

Probiotic Buying Guide Checklist: What to Check Before You Buy

Get the probiotic buying checklist: the six things to check before buying any probiotic supplement, from strain diversity to CFU counts to shelf stability, so you buy the right formula instead of the biggest number.

Before you buy: what to check

1. Start with probiotic foods first: yogurt and fermented vegetables are natural sources of probiotics, and many people should try food sources before moving to capsules.
2. Check strain diversity, not just the brand name: different strains serve different purposes (some break down food, others support immune function, a few may reduce bloating). Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium are among the most researched strains. The right probiotic is the one that suits your specific needs, not always the strongest one.
3. Do not overpay for CFUs: labels range from a few million to several billion colony-forming units, but more does not always mean better. For general wellness, moderate CFU levels often work well; very high CFUs are mainly useful in specific situations such as after a round of antibiotics.
4. Check survival, not just the number: bacteria must survive stomach acid to reach the gut. Look for protective capsules or fermentation-based formulations where survival rate matters as much as the CFU count.
5. Match the delivery method to your life: capsules are standard because they protect microorganisms through stomach acid; powders disperse quickly but protect less; liquids are convenient but sensitive to temperature. Check whether the product needs refrigeration or is shelf-stable (for example, through specialized fermentation or encapsulation), and pick what fits your travel and storage routine.
6. Read the extras on the label: prebiotics act as food for the bacteria, enzymes support digestion, and plant extracts may add antioxidant support, but none are required for a probiotic to work. If you prefer clean labels, avoid artificial colors, preservatives, and sweeteners, and check carefully for allergens or dietary conflicts.

Using it safely

7. Expect a short adjustment period: mild gas, bloating, or digestive discomfort can happen as your gut adjusts. Start with a lower dose and increase gradually.
8. Talk to a healthcare professional first if you have underlying medical conditions or a weakened immune system. If discomfort persists, switching to a different strain combination or delivery method may help.

Want the full guide?

Want the full guide with delivery-method details and ingredient breakdowns? Read the complete guide Checklist distilled from the Biohack article above; anything not stated there is marked [VERIFY].

<https://thebiohack.org/everything-you-need-to-know-before-buying-a-probiotic-supplement/>