Prebiotics and Probiotics: What You Should Know

Discussion on prebiotics and probiotics has been a nutrition topic in recent years, but do you know what they are? With continued growth in research, studies have found these “nutrition boosters” in foods may improve your overall health.

You probably have noticed many different types of supplements; from pills and cleanses to powders, but they are unnecessary. Pre and probiotics are natural ingredients found in everyday foods.

What are Prebiotics and How Do They Work?
Prebiotics are “good” bacteria promoters – natural, non-digestible fiber compounds linked to promoting the growth of helpful bacteria in your gut. Prebiotics improve gastrointestinal (GI) health as well as improve absorption of certain nutrients. Foods that contain prebiotics include leeks, onions, garlic, bananas, asparagus, artichokes, soybeans, and whole-wheat foods.

What are Probiotics and How do they Work?
Probiotics are the “good” bacteria, or live cultures, just like those naturally found in your gut. These active cultures help transform and repopulate intestinal bacteria to balance gut flora. This functional component has been found to boost immunity and overall health, even used to manage certain intolerances and allergies. Yogurt is not the only source of probiotics, but also kefir, aged cheeses, kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, tempeh, and other cultured non-dairy yogurts.

The bottom line: Pre and probiotics work together to promote GI health and researchers are finding that healthy gut flora is responsible for more than just healthy digestion, but healthy bodies.

(Reference: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics)

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