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**The dual role of bacteriocins as anti- and probiotics.**

Gillor O<sup>1</sup>, Etzion A, Riley MA.

**Author information****Abstract**

Bacteria employed in probiotic applications help to maintain or restore a host's natural microbial flora. The ability of probiotic bacteria to successfully outcompete undesired species is often due to, or enhanced by, the production of potent antimicrobial toxins. The most commonly encountered of these are **bacteriocins**, a large and functionally diverse family of antimicrobials found in all major lineages of Bacteria. Recent studies reveal that these proteinaceous toxins play a critical **role** in mediating competitive dynamics between bacterial strains and closely related species. The potential use of bacteriocin-producing strains as probiotic and bioprotective agents has recently received increased attention. This review will report on recent efforts involving the use of such strains, with a particular focus on emerging probiotic therapies for humans, livestock, and aquaculture.

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