

Probiotics May Ease Anxiety and Depression

A recent study suggests that supplements that boost probiotics, the beneficial micro-organisms in the body, can affect the way people process emotional information, as well as easing anxiety and depression.

The study recruited 45 healthy 18- to 45-year-olds. Half of the participants were given a probiotic supplement and the other half a placebo, to be taken every day for three weeks. They were instructed to complete a variety of computer tests in order to assess their findings on whether or not they processed emotional information through negative or positive words.

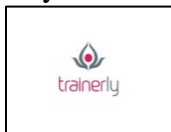
One test proved that people who were given the probiotic ignored negative information and paid more attention to positive information. A similar study suggested that people who took supplements specific to depression or anxiety proved to have less anxiety about negative or threatening stimuli, explained Philip Burnet, researcher at the University of Oxford.

Burnet mentioned another study, published in the journal *Psychopharmacology*, which was conducted to see if gut bacteria benefited the immune system, therefore, influencing the brain. As reported by the website *LiveScience*, researchers concluded that there was not enough proof to back up their theory, although a handful of researchers suspected that the vagus nerve had altered the way people think.

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