

Functional Foods: Probiotic vs Prebiotic

Food is more than just something to eat when we are hungry. Some foods can help our bodies work better and keep us healthy. These are called functional foods. Functional foods give us energy, support our digestion, and help improve our heart health.



The two most common types of functional foods are called **probiotics and prebiotics**. Let's break them down to understand how they benefit our health.



Probiotics are live healthy bacteria. They live in your gut and help you digest food, fight off bad bacteria, and support your immune system. Probiotics come in different forms. They can be found in foods like probiotic yogurt, kefir (a yogurt-like drink), and in some fermented foods such as kimchi, sauerkraut, and miso. Some probiotics also come in a powder or pill form, but it is important to note that not everyone needs to take probiotics for general gut health. *Talk to your doctor or dietitian before taking probiotics.*

Prebiotics are NOT bacteria. They are a type of fibre that feeds the good bacteria already living in your gut. Think of them as food for your gut microbes. When we eat prebiotic foods, we help our healthy bacteria grow and stay strong which supports our overall gut health. Prebiotics can be naturally found in high-fibre foods like legumes, fruit, garlic, asparagus, and whole grain foods like oats.

Adding these functional foods in your diet can help keep your gut healthy making you feel better, have more energy, and even improve mood. Here are a few tips to help keep your gut healthy:

- Cut down on sugar and processed foods.
- Keep hydrated.
- Practice stress management techniques.
- Add more high fibre foods into your daily meals.

When you take care of your gut, your whole body will feel better!

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