

FOOD NUTRITION & SAFETY

We all know the importance of eating well, but how about eating safe? In this issue, POPClub heads to Japan with Yakult to bring you the lowdown on the benefits of probiotics and ensuring its safety for consumption.



1. Getting a behind-the-scenes look at Yakult's production process and its high standards of hygiene, quality and environment management.

2. In Japan, some schools include Yakult as part of their nutritional programme, which proved to be popular with the kids.

quantity and quality of products manufactured: good quality water, space, and access to resources.

- Machines Are Not Enough

There is a stringent checking process that uses both machine and visual inspections for accurately detecting flaws in the product. There can be more than 150 individual checks performed in the production of a single type of product. If the flaws detected require further investigation, the production lines are stopped at once.

- Air-free Transportation

Transporting the Yakult culture to the bottling plants can be challenging in its own right, especially when it comes to ensuring the quality of the product. Yakult uses an air-free technique such that the liquid is transferred

from plant to truck without contact with air. Trucks are cleaned after each time it is used.

- Cleaning Is Crucial

When dealing with bacteria (even good ones like probiotics), cleaning is the most crucial part of every day's work. All machinery and pipes must be disassembled for washing and disinfecting, and it takes 3 hours per day to complete the process, which is done once by machines and once by man.



Home Delivery by Yakult Ladies

Did you know that apart from obtaining your Yakult from supermarkets, you can also get them delivered to your house by Yakult Ladies? The Yakult Ladies scheme is an inseparable part of the Yakult business as they believe that Yakult Ladies can help customers fully understand the benefits of lactobacilli. There are over 350 Yakult Ladies in Singapore, so if you'd like Yakult to be delivered to your home, call +65 6752 0673 today!

Benefits of Probiotics

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines probiotics as “live microorganisms which when administered in adequate amounts confer a health benefit on the host”. In order to be labelled as probiotics, scientific evidence for the health benefit must be documented. The *Lactobacillus casei* strain Shirota (*L. casei* strain Shirota), for example, helps to replenish the good bacteria in your guts. It can survive the acidic juices in your digestive system and reach the small intestines alive, thereby allowing the body to reap its benefits. Research has shown that it can boost your body's natural immunity and reduce the occurrence of constipation and diarrhoea. Whether you are 8 or 80, everyone can benefit from consistent consumption of probiotics. Fortunately for all of us, it is

easy to obtain probiotics from products such as Yakult, which is a probiotic cultured milk drink that contains more than 10 billion specially cultivated *L. casei* strain Shirota. Currently, Singapore is the only country that sells flavoured versions (Green Apple, Grape and Orange) of Yakult, you can't even get it in Japan!

Handling Probiotics: Understanding the Yakult Production Process

While there are many benefits to probiotics, it is still a type of bacteria and its benefits cannot be reaped safely without meticulous care. With a rigorous hygiene and quality control system in cultivating bacteria, preparing ingredients, and producing and packaging the products at all its production plants, Yakult has acquired the HACCP, ISO9001 and ISO14001 certification, meeting international

standards of hygiene, quality and environment management. We visited the Yakult Fuji Susono Plant for an exclusive look, and here's what we discovered:

- Made for The Masses

In Tokyo alone, more than 200,000 bottles of Yakult are sold every day. Some schools and hospitals in Japan even include Yakult as part of their nutrition programme for growing children and recovering patients. To ensure everyone gets their Yakult fix, there are 5 plants specialised in producing the Yakult concentrate and 5 bottling plants dedicated to packaging. The Fuji Susono plant alone produces 1.2 million products a day.

- Location, Location, Location

This golden rule is key to deciding where the production plants are located. 3 assessment criteria are important in ensuring the

