



Morinaga Milk Reveals Major Breakthroughs in a ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ Program With Professional Footballer Yuto Nagatomo

In recent crosstalk, footballer Yuto Nagatomo speaks passionately about his full year on the ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ program. “My condition improved because I stayed with it.” “Bifidobacteria ‘saved me’”, he shared.

TOKYO (AUG, 2021) — Morinaga Milk Industry Co., Ltd. (TOKYO:2264), a pioneer in bifidobacteria and gut microbiota research, reveals that its collaborative ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ project (launched in June 2020) helped professional athlete Yuto Nagatomo improve his gut microbiota. Nagatomo stayed on the program for a full year, and has been outspoken about the changes in his gut microbiota that not only improved his digestive system, but also his physical condition.



About the ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ program

The program encourages participants to incorporate bifidobacteria into their existing knowledge, diet, and physical and mental health regimens with the aim of improving the environment of the large intestine through input from inside and outside the body.

The ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ program website offers a wealth of information not available elsewhere, including varied content on knowledge, diet, exercise, and mental health, and a profile of Yuto Nagatomo’s gut microbiota shaped by his consistent intake of bifidobacteria since 2020.

1. Overview of Report on ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ CROSS-TALK 2020–2021

Footballer Yuto Nagatomo started taking bifidobacteria in July 2020, during the offseason. He later signed with a French (Ligue 1) team, and his condition suffered as he attempted to adapt to an unfamiliar living environment. However, his digestive system steadily regained its balance thanks to his persistence with the ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ program. Our analysis of his gut microbiota revealed inconsistency immediately after his move to France, followed by certain changes that suggested a strong connection between his enteric bacteria and his physical condition.

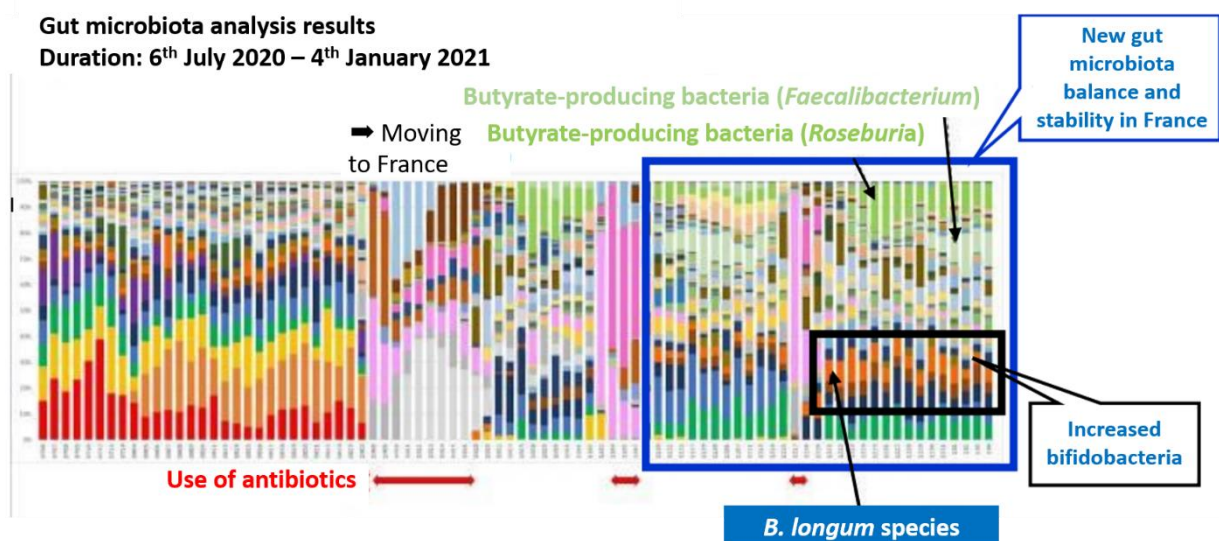
Nagatomo recognized the changes as they were occurring. “My condition improved because I stayed with the ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ program every day,” he said. “Even on days I couldn’t sleep, both my digestive system and my physical condition were stable.” He also noted that his recovery speed had improved, and identified the source without uncertainty. “[Bifidobacteria] saved me.” His condition and performance on the field continuously improved. “I’m so much more confident now that I have the final piece of the puzzle in my goal to represent Japan in the 2022 World Cup.”

He reflected on his full year on the ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ program, noting that staying with it was important, yet not all that burdensome. “[Staying with the program] was everything for my gut microbiota,” he said in a nod to a Japanese adage about the value of persistence in sport. “It helped me so much. I’m grateful for the support.”

2. Changes in Yuto Nagatomo’s gut microbiota on the ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ program

Dr. Toshitaka Odamaki, Manager of the Microbiota Research Department at the Next Generation Science Institute of Morinaga Milk, analyzed Nagatomo’s gut microbiota over the roughly seven months in which he took bifidobacteria. “The balance of enteric bacteria shifted substantially after [Nagatomo] moved from Japan to France, but his intake of bifidobacteria and balanced meals created a new balance that stabilized in December,” Dr. Odamaki said, also confirming the disappearance of the harmful bacteria may be associated with the cause of Nagatomo’s illnesses. “The analysis showed increases in good bacteria such as bifidobacteria and butyrate-producing bacteria following his persistence with the ‘Bifidobacteria Training’ program.” Dr. Odamaki also noted that Nagatomo had a growing population of bacteria that is linked to the performance of professional athletes. “The changes in gut microbiota could be a factor behind Nagatomo’s sense that his condition improved.”

“This is the first experience to track the detailed changes in an individual’s gut microbial composition,” Dr. Odamaki said. “Our analysis illustrated a strong connection between tangible feelings and enteric bacteria, which are normally hidden from us, a significant finding among Morinaga Milk’s research.”



About professional footballer Yuto Nagatomo



Born in Ehime Prefecture, Japan in 1986. Made his official J. League debut with FC Tokyo in 2008. Invited to play on the Japanese national team for the first time in May 2008, and appeared in the Beijing Olympics in August of that year. Played every minute of Japan’s four games in the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, signed with Cesena of Serie A (Italy) in July of that year. Signed with the vaunted Inter Milan in January 2011. Played every minute of Japan’s games in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. Joined Galatasaray S.K. of the TFF 1. Lig (Turkey) on loan in 2018. Advanced to the finals for the first time at the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Joined Galatasaray S.K. on a permanent deal in 2019, and won two consecutive Süper Lig titles and two Turkish Cup trophies. Signed with Olympique de Marseilles of Ligue 1 (France) on August 31, 2020. Developed original exercise methods incorporating elements of stretching, yoga, and core training, worked with a personal chef and physician to develop a fat-adaptation diet, and more. With a style of examining his body from the inside and outside, he continues to maintain a high level of athletic performance, and has declared his goal to represent Japan in the 2022 World Cup.

About Morinaga Milk’s initiatives with Yuto Nagatomo

Morinaga Milk sensed Yuto Nagatomo’s dedication to constant improvement as a professional athlete, evident in his commitment to physical fitness, diet, and other facets of health within his control. We heard of his concern about his digestive system suffering during extended stays outside Japan despite unflagging self-control, and wanted to apply our findings from many years of research to try to improve his intestinal environment and help him continue to evolve as an athlete from the inside out.

Additionally, “nurturing the next generation” is one of the themes of ESG-focused management, a basic policy from our Medium-Term Business Plan. We aim to teach people the importance of food for maintaining healthy bodies and minds, while also helping them grow as people with positive attributes like agency, autonomy, and motivation to take on challenges, all in an effort to nurture the next generation in order to create a sustainable society.

These goals resonate with Nagatomo, who for his part has established the Yuto Nagatomo Football Academy (YNFA), founded Cuore Inc. with the aim of using his influence as an athlete to solve health problems around the world, and devoted energy to activities in support of single-parent families.

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