



TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR GUT HEALTH

LEARN HOW PREBIOTICS AND PROBIOTICS CAN HELP TO BATTLE INFLAMMATION AND REDUCE DISEASE RISKS.
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You might have come across reports and findings that tout the benefits of including prebiotics and probiotics in your diet. You also might think they are similar. But these two compounds are actually different and each plays its own role in protecting our gut health.

PREBIOTICS

Prebiotics, which are non-digestible fibres, can be found in foods such as bananas, onions, garlic, Jerusalem artichoke, the skin of apples, chicory roots and beans. When consumed, prebiotics go through the small intestine undigested and become fermented upon reaching the large colon. This fermentation process helps sustain beneficial

bacteria (including probiotic bacteria) and boosts the presence of desirable bacteria in the digestive system, which has been associated with improved health and reduced risk of disease.

As our good gut bacteria metabolise non-digestible fibres, they produce short-chain fatty acids that are important for our health. Among these is butyric acid, which improves the health of the intestinal lining. Short-chain fatty acids also help to regulate levels of electrolytes in the body, including sodium, magnesium, calcium and water. Having a good balance of electrolytes aids digestion and bowel movements, and prevents diarrhoea.

FOODS RICH IN PREBIOTICS

- Onions
- Garlic
- Oatmeal
- Wheat bread with wheat bran
- Asparagus
- Barley

Apart from stimulating good bacteria growth in the gut, prebiotics can help to defend against harmful bacteria and toxins. This improves digestion. As prebiotics make their way through the stomach without being broken down by gastric acids or digestive enzymes, they bring about positive changes in the digestive tract and organs. Essentially, prebiotics become sources of nutrients or 'fuel' for beneficial bacteria in our gut.

PROBIOTICS

Unlike prebiotics, probiotics are live beneficial bacteria that naturally occur from fermentation in foods such as sauerkraut (pickled cabbage), miso soup and kimchi. Probiotics are also found in products like yoghurt, and health drinks such as Yakult or Vitagen.

One common probiotic is lactobacillus, which is present in yoghurt and other fermented foods. Lactobacillus can help in digesting lactose in dairy products such as milk. Consuming these benefit people who struggle with symptoms of lactose intolerance such as diarrhoea, abdominal cramps and vomiting.

Another common probiotic is bifidobacterium, which is found in dairy products such as cheese and infant milk formulas. It's also naturally present in the large intestine and useful to combat harmful bacteria in the intestines, prevent constipation as well as boost the immune system.

PREBIOTICS + PROBIOTICS

When combined, prebiotics and probiotics work together to help balance intestinal bacteria, especially to increase good bacteria.

A 2012 report in *The Journal of Nutrition* reveals that prebiotics and probiotics can help to treat many digestive diseases, including intestinal infections, chronic disorders like Crohn's disease, and symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

As 70% of our immune system is in the digestive tract, it is essential to keep the gut in good health.



FOODS RICH IN PROBIOTICS

- Fermented vegetables such as kimchi,
- Natto, a dish of Japanese fermented beans
- Raw and unpasteurised cheeses, especially if made from goat's milk
- Apple cider vinegar (as a drink or a salad dressing)



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