

Probiotics & Prebiotics...

for a healthy Colon



The growing awareness of the relationship between our diet & health has led to an increasing demand for food products that support our health above & beyond providing basic nutrition!!

Many of us could have heard of Probiotics & Prebiotics, & are aware of their benefits. Others may not, or are not sure of the difference in terms between both! That's why I felt the need to talk about these 2 important components that are very beneficial to our diet as well as well being.

Probiotics & Prebiotics are components present in foods, or can be incorporated into foods, which provide health benefits related to the gastrointestinal tract. Probiotics & prebiotics are rapidly gaining scientific popularity as safe & effective agents that help regulate the body's micro-environment.

Probiotics are live micro-organisms which, when administered in sufficient amounts, provide many health benefits. These "friendly bacteria" go by such names as acidophilus & L. reuteri. Supplementing with probiotics is particularly beneficial during & after the use of antibiotic drugs because the latter kill off all bacteria in our gut & probiotics help repopulate with "good bacteria".

Prebiotics are non-digestible food ingredients that benefit our body by selectively stimulating the growth of the “friendly bacteria” in the colon. Prebiotics are, simply speaking, the “food” for favorable bacteria or probiotics.

Probiotic microorganisms can be found in both supplement form & as components of foods & beverages such as:

- Yogurt
- Buttermilk
- Kefir
- Tempeh
- Miso
- Kim Chi
- Pickled carrots, beets & cucumbers
- Kombucha

Prebiotics are found naturally in many foods, & can also be isolated from plants (e.g., chicory root) or synthesized (e.g., enzymatically, from sucrose).

Food that naturally contain prebiotics:

- Oatmeal
- Flax
- Barley
- Other whole grains
- Onions & Garlic
- Artichokes
- Greens (dandelion greens, spinach, collard greens, chard, kale, & endives)
- Berries, bananas, & other fruit
- Legumes (lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, navy beans, white beans, black beans, sprouted wheat..)

Probiotic bacteria taken together with prebiotics that support their growth are called “synbiotics.” Synbiotics make for a perfect environment inside the colon for these bacteria to colonize & wipe out the pathogenic bacteria.

To emphasize the importance of supporting your diet with safe & effective probiotics, here is a list of body conditions in which intestinal floral imbalance can lead to:

- Infant allergies & infections
- Inflammatory colitis
- Candida yeast infections (in all
- Ulcerative colitis
- Antibiotic-induced diarrhea
- Gastroenteritis (stomach flu)

- body areas)
- Atopic dermatitis
 - Bladder infections
 - Vaginal infections
 - Acute pancreatitis
 - Indigestion
 - High cholesterol
 - Crohn's Disease
 - Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease
 - Diarrhea
 - Risk of colon cancer
 - Gastric ulcers
 - Duodenal ulcers
 - Helicobacter pylori infections
 - Post-operative bowel infections
 - Complications of prematurity
 - Abdominal radiation

The healthful effects of pre- & probiotics influence the balance of the body's microflora, & improve the function of the gut & systemic immune system. Although benefits vary, depending on the type & amount of a pre- & probiotic consumed, experts agree that daily consumption of foods containing these functional components is extremely beneficial... So let's go ahead and add these healthy foods to our diets!!

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