



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is probiotic therapy?

Probiotics have been defined as living organisms that upon ingestion in certain numbers, affect the body in a beneficial manner.

The human bowel contains a complex population of bacteria of hundreds of different species and thousands of subspecies. These bacteria, and the chemicals they produce, can have different effects on the human body within which they live. The 'good' bacteria found in the human bowel are known as normal flora. These 'good' bacteria are considered beneficial to the body as they help in the breakdown of carbohydrates, proteins and fats in food as well as aid with the metabolism of vitamins, minerals and amino acids. They control infective bacteria from implanting and protect us from pathogenic (bad) bacteria penetrating the bowel wall and infecting the human body.

Problems arise if bad bacteria live among the good human flora. This can cause an imbalance, which can have a toxic effect on the bowel or even the entire body.

Probiotics can include normal human flora, and are introduced into the body to increase their dominance in the bowel, thereby reversing the damage or problems caused by bad bacteria.

2. How is VSL#3™ different from other probiotic therapies?

VSL#3™ is a patented preparation of live freeze-dried lactic acid bacteria. VSL#3™ has 450 billion bacteria per sachet with a mixture of eight different bacterial species.

3. How does VSL#3™ work?

VSL#3™ is a probiotic composition containing various strains of "good" bacteria. These strains were chosen for their synergy and capability to colonise the lower intestine. VSL#3 introduces these bacteria into the body to increase their dominance in the bowel, thereby reversing the damage or problems caused by "bad" bacteria.

4. Why do I need probiotic therapy like VSL#3™?

About 400 bacterial species are thought to be present in the normal intestine, with bacterial concentration as high as 10^{10} - 10^{12} bacteria per gram in the colon.

VSL#3™ is the first probiotic product marketed in Australia with 450 billion lactic acid bacteria per sachet from 8 different strains. Probiotic species in VSL#3 help maintain digestion by increasing intestinal flora to optimal levels.

5. What can I dissolve it in?

VSL#3™ can be added to yoghurt, fruit juice or flavoured drink.

VSL#3™ must be consumed as soon as possible after it has been mixed. It is also important NOT to mix VSL#3™ with any food/liquid that is warmer than room temperature (i.e. hot tea, soup, etc.) or with a sparkling drink.

VSL#3™ can be mixed with food/water that is at room temperature (25° C).

6. How much VSL#3™ should I take?

The amount can vary from person to person. The usual quantity is one to two serves per day (one sachet constitutes one serve).

7. Can I take too much VSL#3™?

There have been no reports of taking too much VSL#3™ or other probiotic products.

8. What if I experience bloating symptoms?

Bloating can occur during the first few days when first taking VSL#3™. This is usually transient and most likely due to the changing intestinal microflora.

9. How long can I take VSL#3™?

VSL#3™ may be taken every day for as long as necessary.

10. Is VSL#3™ safe for children?

A significant number of studies with various probiotic bacteria have been performed in children and none of them has reported any significant ill effects potentially related to the probiotic treatment.

11. Can I take VSL#3™ while on antibiotics?

If you take VSL#3™ with antibiotics, it will not harm you but the effects of VSL#3™ may be reduced since the antibiotics can inactivate the bacteria in VSL#3™.

12. Can I take VSL#3™ if I have intolerance to dairy products?

In people with lactose intolerance (lactase enzyme deficiency), ingesting lactose can cause severe intestinal distress characterised by bloating, flatulence and abdominal pain. Probiotics may be useful in individuals with lactose mal-digestion and lactase deficiency.

13. Does VSL#3 contain gluten?

VSL#3 contains small traces of gluten. The actual measurement is 20 ppm.

14. Does VSL#3 contain corn starch?

The new contents of VSL#3 which were introduced in 2006 does not contain corn starch. It has been replaced with maltose and silicon dioxide. The maltose is derived from corn syrup.

15. What time of day is best to take VSL#3™?

VSL#3™ can be taken at any time during the day.

16. How long can I keep VSL#3™?

VSL#3 should be stored in the refrigerator until used and should be used by the "Best Before" date on the carton.

17. Is it better to freeze VSL#3™?

No, refrigeration is best.

18. How do I open VSL#3™?

Each sachet is tightly sealed to prevent air contamination. The easiest way to open a VSL#3 sachet is to carefully cut along the corner of the sachet with a pair of scissors.

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