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The role of cranberry and probiotics in intestinal and urogenital tract health.

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Source

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Abstract

Several forces are driving an expanded use of nutraceuticals, particularly functional foods and probiotics, as instruments of the restoration and maintenance of well-being. These include consumer desire to use natural rather than pharmaceutical products, the mounting scientific evidence that shows efficacy of certain nutraceutical products, and the increasing cost and continued failure of drugs to cure or prevent disease. There is now a strong scientific basis for use of cranberries to reduce the risk of *E. coli* adhesion to bladder cells and the onset of urinary tract infection. There is also a mechanistic basis and clinical support for use of *Lactobacillus* strains such as *L. rhamnosus* GR-1 and *L. fermentum* RC-14 to colonize the intestine and vagina and reduce the risk of intestinal and urogenital infections. For such alternative approaches to be successful, scientific rigor must be backed by public education and physician acceptance. Given the emergence of virulent and multidrug-resistant pathogens, time is not on our side.