



Probiotics

Probiotics are most commonly given to pets to prevent or clear up diarrhea. Probiotics work by normalizing bacteria in the intestines, which prevents diarrhea and decreases its severity. Probiotics may work for diarrhea caused by dietary changes and stress. They may not work for other causes of diarrhea or for chronic diarrhea, but it won't hurt to try them. Probiotics are very safe; no adverse effects have been reported.

Definitions

- Probiotics are live bacteria which, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the pet (or person) who takes the probiotics. Some probiotics contain a single strain of bacteria, and some are multi-strain.
- Prebiotics are non-digestible food ingredients that are added to diets to stimulate the growth of good bacteria.
- Synbiotics are a combination of probiotics and prebiotics. They are often given together; the prebiotics help stimulate growth of the probiotics.
- Some examples:
 - Fortiflora® is a single strain probiotic.
 - Provable® and Bene-Bac® Plus are both multi-strain synbiotics.

Brands

- There are many brands of probiotics containing different types of bacteria. No specific product is recommended for use over another.
- Look for probiotics that have documentation that the product has stability and survives in the gut for at least 14 days.
- Fortiflora®, Provable®, BeneBac® Plus are all commonly used brands.
- Helpful tip: Do not use yogurt. It contains too much calcium to be used as a probiotic. Most yogurt does not contain sufficient measurable bacteria to be considered a probiotic.



Dose

- The dose of probiotics needed is not well established. More studies need to be done.
- Follow label directions for how much to give and how often, unless otherwise directed by a veterinarian.

Administration

- Probiotics can be formulated as powders, pastes, or capsules. Administration depends on formulation:
 - If it is a powder, it should be mixed with the food.
 - If it is a paste, it should be drawn up in a separate syringe and given by mouth.
 - If it is a capsule, it should be given inside a treat, like a canned food meatball or a “pill pocket.” A pet pill popper may also be used.
- Watch the [Maddie’s How-To Video “Giving Orphaned Kittens Probiotics.”](#)

References

- Greco, Deborah S. "Pediatric nutrition." *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, edited by Autumn P. Davidson, vol. 44, no.2, 2014, pp. 265-273.
- Jugan, Maria C., et al. "Use of probiotics in small animal veterinary medicine." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, vol. 250, no. 5, 2017, pp. 519-528.

