

‘Wildly popular’ and unproven probiotics may interfere with some treatments

Probiotics are wildly popular. After all, the microbial cocktails are available over the counter and have been shown to be helpful in the treatment of gastrointestinal illnesses for some people.

But some scientists worry [probiotics](#) aren’t as innocuous as they seem — and might be affecting the way other medicines work in the body.

The latest cautionary note comes in the form of a preliminary study released Tuesday, in which researchers found that melanoma patients were 70 percent less likely to respond to cancer immunotherapy if they were also taking probiotic supplements. The study group was small — just 46 patients — but the findings support broader suggestions that probiotics might actually upset the balance of so-called “good” bacteria in the gut.

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[B]ecause probiotics — like vitamins and other such supplements — are only loosely regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, consumers are free to sprinkle these prepackaged bacterial spores in with their standard therapeutic regimens.

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“[T]his study reminds us that there’s no question that probiotics have a powerful impact on the immune system,” [Dr. Pieter] Cohen said. “That, and we have almost no data to demonstrate that these live microorganisms actually improve health.”

Read full, original post: [Probiotics are touted as good for the gut. They may be trouble for the immune system](#)