



Balance

from the Inside

If you've looked closely at a yogurt label lately, you probably have some idea of what probiotics are. Prebiotics, on the other hand, are new to many of us despite the fact that most of us eat some almost every day.



What are prebiotics?

Prebiotics act as "food" for the beneficial bacteria in our digestive system, by promoting their growth and activity. At any given moment there are a variety of microorganisms living in our bodies that actively participate in key functions such as digestion and nutrient production. There are also potentially harmful bacteria present, and keeping the two in balance is important for maintaining our health. Probiotics, on the other hand, are actual live microorganisms that we get through food and supplements to add to the existing beneficial bacteria in our bodies. One way to view prebiotics and probiotics is that prebiotics feed the good bacteria we already have, while probiotics give us more of the good bacteria.



What do they do?

Recent studies suggest that prebiotics help us to feel full faster and improve our blood sugar and insulin levels after eating. Prebiotics have also been credited with helping to improve nutrient absorption, reduce inflammation and reduce our risk of heart disease and certain cancers. The science supporting the use of prebiotics is still developing, but there is evidence to suggest that eating more prebiotic foods can be beneficial to our overall health.



Where do we get prebiotics?

Prebiotics occur naturally in foods such as leeks, asparagus, chicory, Jerusalem artichokes, garlic, onions, wheat, oats, and soybeans. All of the currently known prebiotics are types of fiber. Incorporating a variety of sources of fiber such as fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains into your diet every day can help you get the benefits of prebiotics along with other important nutrients.



REFERENCES:

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