

September: Probiotics and a Healthy Gut

What is a probiotic?

The word probiotic is derived from the Latin *pro*, meaning “for” and *biotic*, meaning “life”. As defined by the World Health Organization, probiotics are “live microorganisms which confer a health benefit to the host.” Probiotics support life and promote a healthy digestive tract or a “healthy gut”.

Where are they found?

The best source of probiotics can be found in certain foods, specifically cultured or fermented foods. Great probiotic food sources include yogurt or milk with live cultures (*acidophilus*), sauerkraut, soft cheeses like cottage cheese, kombucha tea, and miso. Probiotics can also be found through supplementation. Look for supplements containing living, viable microorganisms that are not destroyed by stomach acid and can adhere to the lining of the gut.

What are the benefits?

Probiotics help to create a healthy gastrointestinal tract, promote immune function, and can be beneficial in aiding in common digestive issues. Additionally, probiotics help to deter pathogens and provide better digestion and nutrient absorption.

The role of prebiotics:

You can't have one without the other! Prebiotics are sugar molecules that nourish and stimulate the growth of “good” bacteria, all while promoting a decrease in disease causing bacteria. Essentially, prebiotics are the food for probiotic bacteria in the gut. Prebiotics create a more acidic environment in the intestines which enhance the absorption of minerals, they help to keep blood sugar levels even, and promote the growth of the beneficial bacteria. Examples of foods containing prebiotics are bananas, eggplant, asparagus, legumes, soybeans, bran, wheat and green tea.

Great 8 Probiotic Foods

1. Kefir



5. Yogurt



2. Sauerkraut



6. Coconut Kefir



3. Kombucha



7. Kvass



4. Natto



8. Raw Cheese



Dr. Axe
FOOD IS MEDICINE

Note: If you are currently undergoing cancer treatment, defer to your physician's nutritional recommendations.