Creating Health & Nutrition

Prebiotics: How to Feed Your Good Bacteria

What Are Prebiotics?
You may not normally think about the beneficial bacteria in your gut (known as probiotics) as needing to eat, but they do! The types of nutrients that strengthen the good bacteria (namely, Bifidobacteria and Lactobacillus) are known as prebiotics and they are found in a wide variety of everyday foods. By keeping your beneficial bacteria healthy, you will also keep your gastrointestinal (GI) tract healthy.

Benefits of a Prebiotic-rich Diet
1. Improves satiety (feeling of fullness) and weight management
2. Protects against gut infections and even some types of cancer (especially colon cancer)
3. Reduces incidence and symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
4. May increase uptake of certain minerals, such as calcium and magnesium
5. Improves overall immune function by decreasing the presence of harmful bacteria

Products or food combinations that contain both a probiotic and a prebiotic are known as symbiotic foods because they work together to benefit the body.

Shopping Tips
Look for the following terms on food labels to seek out prebiotic sources:
• Acacia gum
• Arabinose
• Fructooligosaccharides
• Galactooligosaccharides
• Inulin
• Lactulose
• Maltodextrin
• Wheat dextrin

Best Food Sources of Prebiotics
• Bananas, berries, and legumes (fructooligosaccharide sources)
• Garlic, onions, Jerusalem artichokes, and leeks (inulin sources)
• Whole grains (wheat dextrin source)
• Nuts and seeds (arabinose sources)

Tips Affecting Different Age Groups
All prebiotics are also sources of fiber, which means that eating too much can sometimes cause gastric upset (such as gas, bloating, and stomach ache). Inulin in particular is not always tolerated in large amounts.

For More Information

Prebiotic Yogurt Parfait*

Makes 1 serving

INGREDIENTS
¼ cup whole grain cereal
10 almonds or cashews
1 small banana
6 ounces of nonfat plain or vanilla yogurt
1 Tbsp ground flaxseed
½ cup fresh berries

DIRECTIONS
Place yogurt, flaxseed, nuts, and cereal in a bowl. Top with banana
and fresh berries.

NUTRIENT INFORMATION
Per serving: 377 calories, 19 g protein, 58 g carbohydrate, 11 g
total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 5 g monounsaturated fat, 10 g fiber, 4 mg
cholesterol, 210 mg sodium.

*Since this recipe contains prebiotics and probiotics (from the yogurt),
it is naturally symbiotic.

Recipe by Nicole Hindle.