



Probiotics

Good Bacteria You Should Know About

what are probiotics?

Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts found naturally in the body and in some foods. Many people think of bacteria as “bad,” but probiotics are often called “good” or “helpful” bacteria because they can help create a healthy digestive system.

Researchers are trying to learn more about probiotics and all of the ways they work. One way is that probiotics can help restore beneficial bacteria (as opposed to antibiotics, which can kill good gut bacteria) and balance your digestive system to keep your body working like it should. Other ways include:

- ➔ Facilitating digestion and nutrient absorption
- ➔ Helping optimize our body’s immune system by increasing good bacteria in the gut
- ➔ As a complementary treatment for digestive diseases, such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and Crohn’s
- ➔ There is some research that supports their benefit in non-digestive issues, such as skin conditions like eczema

terms to know

Fermentation

In order to understand the role of probiotics in food, it is important to learn about fermentation. Fermentation is a common process that has been used for thousands of years to make many everyday foods. It is a metabolic process where live bacteria (such as probiotics) and yeasts convert carbohydrates, such as sugar or starch, into an alcohol or an acid. Without fermentation, it would be impossible to make many fantastic foods including yogurt, beer, wine, and cheese!

Live and Active Cultures

Some of the live bacteria (such as probiotics) that are essential for fermentation do not survive due to factors such as the temperature required to complete the fermentation process. Dairy foods like milk, yogurt, and cheese are most likely to contain probiotics that survive the fermentation process. Look for products that contain “live active cultures” or “probiotic cultures.”

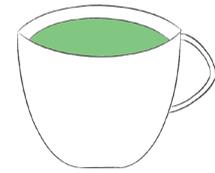
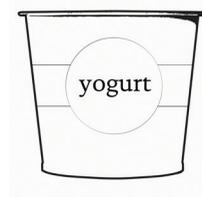
examples of probiotics

Streptococcus thermophilus: These friendly bacteria are used to make yogurts and cheeses. They help break down lactose, the sugar in milk. This is particularly helpful for those who are lactose intolerant.

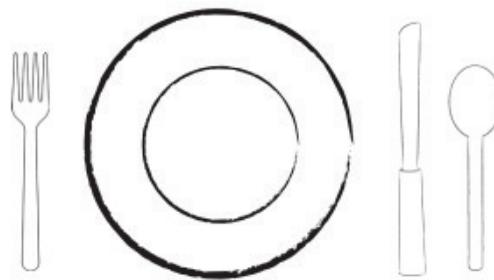
Lactobacillus acidophilus: This bacteria exists naturally in the body, and is also used to produce yogurt and other dairy products. Similarly to *S. thermophilus*, *L. acidophilus* digests lactose and may be helpful for people with lactose intolerance.

foods that contain probiotics

- ➔ yogurt, fermented milk
- ➔ kefir, a fermented milk drink
- ➔ filmjök, a fermented milk drink
- ➔ sauerkraut, fermented cabbage
- ➔ kombucha tea, a fermented tea beverage
- ➔ tempeh, fermented soybeans
- ➔ miso, a traditional Japanese fermented seasoning
- ➔ kimchi, a Korean fermented vegetable dish



how much do you need?



While there's no recommended daily dose of probiotics, research suggests aiming for 1 billion to 10 billion live bacteria cultures (measured in Colony Forming Units, or CFUs). Since bacteria counts are rarely found on food labels, focus instead on fitting a serving of probiotic-rich food into your eating routine every day. A cup of filmjök or yogurt labeled “live and active cultures” for example, will put you well within that range.

getting the most out of probiotic foods

Not all probiotic foods are created equal, so here are a few tips to make sure you're making the best choice for your body:

- ➔ Always read nutrition labels and pay attention to the serving size so you understand what amount the nutrition information is based on
- ➔ When choosing between options of the same type of food, make sure you select the option with less sugar and a short, simple ingredient list
- ➔ For yogurt, make sure the label reads “live and active cultures” - this is a guarantee that your yogurt contains probiotics
- ➔ Choose probiotics in their natural food form versus taking probiotic supplements in pill form