

Prebiotics and Probiotics

Creating a Healthier You



You've probably heard of prebiotics and probiotics, but do you know what they are? Nutrition research has pinpointed specific functional components of foods that may improve health, and prebiotics and probiotics are two such substances.

What Are Prebiotics and What Do They Do?

Prebiotics are natural, non-digestible food components that are linked to promoting the growth of helpful bacteria in your gut. Simply said, they're "good" bacteria promoters. That's right, not all bacteria are bad! Prebiotics may improve gastrointestinal health as well as potentially enhance calcium absorption.

Prebiotics in Your Diet

Prebiotics include fructooligosaccharides, such as inulin and galactooligosaccharides. But rather than focusing on these lengthy words, include more prebiotics in your diet by eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains such as bananas, onions, garlic, leeks, asparagus, artichokes, soybeans and whole-wheat foods.

What Are Probiotics and What Do They Do?

Probiotics are the "good" bacteria — or live cultures — just like those naturally found in your gut. These active cultures help change or repopulate intestinal bacteria to balance gut flora. This functional component may boost immunity and overall health, especially GI health. For instance, probiotics have been used for management of irritable bowel syndrome symptoms.

Probiotics in Your Diet

To obtain more probiotics, look to fermented dairy foods including yogurt, kefir products and aged cheeses, which contain live cultures (for example, bifidobacteria and lactobacilli). Be sure include plenty of non-dairy foods which also have beneficial cultures, including kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, tempeh and cultured non-dairy yogurts.

For more information: www.eatright.org | Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics