

Probiotics and obesity

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The prevalence of obesity is increasing worldwide, reaching alarming levels in several parts of the world jeopardizing the ability of some countries to cope with the increasing cost of treatment. Obesity is a multifactorial disease often attributed to energy imbalance as a result of interactions of genes, environment and lifestyle. All attempts using interventions focusing on diet and physical activity failed to curb the obesity epidemic. Novel approaches are needed, thus recent studies on animals have indicated a link between adiposity and gut microbial ecology whereby altered gut microbiota composition has been hypothesized to affect nutrient acquisition and energy regulation and contribute to metabolic abnormalities ranging from inflammation to obesity. Recent data also suggest that modifying the gut microbiota may contribute to improving insulin resistance, reducing fat accumulation and reversing many of the metabolic effects linked to obesity. Thus it appears that probiotics could play a promising role in the fight against obesity and its co-morbidities.

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