

Probiotic and Prebiotic Foods

The digestive tract is home to more than 500 bacterial species, totaling about 100 trillion microorganisms. Together, they play a crucial role in maintaining overall health. By providing them with a habitat, they perform various beneficial functions for us. They aid in food digestion, produce specific vitamins, and contribute significantly to immune defense. Additionally, they serve as a protective barrier, facilitating the filtration and proper absorption of nutrients from our

In our digestive system, there exist beneficial microorganisms known as probiotics, which require regular replenishment. These probiotics thrive on nourishing foods. Prebiotics, found in fiber-rich foods, serve as the fuel for probiotics, aiding their growth. Moreover, when probiotics break down prebiotic foods in the colon, they produce butyric acid. This compound serves as the primary energy source for the cells lining the colon and helps create an acidic environment, which is unfavorable for harmful bacteria.

Among the probiotic bacteria residing in the digestive tract, Lactobacilli and Bifidobacteria are prominent. These can be introduced into the body through supplements or incorporated into the diet via fermented or probiotic foods.

The table below provides examples of common probiotic and prebiotic foods.

To maintain a healthy balance of probiotics in the digestive tract, it's important to consume them regularly. General recommendations suggest ingesting 1 to 25 billion colony-forming units (CFUs) daily.

For instance, many commercially available probiotic yogurts contain around 1 billion CFUs per serving. Opting for fermented foods with "active, live cultures" is crucial for maximizing their benefits. Preferably, choose raw, unpasteurized, perishable options, and prioritize organic brands, as they typically retain more beneficial bacteria since they are not subjected to heat treatment post-fermentation. Additionally, fermented foods can be prepared at home, ensuring the ingestion of beneficial bacteria, as has been practiced in various cultures for centuries.

Prebiotic Foods	Probiotic Foods	
Apple	Dairy:	Non-Dairy:
Asparagus	Acidophilus milk	Fermented meats
Banana	Buttermilk	Fermented vegetables
Burdock	Cheese	Kimchi
Chicory	(aged) Cottage cheese	Kombucha
Cocoa	Kefir	Kvass
Dandelion greens	Sour cream	Miso
Eggplant	Yogurt (plain, no added sugar, active cultures)	Natto
Endive		Pickled vegetables (raw)
Flaxseed		Sauerkraut
Garlic		Tempeh
Honey		Yogurt (plain, no added sugar, active cultures)
Jerusalem artichoke (sunchoke)		
Jicama		
Konjac		
Leek		
Legumes		
Onion		
Peas		
Radicchio		
Whole grains		
Yaco		

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