



NATURE NATE'S
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WITH *Honey*
Nutrition Edition

HOT TOPICS IN TODAY'S HEALTH SCENE

The Ins and Outs of Gut Health: Prebiotics' and Probiotics' Role

If you haven't already taken them, you're sure to have heard of probiotics by now. But what are they, really? And what do they support? You may think they're just a supplemental bacteria that helps regulate digestion and elimination, but their sources and purpose extend much further.

Your lower digestive tract is home to at least 300 species of bacteria! These bacteria are referred to as your "microbiome" or the "microbiota." When the body has a favorable balance of microbiota, there are a variety of benefits.

Numerous studies show over 70% of our immune system is regulated by these bacteria. This makes a balanced digestive system a major benefit for not only the short term to prevent illness, but also the long term to aid in defenses against chronic disease. Our gut-regulated immune systems work over time, supporting antioxidant systems that protect cells from constant stress. This means proper gut health can also aid in recovery from trauma or exercise!

**DID YOU KNOW YOUR DIGESTIVE SYSTEM
NOT ONLY IMPACTS HOW YOU FEEL AFTER
YOU EAT, BUT ALSO IMPACTS YOUR
IMMUNE SYSTEM AND STRESS LEVELS?**



In addition to the immune and antioxidant benefits, a well-balanced digestive system has also been found to work closely with the brain to manage stress via hormone regulation. Roughly 90% of the feel-good hormone serotonin is actually made in your gut, and signals from your gastrointestinal tract influence anxiety and depression symptoms.

Then, of course, there are the digestive benefits, not only reducing constipation, bloating, and diarrhea, but also potentially increasing nutrient absorption from food in your intestines into the bloodstream.

So, how do we obtain this “favorable balance”? With food, of course! There are two types of food sources: probiotics, which most of you have heard of, and prebiotics, which many of you may be eating plenty of without realizing it!

PROBIOTICS are living bacteria in fermented or cultured foods that will colonize in your gut when consumed. They include the obvious foods such as yogurt, but they’re also in cultured sauerkraut, kimchi, tempeh (a fermented soy protein) and even naturally in raw dairy. There are also many probiotic beverages on the market, the most notable being kombucha.

PREBIOTICS are fermentable carbohydrates, including soluble fibers in produce, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains, but also oligosaccharides, a type of carbohydrate you get from raw honey! Including a variety of these foods daily in your diet essentially “feeds” the good bacteria that live in your digestive tract to support all of the benefits above.



MEET KELLY JONES

Kelly Jones is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics. She is also a former Division I athlete who believes that eating real food and leading an active lifestyle are keys to not only physical health, but also mental health and happiness. Visit Kelly's blog eatrealivewell.com



BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING YOUR GUT HEALTH:

1. EAT PLENTY OF FRUITS, VEGETABLES, WHOLE NUTS, SEEDS AND WHOLE GRAINS.

Make a realistic goal that includes adding more of these foods to your current diet. For example, always include fruit at breakfast, or sweeten your coffee with honey.

2. WHEN DEALING WITH ADDED STRESS (WORK, RELATIONSHIPS, TRAVEL, FITNESS), INCREASE YOUR INTAKE OF PROBIOTIC FOODS.

When your body is under stress, so is your digestive tract. Support it with a cultured yogurt each day to help combat any imbalance that may occur.

3. TAKE A PROBIOTIC SUPPLEMENT WHEN ON ANTIBIOTICS.

While you should always consult your physician first, probiotic supplements can help maintain good bacteria as antibiotics fight off the bad. Multi-strain supplements are a better buy than single-strain.

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