a cluster of symptoms consisting mainly of fatigue, mental/emotional symptoms(such as irritability, depression, and difficulty concentrating), and gastrointestinal symptoms(such as bloating, GERD, and constipation). There is no medical test for the condition, and diagnostic criteria have not been scientifically established. It is not generally recognized by practicing physicians, and so it is not usually diagnosed. However, the minority of doctors who do recognize the syndrome as a medical condition will often diagnose it based upon a positive response to anti-candida treatment. Most people learn about chronic candida from books published in the lay press, which are based mainly on case reports. Since the condition hasn't been the subject of extensive medical research, most physicians will not diagnose it.

What are probiotics?

A healthy human gastrointestinal(GI) tract contains trillions of bacteria and other microbes. There are several hundred species, and their total numbers are estimated to be 10 times the number of cells that make up the human body. Because man has evolved with these microbes present in the GI tract, they are a necessary part of healthy digestion and immune function.

"Probiotics" are live bacteria administered to animals or humans to supplement the microbes in the GI tract, and in doing so, improve health. Medical benefits from specific strains of bacteria have only recently been scientifically proven(1), although the concept has been around for a long time(2). There are a dozen or two products on the market worldwide with bacteria that have proven clinical benefits.

Dozens of supplement products are marketed as probiotics, frequently capsules of freeze-dried Lactobacillus species. Research has shown that there are benefits to a healthy population of Lactobacilli in the GI tract, but the use of the term "probiotic" does not refer specifically to Lactobacilli or any other bacteria. It can refer to any microorganism meant to be used to promote health. It does not mean that a health benefits has necessarily been proven for that organism, either.

What is the relationship between candida and probiotics?

Probiotics are a popular treatment for chronic candida, probably because that condition is thought to occur (at least in some cases) after the protective GI microflora has been reduced

by antibiotics. There are prescription antifungals for candida infection, but some infections do not respond completely. A recent animal study with mice showed that a commercially available strain of probiotic bacteria([Lactobacillus GG](#)) improved the response to candida infection(3). Because candida infection is very common, and probiotics may be effective at preventing candida overgrowth as well as reversing it, candida is a good target pathogen for future probiotic [research](#).

References

1. Elmer GW, Surawicz, CM, and McFarland LV "Biotherapeutic agents: a neglected modality for the treatment and prevention of selected intestinal and vaginal infections" *JAMA* **275**:(11):870-876, March 20, 1996
2. Kopeloff N. "*Lactobacillus Acidophilus*" Williams and Wilkins Co., 1926
3. Wagner RD et al. "Biotherapeutic effects of probiotic bacteria on candidiasis in immunodeficient mice" *Infection and Immunity* **65**(10):4165-4172

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