

Media Pack



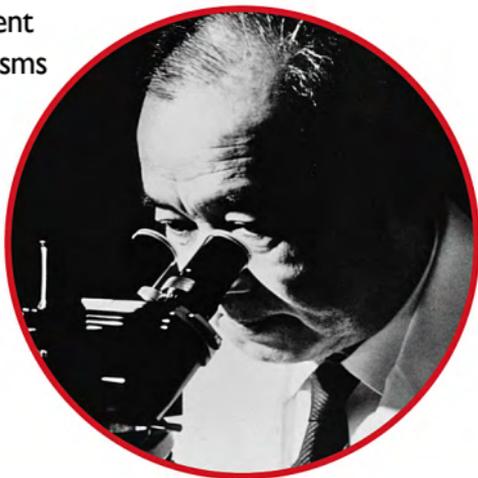
Yakult

A Little Bottle Of Science

Yakult History

Dr Shirota

The Japanese scientist Dr Shirota spent many years investigating microorganisms and in 1930 he succeeded in selecting and cultivating a unique strain of lactic acid bacteria that was scientifically proven to reach the gut alive. He used this strain, now known as ***Lactobacillus casei* Shirota**, to make a fermented milk drink – and so, in 1935, the first bottle of Yakult was produced.



Scientist Dr Shirota firmly believed that true health consists not just of physical fitness, but also requires good mental, social and cultural wellbeing – a view he expressed in Yakult's corporate philosophy:

“We contribute to the health and happiness of people around the world through pursuit of excellence in life science in general and our research and experience in microorganisms in particular”.

This philosophy shone through in the way that he set up the company, from the revolutionary Yakult Ladies system to a wide programme of corporate, cultural, academic and scientific sponsorships.

Fast forward 85 years, and today over **40 million Yakult products are consumed every day in 40 countries** and regions around the world.



The Yakult Central Institute

Our original product has changed very little – today's Yakult still contains the very same ***Lactobacillus casei* Shirota** strain that was selected and cultivated by the scientist Dr Shirota all those years ago. The Yakult Central Institute, our state-of-the-art research centre in Japan, continues to conduct research into this ***Lactobacillus casei* Shirota** strain, alongside our European Research Centre in Belgium and hundreds of independent researchers worldwide.

Yakult Central Institute continues to investigate the application of microorganisms, with major research fields including microbiology, nutritional science, physiological sciences, immunology, biochemistry, bioengineering, organic chemistry, fermentation engineering, natural products chemistry, pharmaceutical science and analytical chemistry.



Yakult Ladies

The pioneering Yakult Ladies system started in 1963 in Japan and is now a system that is used in several other countries including India, Thailand and Indonesia. The company currently employs over 84,000 Yakult Ladies worldwide, with 36,900 in Japan alone. Interestingly, more than 50% of Yakult products in Japan are distributed by Yakult Ladies.

The Yakult Ladies perform an important role, not only delivering Yakult products door-to-door every day, from rural areas to high-rise buildings in the city, but also providing an important community role interacting with customers. Yakult Ladies in Japan contribute to the creation of safe, secure and liveable communities through “Courtesy Visit Activities”. These Yakult Ladies visit more than 44,000 older people living alone and participate in safety and crime prevention watches both in cooperation with local police departments and local governments. Watch the inspiring story of a Yakult Lady in our award winning **Corporate Film**.



The Yakult Bottle

The first Yakult bottles were made of glass with a cork stopper and have since been replaced with recyclable plastic. Yakult's iconic bottle was developed in 1968 by Isamu Kenmochi who was an award-winning designer. The idea was to have an original, easy to handle and recognisable bottle. The bottle is based on the shape of the traditional Japanese kokeshi doll.

The Science Behind Yakult

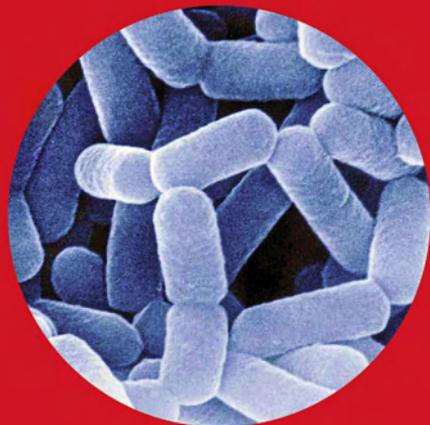
What exactly does '*Lactobacillus casei* Shirota' mean?

The strain name is broken down as follows:

Lactobacillus (genus): Made up of two Latin words: lacto meaning milk, and bacillus meaning small rod. Lactobacilli are small rod-shaped bacteria, often found in dairy products.

casei (species): Latin for 'cheese', reflecting the association of this species with fermented dairy products.

Shirota (strain): Named after Yakult's founder scientist Dr Shirota.





Production Process

To make the perfect bottle of Yakult a few elements are crucial – Yakult's unique bacteria, high quality ingredients, stringent hygiene procedures and strict quality controls. It takes nearly a week of fermentation to make Yakult.

Ongoing Research

Science remains at the heart of Yakult.

There are nearly 300 scientists and staff working at the Yakult Central Institute in Japan and the European Research Centre in Belgium, where innovative findings are generated every day.

The company also supports and collaborates with independent scientists and researchers in hospitals, universities and institutes all around the world, including the UK and Ireland.

Yakult in Europe

The European headquarters, Yakult Europe B.V., started operations in 1994.

Now, more than 25 years later, Yakult is available in 13 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

Yakult Factory in Almere

The factory in Almere, the Netherlands – where all the Yakult sold across Europe is made - is also open for visitors to come along and see the process for themselves. So far, we have welcomed over **200,000 visitors!**

Micropia Partnership

As part of the Yakult commitment to support educational sciences, Yakult supports Micropia – the only museum of its kind for microorganisms. The museum is located in Amsterdam and reveals the invisible world of microscopic life.



ARTIS MICROPIA

Yakult in the UK and Ireland

In the UK, Yakult was launched in 1996, with the addition of Yakult Light in 2002. Both Yakult products were introduced in Ireland in 2004. The two different types of Yakult available in the UK and Ireland are the Yakult Original (in the red packaging) and Yakult Light (in the blue packaging). The Light version contains less sugar and fewer calories and is enriched with vitamin D, which supports the maintenance of normal bones and muscle function and vitamin E, which contributes to the protection of cells from oxidative stress.

Both are guaranteed to contain at least 20 billion *Lactobacillus casei Shirota* bacteria per bottle.



Projects and Partners (UK & Ireland)

British Science Association

As part of our commitment to science, Yakult has been working with the British Science Association since 2017 supporting projects and activities that showcase the role of science in everyday life and bring science to the attention of people not normally engaged in this field.

Love Your Gut

Love Your Gut is an annual campaign highlighting the vital role of the digestive system and emphasising the importance of good gut health through educating the public, in association with charity and healthcare professional organisations in the UK and in Ireland.



Japanese culture

We are also involved in highlighting Japanese culture including the best in Japanese cinema with the **Japanese Touring Film Programme** (UK) run by the Japan Foundation and access>CINEMA's **Japanese Film Festival** (Ireland). Other events include our support of the annual **Experience Japan Festival** in Dublin.



Our partnership with Japanese chef **Yuki Gomi** allowed us to create inspirational Japanese recipes you can make at home, including a **Miso Yoghurt Chicken**, **Soba Noodle Salad**, **Instant Miso Soup** and more.

Inspired by the Yakult skin care products in Japan, together with beauty expert Abigail James we created **three DIY beauty** recipes that also include Yakult: a hand and feet scrub, a face mask and a hair rinse.

PR Team contacts'

PR team contacts:

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Please contact the PR team if you would like to speak in anyone in our science, marketing or sales team.



Samples

If you would like to receive some complimentary Yakult for you and your colleagues to try please give us a call at the Press Office and we will arrange this for you.

Or your office might be interested in receiving a visit from the Yakult Vending Machine! Using artificial intelligence, voice recognition, face recognition and a touch screen, the Yakult Vending Machine will offer a free Yakult to anybody who wants to learn a word in Japanese.

10 facts about Yakult

1. Each little bottle of Yakult contains at least 20 billion bacteria!
2. Our unique **Lactobacillus casei Shirota** bacteria – found in every little bottle – is scientifically proven to reach the gut alive.
3. Yakult Original (red top) and Yakult Light (blue top – less sugar & fewer calories with added Vitamin D & E) are both available in the UK and Ireland.
4. Yakult is sold as a 7-pack. One bottle for every day!
5. Both Yakult and Yakult Light are fat free, gluten-free and suitable for vegetarians.
6. Today, over 40 million Yakult products are consumed every day in 40 countries and regions all over the world.
7. The current bottle was designed by award-winning Japanese designer Isamu Kenmochi, after the traditional Japanese Kokeshi dolls – lucky charms.
8. Yakult has nearly 300 staff and scientists working at the Yakult Central Institute in Japan and the European Research Centre in Belgium.
9. Yakult is boldly going into space for experiments with astronauts on the International Space Station in collaboration with Japan Aerospace Exploration agency (JAXA). Their mission is to study the potential of bacteria such as those in Yakult.
10. Yakult's video about the story of our Yakult Ladies was the winner for Best Corporate Video at this year's PR Week's Brand Film Awards.

Additional resources available

You Tube

YouTube:



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Yakult

Website: