

SCAFFSTRONG

THE

PROBIOTICS & PREBIOTICS GUIDE

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Introduction

Gut health is a hot topic in the health world these days, and prebiotics and probiotics seem to be at the centre of the discussion.

But even though you've probably heard these terms a million times, you might not know what role they each play in maintaining a happy gut.

So let's break it down to basics and talk about our tummies on a microscopic level.

Our gut's diverse ecosystem is made up of trillions of different bacteria.

The bacteria that are present in our gut benefit far beyond just the gut itself, playing a role in our immune system and even our mental health. We've all heard of the benefit of prebiotics and probiotics in our diets, but do we really understand what these are and the differences between them?

Many things including high stress levels, too little sleep, eating ultra processed and high-sugar foods, can all damage our gut microbiome.

In this guide I will explain the main differences between pre and probiotics, what they are, why they're important for your health, and what foods to find them in.



What are Probiotics & Prebiotics?

Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts that are good for you, especially your digestive system.

So how do probiotics work?

The main job of probiotics, is to maintain a healthy balance in your body. We usually think of these as germs that cause diseases. But your body is full of bacteria, both good and bad. Probiotics are often called “good” or “helpful” bacteria because they help keep your gut healthy.

Among other things, probiotics help send food through your gut by affecting nerves that control gut movement. Researchers are still trying to figure out which are best for certain health problems.

When you are sick, bad bacteria invades your body and increases in number. This makes you feel out of balance or sick. Now the good bacteria work hard to fight off the bad bacteria to bring back the balance within your body and make you feel better again .

Prebiotics are special plant fibers that help the healthy bacteria grow in your gut.

Prebiotics are a type of plant fibre that the human body cannot digest. They serve as food for probiotics, which are tiny living microorganisms, including bacteria and yeast. Both prebiotics and probiotics may support helpful bacteria and other organisms in the gut.

Prebiotics are found in the carbohydrates that your body can't digest. They travel to your lower digestive tract. This helps make your digestive system work better. Where they then act like food to help the healthy bacteria grow.

Bottom line: Without prebiotics there's no food for the probiotics. That means the probiotics can't do their job effectively, which leads to problems in your gut microbiota.



Foods To Keep Your Gut Microbiota Healthy

Maintaining a healthy gut can sometimes be difficult. But there are many healthy probiotic and prebiotic foods that you can eat, to help your gut.

Which foods are prebiotic?

Before you go out and buy expensive prebiotic supplements, remember that many foods naturally contain them. That's because prebiotics are types of fibre found in vegetables, fruits, and legumes. Humans are not able to digest these types of fibre, but your good gut bacteria can digest them.

Foods that are high in prebiotic fibre include:

- Legumes, Beans, And Peas
- Oats
- Bananas
- Berries
- Jerusalem Artichokes (Not The Same As Regular Artichokes)
- Asparagus
- Dandelion Greens
- Garlic
- Leeks
- Onions

Which foods are probiotic?

There are also many probiotic foods that naturally contain helpful bacteria, such as yogurt.

A high quality, plain yogurt with live cultures can be a fantastic addition to your diet if you want to add beneficial bacteria.

Fermented foods are another great option, as they contain beneficial bacteria that thrive on the naturally occurring sugar or fibre in the food.

Examples of fermented foods include:

- Sauerkraut
- Kimchi
- Kombucha Tea
- Kefir (Dairy And Non-dairy)
- Some Types Of Pickles (Unpasteurized)
- Other Pickled Vegetables (Unpasteurized)

If you're going to eat fermented foods for their probiotic benefits, make sure they're not pasteurized, as this process kills the bacteria.

Some of those foods can also be considered synbiotic, because they contain both beneficial bacteria and a prebiotic source of fibre for the bacteria to feed on.

Some examples of synbiotic foods are cheese, kefir, and sauerkraut.

Should I take probiotic supplements?

Probiotic supplements are pills, powders, or liquids that contain live beneficial bacteria or yeast.

They're very popular and easy to find, yet not all of them are worth your money. They do not all have the same types of bacteria or the same concentrations. There are also many products on the market making claims with no proof of efficacy.

They also usually do not come with fibrous food sources for the bacteria to eat, which can hinder their effectiveness if someone isn't also eating those foods.

Some probiotic supplements are designed to carry the bacteria all the way to your large intestine for better effects, while others probably don't make it past your stomach acid.

There are some individuals who should not take a probiotic, or who may experience worsened symptoms if they do, such as people with small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) or people sensitive to ingredients in the supplement.

However, the right strains of probiotics can be incredibly beneficial for some people. It depends on the type of strain, product formula, the quality of the product, and storage.

The Benefits

Probiotics and prebiotics can provide your body with powerful benefits...

The probiotics may improve digestive health, mental health like reducing depression for example, gastrointestinal health and heart health. Plus, evidence suggests they may even give you healthier looking skin.

The prebiotics have many links to the benefits of probiotics. They may support a healthy gut, offer better digestive health, and help to lower antibiotic-related health problems. They may also improve your body's absorption of calcium and can help process foods faster, so they spend less time in your digestive system, which help avoid constipation.

Summary

Keeping your gut bacteria balanced is important for many aspects of health.

Your gut bacteria consist of hundreds of species of bacteria which all are extremely important for many aspects of your health. The best way to maintain a healthy gut microbiota is to eat plenty of both prebiotic and probiotic foods, as they will help promote the most ideal balance between good and bad gut bacteria.

Bonus tips...

- Try trading milk for kefir or yogurt in a smoothie!
- Add tempeh to your favourite stir-fry recipes!
- Serve sauerkraut as a side dish or try adding it in a soup!
- Experiment with kimchi. Add it to your rice or make delicious fritters or pancakes out of it!





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