

Probiotics And Prebiotics



June 2024 Nutrition Corner

Non-Metro New Mexico Area Agency on Aging

Your gut biome is a miniature biome inside your intestines populated by trillions of microscopic organisms. These microorganisms affect each other and their environment in various ways. They can influence your overall health, both within your digestive system and outside of it.

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Probiotics are live micro-organisms found naturally in food. They are friendly bacteria (flora) that assist the body's naturally occurring gut flora. Probiotics are widely known to help improve digestion. They may also be beneficial in reducing depression, promoting heart health, and boosting immunity.

Probiotics are found in:

- ◆ Yogurt
- ◆ Kefir
- ◆ Sauerkraut
- ◆ Kimchi
- ◆ Miso
- ◆ Kombucha
- ◆ Pickles
- ◆ Buttermilk
- ◆ Cheese
- ◆ Apple Cider Vinegar



Prebiotics are foods that feed the natural flora within our gut. They are special plant fibers that help the healthy bacteria grow. Prebiotics are used to help improve the balance of the gut microbiome which then improves digestion and absorption of nutrients. They may also enhance the body's anti-inflammatory response.

Prebiotics are found in:

- ◆ Blueberries
- ◆ Chicory Root
- ◆ Jerusalem Artichokes
- ◆ Onions
- ◆ Bananas
- ◆ Whole Oats
- ◆ Apples
- ◆ Mushrooms
- ◆ Asparagus
- ◆ Barley
-and many other foods



Senior Center Spotlight—White Rock Senior Center

Here at the White Rock Senior Center, we help the seniors in our community to come together for good food and good company. The center offers classes ranging from Yoga and Pilates, to Bridge and Billiards. The seniors are provided lunches with a wide variety of food from different cultures. Each month a speaker is invited to tell stories about the countries he has visited while a dish with flavors from that country is served to the seniors. So far, we have served fresh fish and black beans from Costa Rica, Tikka Masala and basmati rice from India, crab cakes from the Alaskan coast, and Beef Rendeng from Indonesia. We have also collaborated with the Los Alamos team to organize the 2024 Senior Health Fair where we spotlighted the farms we work with through NM Grown with several dishes using fresh, local produce.

MORE FACTS ABOUT PROBIOTICS AND PREBIOTICS

Research has shown that **probiotics** may be beneficial in improving:

- Digestive health
- Mental health (including depression and cognitive memory)
- The Immune System

Some benefits of **prebiotics** are that they:

- improve calcium absorption
- regulate blood sugar and insulin resistance
- lower inflammation

There is no recommended daily intake for probiotics, so there is no way to know exactly which fermented foods or what quantity is best. The general guideline is to just add as many fermented foods to your daily diet as possible. Eat probiotic and prebiotic foods together to help balance the good and bad gut bacteria.



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How can you include more probiotics and prebiotics in you Senior Center meals?

- ⇒ Serve Greek yogurt with berries (probiotics and prebiotics)
- ⇒ Substitute Plain Greek Yogurt in place of sour cream or mayonnaise (ex. Egg or Potato Salad (probiotics))
- ⇒ Serve sauerkraut (serving size 2 TBSP) with bratwursts. (probiotics) However, since sauerkraut is high in sodium, reduce sodium in other menu items within the week.
- ⇒ Use Apple Cider Vinegar for Salad Dressings (probiotics)
- ⇒ Cook with more onion and garlic (prebiotics)
- ⇒ Follow the meal patterns from the approved menus to ensure your seniors are getting the required fruits and vegetables. (prebiotics)

“Yes” to Yogurt!

Britannica defines **yogurt** as a “semifluid fermented milk food having a smooth texture and mildly sour flavor because of its lactic acid content”. Besides providing probiotics, yogurt also contains many nutrients such as protein, calcium, vitamins B6 and B12, riboflavin, potassium, and magnesium. The amounts of these nutrients will depend on the type of yogurt. There are three types of yogurt:

- ⇒ Low fat or non-fat which is made with 2% milk or skim milk
- ⇒ Kefir is a fermented milk beverage
- ⇒ Greek yogurt is creamier and has a higher protein content. However, because it is strained more, it may have a lower calcium content.

Adding fruit such as berries to yogurt provides prebiotic benefits as well.

It is important to read the nutrition labels on the yogurt containers. Many yogurts have added sugars, artificial sweeteners, and unnecessary additives. Products (ie. cereals, bars, or yogurt-covered raisins) stating that they are “made with real yogurt” usually only contain a small amount of yogurt powder. Yogurt powder is heat-treated which kills the beneficial bacteria. Yogurt coatings are made with sugar, oil, and yogurt powder which offsets any nutritional benefits. It’s best to choose yogurts that are low in sugar and additives with a variety flora.



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Homemade Greek Yogurt Ranch Dressing

Servings: 16 Tablespoons

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1/2 - 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1/2 - 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 - 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh chives
- 1 cup non-fat plain Greek yogurt
- 1/3 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice



Instructions:

1. Place the spices (dried parsley - fresh chives) into a food processor and pulse a few times, until the spices have been ground up a bit.
2. Scrape down the sides.
3. Place the remaining ingredients - Greek yogurt, buttermilk, Dijon, and lemon juice - into the food processor and pulse until the ingredients have been fully incorporated.
4. Scrape down the sides, if needed, and pulse again.
5. Transfer into a sealable container (like a mason jar) and place in the fridge until you're ready to use it!