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Saccharomyces boulardii

What is it?

Saccharomyces boulardii is a yeast, which is a type of fungus. Saccharomyces boulardii was previously identified as a unique species of yeast, but is now believed to be a strain of Saccharomyces cerevisiae (baker's yeast). Saccharomyces boulardii is used as medicine.

Saccharomyces boulardii is used for treating and preventing diarrhea, including infectious types such as rotaviral diarrhea in children, diarrhea caused by gastrointestinal (GI) take-over (overgrowth) by "bad" bacteria in adults, traveler's diarrhea, and diarrhea associated with tube feedings. It is also used to prevent and treat diarrhea caused by the use of antibiotics.

Saccharomyces boulardii is also used for general digestion problems, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel syndrome (IBD, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis), Lyme disease, a bowel disorder called relapsing Clostridium difficile colitis, and bacterial overgrowth in short bowel syndrome.

Some people use Saccharomyces boulardii for lactose intolerance, urinary tract infections (UTIs), vaginal yeast infections, high cholesterol levels, hives, fever blisters, canker sores, and teen-age acne.

How effective is it?

Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database rates effectiveness based on scientific evidence according to the following scale: Effective, Likely Effective, Possibly Effective, Possibly Ineffective, Likely Ineffective, Ineffective, and Insufficient Evidence to Rate.

The effectiveness ratings for **SACCHAROMYCES BOULARDII** are as follows:

Likely effective for...

- **Diarrhea associated with antibiotics.** Most research shows that taking Saccharomyces boulardii can prevent diarrhea caused by taking antibiotics.
- **Diarrhea.** Most research shows that Saccharomyces boulardii can prevent diarrhea in people with feeding tubes. It also appears to help treat diarrhea in infants and children.

Possibly effective for...

- **Acne.** Some research suggests that taking a type of *Saccharomyces boulardii* (Perenterol, Cell Tech Phama) by mouth can improve the appearance of acne.
- **Diarrhea caused by the bacteria *Clostridium difficile*.** Taking *Saccharomyces boulardii* by mouth along with the antibiotics vancomycin or metronidazole prevents the recurrence of diarrhea caused by the bacteria *Clostridium difficile*. However, it might not help treat first episodes of diarrhea caused by this type of bacteria.
- ***Helicobacter pylori*.** Some evidence suggests that taking *Saccharomyces boulardii* reduces the side effects of treatment for ulcers caused by the bacteria *Helicobacter pylori*.
- **Diarrhea related to HIV.** Taking *Saccharomyces boulardii* by mouth appears to reduce diarrhea related to HIV.
- **Traveler's diarrhea.** Taking *Saccharomyces boulardii* by mouth appears to prevent traveler's diarrhea.

Insufficient evidence to rate effectiveness for...

- **Amoeba infections (amebiasis).** Early research shows that taking *Saccharomyces boulardii* by mouth along with antibiotics reduces diarrhea and stomach pain in people with amoeba infections.
- **Crohn's disease.** Early research shows that *Saccharomyces boulardii* combined with mesalamine can help people with Crohn's disease stay in remission longer. Remission is a period of time during which symptoms of disease are controlled. Taking *Saccharomyces boulardii* also seems to reduce the number of bowel movements in people with Crohn's disease.
- **Cystic fibrosis.** Early research shows that taking *Saccharomyces boulardii* by mouth does not seem to reduce yeast infections in the digestive tract of people with cystic fibrosis.
- **Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).** Early research suggests that taking *Saccharomyces boulardii* by mouth might improve bowel movements, stomach pain, bloating, and upset stomach in people with IBS.
- **Ulcerative colitis.** Early research shows that adding *Saccharomyces boulardii* to standard mesalamine therapy can reduce symptoms in people with mild-to-moderate ulcerative colitis.
- **Urinary tract infections (UTIs).**
- **Yeast infections.**
- **High cholesterol.**
- **Lyme disease.**
- **Hives.**
- **Fever blisters.**
- **Canker sores.**
- **Lactose intolerance.**
- **Other conditions.**

More evidence is needed to rate *Saccharomyces boulardii* for these uses.

How does it work?

Saccharomyces boulardii is called a "probiotic," a friendly organism that helps to fight off disease-causing organisms in the gut such as bacteria and yeast.

Are there safety concerns?

Saccharomyces boulardii is **LIKELY SAFE** for most adults when taken by mouth for up to 15 months. It can cause gas in some people. Rarely, it might cause fungal infections that can spread through the bloodstream to the entire body (fungemia).

Special precautions & warnings:

Children. Saccharomyces boulardii is **POSSIBLY SAFE** for children when taken by mouth appropriately. However, diarrhea in children should be evaluated by a healthcare professional before using Saccharomyces boulardii.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding: There is not enough reliable information about the safety of taking Saccharomyces boulardii if you are pregnant or breast feeding. Stay on the safe side and avoid use.

Weakened immune system: There is some concern that critically ill people, people who have a weakened immune system, and people who are taking medicines that alter the immune system might have an increased risk for developing a yeast infection that spreads to the bloodstream and the rest of the body (fungemia) if they take Saccharomyces boulardii. Although Saccharomyces generally doesn't cause disease, there have been numerous cases of fungemia following its use, primarily in people with a weakened immune system.

Yeast allergy: People with yeast allergy can be allergic to products containing Saccharomyces boulardii, and are best advised to avoid these products.

Are there interactions with medications?

Minor

Be watchful with this combination.

Medications for fungal infections (Antifungals)

Saccharomyces boulardii is a fungus. Medications for fungal infections help reduce fungus in and on the body. Taking Saccharomyces boulardii with medications for fungal infections can reduce the effectiveness of Saccharomyces boulardii.

Some medications for fungal infection include fluconazole (Diflucan), terbinafine (Lamisil), itraconazole (Sporanox), and others.

Are there interactions with herbs and supplements?

There are no known interactions with herbs and supplements.

Are there interactions with foods?

There are no known interactions with foods.

What dose is used?

The following doses have been studied in scientific research:

BY MOUTH:

- For diarrhea associated with the use of antibiotics: 250–500 mg of *Saccharomyces boulardii* two to four times a day.
- For diarrhea caused by *Clostridium difficile*: 1 gram of *Saccharomyces boulardii* daily for 4 weeks along with antibiotic treatment.
- For Crohn's disease:
 - 250 mg of *Saccharomyces boulardii* three times daily has been used for up to 9 weeks.
 - 1 gram of *Saccharomyces boulardii* daily in combination with usual treatment has also been used.
- For ulcerative colitis: 205 mg of *Saccharomyces boulardii* three times daily.
- For treatment of infections due to the ulcer-causing *Helicobacter pylori* bacterium: a dose of 5 billion colony-forming units (CFUs) of *Saccharomyces boulardii* daily in addition to usual treatment.

Other names

Brewer's Yeast (Hansen CBS 5926), Hansen CBS 5926, Levure de Boulangerie (Hansen CBS 5926), Probiotic, Probiotique, *Saccharomyces*, *Saccharomyces boulardii*, *Saccharomyces Cerevisiae*, *S. Boulardii*.

Methodology

To learn more about how this article was written, please see the *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database* methodology.

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