

Keep Your Child Healthy: A Surprising Way to Boost Immunity

A double-blind, placebo-controlled study appearing in the journal *Pediatrics* (2009; 124(2): e172-9) looked at the effect supplementation in a group of children between the ages of three and five had on the immune system. The 110 subjects were given either a placebo, *Lactobacillus acidophilus* NCFM (a single probiotic), or a combination of probiotics. Taking the probiotics provided the test group with a 53% lower incidence of fever (for the single strain) and 73% reduction for the group taking the combination probiotic. Probiotics also reduced other cold and flu symptoms including coughing and runny nose. The group taking the supplement also missed fewer days from day care, 32% fewer days missed for those taking the single strain and 28% fewer days missed for the combination product. Antibiotic use was also less; 68% less in the single strain group and 84% less in the combination group, when compared to controls. These are significant reductions and the authors concluded that daily probiotic supplementation for 6 months (fall/winter) was an effective way to reduce fever and other cold symptoms and could lower antibiotic use and reduce the number of school days missed.

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