

GI EXCHANGE: Choosing the Right Probiotic

What are probiotics and how are they used? Probiotics are live microorganisms that, when ingested, have a beneficial effect on intestinal function by promoting improved intestinal microbial balance. They are often used to nutritionally manage dogs and cats with diarrhea.

There are many probiotic strains — how do I choose the right one? Bacterial species and strains vary widely in efficacy, so you need to make sure that the strain you are using for your patients has actually been proven to work. In addition to the proper probiotic strain, supplements must contain appropriate levels of that strain in order to be effective.

How accurate are probiotic label claims? A recent study revealed that the accuracy of labels and bacterial content claims for canine and feline probiotic supplements was poor. Of the 25 products evaluated, only two had both an acceptable label that properly described its contents, and viable bacterial colonies that met or exceeded label claims.¹ One of these products was Purina Veterinary Diets® FortiFlora® Canine and Feline Nutritional Supplements.

What's different about FortiFlora? FortiFlora contains a strain of the probiotic *Enterococcus faecium*, SF68, which has a long history of safe use in humans and animals. SF68 has been shown to be safe, stable and effective in restoring normal intestinal health and balance, and promoting improved fecal quality. A proprietary microencapsulation process ensures a guaranteed level of live microorganisms in FortiFlora, and our extensive research has shown they remain viable in the intestine.

What are the benefits of pairing a probiotic such as FortiFlora with a specially formulated gastrointestinal (GI) diet?

A probiotic supplement helps promote normal intestinal health and microflora balance, and a GI diet is highly digestible and easily processed through the GI system. These attributes can work synergistically to help nutritionally manage patients with chronic or acute diarrhea.



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1. Weese JS, Martin H. Assessment of commercial probiotic bacterial contents and label accuracy. *Can Vet J* 2011;52:43–46.