

# siggi's®

## Probiotics

### Good Bacteria You Should Know About

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#### what are probiotics?

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Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts found naturally in the body and in some foods that when found in adequate amounts may have a health benefit. Many people think of bacteria as “bad,” but probiotics are often called “good” or “helpful” bacteria because they may 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 may help restore beneficial bacteria (as opposed to antibiotics, which may kill good bacteria, in addition to the harmful bacteria it targets) and balance your digestive system to keep your body working like it should.

Other ways may include:

- ➔ Facilitating digestion and nutrient absorption
- ➔ Helping optimize our body's immune system by increasing good bacteria in the gut
- ➔ Complementing treatment for digestive diseases and issues

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#### terms to know

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##### 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 Active Cultures

The terms *live active cultures* and *probiotics* do not actually mean the same thing. Probiotics are a set of live active cultures with a proven health benefit. While all live active cultures are important, not all have a proven health benefit. Dairy foods like milk, yogurt, and cheese are most likely to contain probiotics or live active cultures that survive the fermentation process. Look for products labeled with *live active cultures* or *probiotics*.

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#### examples of probiotics

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*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.

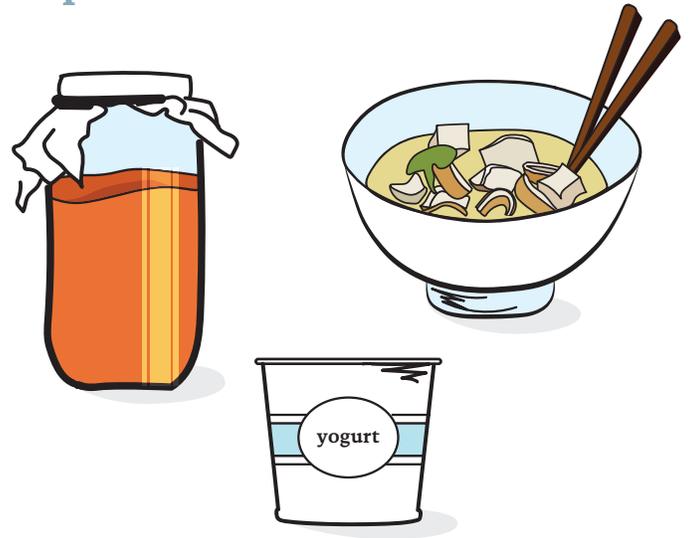
*Lactobacillus acidophilus*: This bacteria exists naturally in the body, and is also used to produce yogurt and other dairy products. Similarly to *S. thermophilus*, *L. acidophilus* digests lactose and may be helpful for people with lactose intolerance.

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## foods that may contain probiotics

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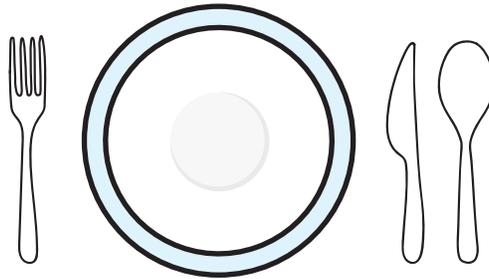
- ➔ yogurt, fermented milk
- ➔ kefir, a fermented milk drink
- ➔ filmjök, a fermented milk drink
- ➔ sauerkraut, fermented cabbage
- ➔ kombucha tea, a fermented tea beverage
- ➔ tempeh, fermented soybeans
- ➔ miso, a traditional Japanese fermented seasoning
- ➔ kimchi, a Korean fermented vegetable dish



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## how much do you need?

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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.

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## getting the most out of probiotic foods

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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*
- ➔ Choose probiotics in their natural food form versus taking probiotic supplements in pill form when possible

Source: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Probiotics-HealthProfessional/>