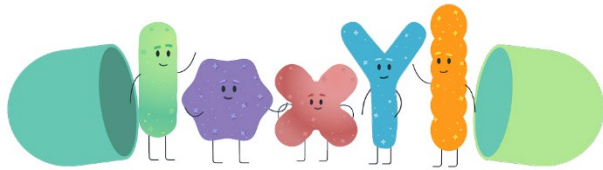


Probiotics: What's Inside is Alive



Ten Questions to Ask your Vendors About their Probiotic Supplements

Identity:

1. Do you label your supplements with the genus, species and strain of each probiotic organism in your products?
2. Do you make any claims on your probiotic supplement labels for specific health benefits likely to result from the product (e.g., helps build a healthier gut, defends against occasional gas and bloating, promotes heart health, can strengthen immune support, etc.)?
3. Do you have scientific support for the probiotics in your product linking those specific strains in their labeled amounts to the health benefits you claim on the label? (*Note: Scientific support is a flexible standard that may require "competent and reliable scientific evidence" for the ingredients: it does not necessarily require clinical trials on that specific product.*)

Quantity:

4. Do you label your product with the number of live organisms delivered in each serving of the probiotic? (One commonly accepted measure is "CFU" or Colony Forming Units as a validated indication of cell activity.) Measurement by metric weight is not sufficient.
5. Is your live cell count on the label valid throughout the claimed shelf life of the product?
6. If your product's live cell count is labeled only "at time of manufacture," what assurance do you provide consumers that the product is viable (will meet label claim) during the anticipated life of the product (in store and for a reasonable time after purchase)?

Viability:

7. Does your product require any special storage or handling in order to keep the probiotics inside viable and alive?
8. If yes to #7, what precautions do you take during storage and transportation to protect the viability of the probiotics before they arrive at store?
9. Also, if yes to #7, is the product properly labeled to give consumers information about how they should store the product at home (e.g., refrigerate, keep away from direct light, store in a dry place)?
10. Do you provide an expiration date on the product? If no, what is the anticipated expiration date; if yes, what stability testing have you conducted to assure viability of the organisms in the product packaging through that date?