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Back to School - Keep Kids Healthy With Probiotics

Body

Body

Going back to school is a time of change and adjustment from those carefree days of summer. "Once kids return to school they're on much more of a schedule. They may not get as much sleep and they also have more stress from homework and extracurricular activities like sports," says board-certified gastroenterologist, Dr. Joseph Brasco. "Kids are also indoors more and around other people which increases the likelihood of exposure to more germs. All of these things place the body under increased stress and take a toll on the immune system." Kids are also exposed to unhealthy food choices from the school cafeteria and eating on the run. "Relying on the school cafeteria and fast foods is a prescription for bad digestion."

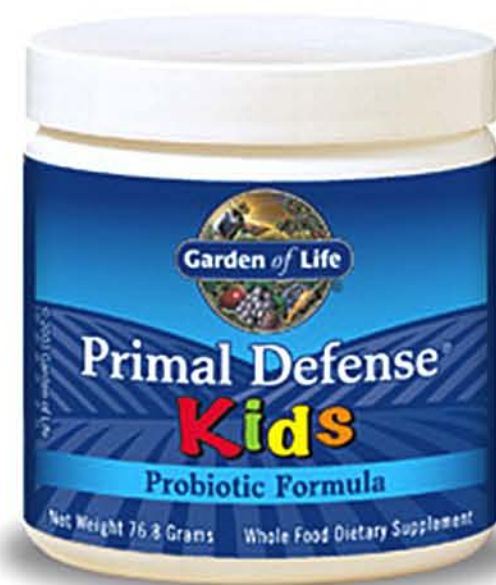
"Friendly Bacteria" Can Help

Probiotics or "friendly bacteria" can support the immune system. "Because the bulk of the immune system is in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract if you ensure intestinal health and harmony it has the benefit of supporting overall immune function," says Dr. Brasco who is also co-director of The Colon and Digestive Disease Center of Huntsville, Alabama. Here's how it works: In a healthy bowel, good microorganisms aid digestion and nutrient absorption while keeping potential pathogens (harmful microorganisms) under control. When the good bacteria become depleted an imbalance of microflora in the gut occurs. Probiotics support a normal gastrointestinal balance of good and potentially harmful bacteria to help maintain a balance, healthy internal environment.

"Probiotics help keep a balance of good bacteria in the gut, which in turn help balance the immune system of the gut, which helps balance the immune system of the body," says Dr. Brasco. "Even if kids aren't having GI problems, probiotics can help to support and maintain the immune system."†

Good for Kids

Garden of Life's Primal Defense® KIDS probiotic formula is a combination of prebiotics and probiotics that help support normal bowel function and a healthy immune system in children 3 and older.† It contains a 4 billion live cell count* of four species of beneficial probiotic cultures: three bifidobacteria strains Bifidobacterium longum, Bifidobacterium breve and Bifidobacterium infantis and Saccharomyces boulardii, all of which have been clinically studied in children and are found in a healthy child's digestive tract. Primal Defense® Kids is also made with inulin from chicory root, a natural plant carbohydrate and a prebiotic that helps probiotics flourish in the gut. Primal Defense® KIDS is made with yummy organic banana so your child will enjoy taking it everyday.



Eating Healthy All Day Long

When you give your child Primal Defense® Kids along with a healthy diet it helps to maximize its benefits because it supports the absorption and assimilation of beneficial nutrients. "Choose organic products as much as possible," says Dr. Brasco. "Instead of plain dairy, include fermented dairy products like kefir and yogurt. Limit sugar and processed foods."

A healthy diet starts in the morning. "Send kids off with a good breakfast," says Dr. Brasco. And skip the school cafeteria as much as possible too. "Give them a lunch made at home, say, an organic peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Include water, so they're not always drinking soda." Keep healthy foods handy after school too. "Eating on the run should be limited. But if you have to, skip the drive through and give kids nutritious types of food, like yogurt, a healthy food bar or make a trail mix with organic dried fruit, almonds, sunflower seeds and shredded coconut. You'll have a portable healthy snack."

Make it a Priority

Once kids are back in school it's extra important to make hygiene a top priority to get rid of germs and help fend off colds. "Kids need to practice simple hand washing with a mild soap and get under the finger nail beds with a small scrub brush before they eat and anytime they go to the wash room," says Dr. Brasco. "It's not necessary to use an anti-bacterial soap since it destroys both good and bad bacteria."

Except for the occasional late-night studying for a test, make sure you have a lights out time so that kids get enough sleep. "Kids need between eight and ten hours sleep. Ideally kids in high school should be in bed by 10:30 and those in pre-high school should be in bed by 9 or 9:30."

Finally, as much as possible, help ease the stress your child experiences. Once of the best places to start is by limiting extracurricular activities. "Kids can't belong to everything," says Dr. Brasco. "They need to pick and choose."

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