

What are probiotics?

Probiotics are harmless bacteria that live in our gastrointestinal tract to help keep our intestines healthy. Probiotics can stop harmful bacteria growing in the intestine and can help prevent medical conditions such as diarrhea (gastroenteritis) and necrotising enterocolitis (NEC).

Probiotics are found naturally in foods such as 'live' yogurts and some cheeses. Probiotics thrive in the intestine of breastfed neonates, but can be easily destroyed by antibiotics. They are also included in modern infant milk formulas e.g. Nan HA Gold.

How can probiotics help your baby?

Often very premature neonates are given essential courses of antibiotics when they are first born to help prevent or treat infection. Probiotics can help replace some of the good bacteria that have been killed when antibiotics have been given.

Are there any risks with giving probiotics to your baby?

Clinical trial results indicate that it is safe to use probiotics in neonates. There have been a small number of reports of infections due to the probiotic bacteria, and there is always the chance that there are risks with using probiotics that we don't know about. However the benefits of using probiotics are very significant and we do not expect any harms that would outweigh using them.

What is Infloran?

Infloran is the brand of probiotic that can be prescribed for your baby. Infloran contains *Bifidobacterium bifidum* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, both bacteria which are commonly found in the stool of breastfed infants. A Randomised Controlled Trial with over 400 very low birth weight infants has shown that Infloran can halve the risk of developing the serious intestine disease necrotising enterocolitis (NEC) and can halve the risk of death.

Is Infloran a registered product?

Infloran is not registered for use in New Zealand. This is because it is a new product which has not yet attracted a drug company to sponsor it through the regulatory process in New Zealand. This medicine has been approved for use by the Capital Coast District Health Board and can be used under Section 29 of the Medicines Act.

If probiotics have been recommended for your baby

Please speak with your Nurse or Doctor if you would like any more information on Infloran or probiotics. Note that as a Section 29 Medicine, information that your baby has been prescribed Infloran will be forwarded to MedSafe (part of the Ministry of Health) and kept on a database.

Thank you to Dunedin Hospital NICU for assistance with this brochure.