




**Diarrhea (242)**

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## Can a Probiotic Help to Prevent Travelers Diarrhea?

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**QUESTION – I will soon be travelling to several countries where finding safe drinking water will be a challenge. In the event I eat or drink something that would cause traveler’s diarrhea would it be wise to preventatively start taking a probiotic? Is it alright to take loperamide at the same time as taking a probiotic?**

**ANSWER –** There is some evidence that taking a probiotic can help prevent travellers’ diarrhea although probiotics are notoriously variable in terms of their activity, with some being more effective than others with respect to this indication. I see no reason why you shouldn’t take loperamide with a probiotic should the need arise.

I should point out that diarrhea in gastroenteritis does serve a purpose of clearing out the germs that are causing the problem and, therefore, taking loperamide can sometimes delay recovery.

I usually advise patients to take one of the glucose and electrolyte powders when they get travellers’ diarrhea and just use the loperamide for emergencies, travelling, and to get home.

### Suggested IFFGD Reading

Thompson, W. *Managing Diarrhea*. IFFGD. Fact Sheet No. 201.

Bonci, L. *Nutrition Strategies for Managing Diarrhea*. IFFGD. Fact Sheet No. 208.

*The information in this fact sheet was adapted from the Clinical Corner Section of Digestive Health Matters, Vol. 18, No. 2.*

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