

Gingivitis and Probiotics: What You Need to Know

By Breana Noble | Wednesday, 20 Jan 2016 04:06 PM

Studies show taking probiotics may be effective in the fight to reduce gingivitis.

Gingivitis, or periodontal disease, is a gum disease that results in irritation, redness, and inflammation of the gums. It is common and a mild form of gum disease.

Research indicates simply changing a patient's diet to include more probiotics — the healthy bacteria found in the body — may help to stop, slow, or delay the bacteria of gingivitis, according to **The National Center for Biotechnology Information**.

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When patients took two different formulations of *Lactobacillus reuteri* (a probiotic) or a placebo, their indicators for gingivitis were reduced in severity in all three cases, though only one of the formulations showed greater improvement than the placebo, **PubMed.gov** reported.

Plaque buildup also decreased in both of the groups that took the probiotics, **PubMed.gov** notes. The mixture that decreased the gingivitis index the most showed that the *Lactobacillus reuteri* had colonized 65 percent of the patients while the formulation that decreased the gingivitis index less had a *Lactobacillus reuteri* colonization percentage of 95.

Researchers developed three reasons to explain the probiotics' effect on gingivitis. They suggested the probiotic secretions prevent the growth of many different types of pathogens, are able to easily colonize and crowd out the bad bacteria, or stop the leakage of pro-inflammatory substances, the **Canadian Dental Association** reported.

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Another study looked at the effects of Lactobacillus rhamnosus and Bifidobacterium animalis on preventing gingivitis. People who took the probiotics showed a decreased appearance of the gum disease, according to **NYR Natural News**. They also had lower levels of plaque. None of these changes occurred in a control group.

Oral probiotics are designed to repopulate the mouth with good microorganisms. They then are able to overtake the detrimental germs trying to make a home there, pushing them out.

Gingivitis, if left untreated, can lead to tooth loss and bone and joint damage. More recently, it has been linked to strokes and heart disease since the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body.

More research is needed in order to understand how probiotics may be effective in treating or preventing gingivitis, the Canadian Dental Association noted.

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