



PROBIOTICS
EDUCATION PROGRAMME

EXPLANATION REGARDING USE OF DIGITAL REFRACTOMETER TO MEASURE “SWEETNESS” (SUGAR CONTENT) OF PROBIOTIC DRINKS

Referring to the recent videos on TikTok that used a Digital Refractometer to measure the percentage level of “sweetness” of various brands of cultured milk drink products containing probiotics, we would like to provide some clarification as follows:

Brix Digital Refractometers show the concentration of the soluble solids content (total soluble solids) in a liquid. The soluble solids content is the total of all the solids dissolved in the water such as sugar, salts, proteins, soluble fibres, and acids. The measurement reading value is the sum total of all the solids contained in a particular beverage or drink.

If the drink that is tested contains any non-sugar content, such as cultured milk drink products, this reading so obtained from a Refractometer cannot be interpreted to represent the actual “sweetness” or sugar content in the liquid.

Probiotic cultured milk drink products usually contain milk proteins, carbohydrates including soluble fibre, and organic acids. So, the measurement obtained from testing such products using refractometer will not be a correct representation of the sugar content in those products. Such values are usually higher than the actual sugar content determined using appropriate laboratory methods.

Last but not least, it is important to understand what cultured milk drinks with probiotics are and their purpose as part of our daily diet, and not just focus on the sugar content alone. Probiotic-containing cultured milk drinks are a source of beneficial bacteria that can deliver certain health benefits to us when consumed appropriately. Keep in mind that it is not in a similar category with soft drinks or flavoured beverages that only contain sugar and flavourings and no other nutrients or beneficial components. Always read the nutrition labels to make sure that you choose genuine cultured milk drinks with live probiotics and preferably products with less sugar.

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