

Probiotics may assist in combating blood cancers

Posted Mar 28, 2013 by [Tim Sandle](#)

New research suggests that probiotic microorganisms, such as those more commonly used in yoghurt, could help bone marrow transplant for patients with blood cancers.

Some patients with leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma are treated with an "allogeneic" bone marrow transplant where the donor is a blood relative or is unrelated but has the same tissue type.

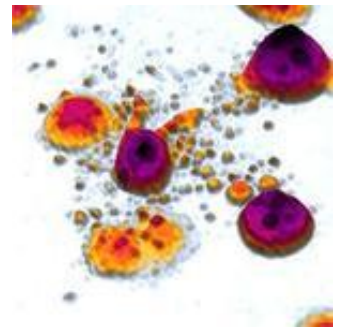
One problem that can arise is "**graft-versus-host disease** (GVHD)". Here donated cells can generate an immune attack against cancer cells in the patient, but they can also attack normal healthy cells and tissues. Commonly this occurs in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract.

According to the **research brief**, when the GI tract malfunctions, bacteria in the colon can invade the body and cause severe infections that activate the immune system. GVHD can then progress to the liver and other organs. This is where **probiotics** comes in.

Probiotics are known to reduce the growth of certain types of bacteria. Due to this, scientists are looking at the right type of probiotic bacteria that meet the requirements of what has been dubbed "PERFECT" (for Probiotic Enteric Regimen For Easing Complications of Transplant).

Scientists hope to build on the initial findings to identify methods of preventing infection.

The research has been conducted by the **Cancer Institute of New Jersey**.



Apoptosis of DU145 prostate cancer cells

Egelberg