Probiotic Benefits

New research is continuing to prove that probiotic benefits and side effects go far beyond what we previously thought.

Probiotics hold the key not just for better health and a stronger immune system, but also for healing digestive issues, mental health illness and neurological disorders.

In this complete probiotics guide, you will learn everything you need to know about probiotics, including the top 10 probiotic foods, the best probiotic supplements to take and how to use them.

Probiotic Benefits Begin in the GUT

The first and most overlooked reason that the state of your digestive tract is critical to your health is because 80 percent of your entire immune system is located in your digestive tract! That is an astounding percentage.

In addition to the impact on your immune system, your digestive system is the second largest part of your neurological system. It is called the enteric nervous system and is located in your gut. This is why it is called your “second brain.”

Many people with health concerns such as thyroid imbalances, chronic fatigue, joint pain, psoriasis, autism and many other conditions do not realize that these illnesses originate in the gut.

If these issues and many others are connected to our gut health, then what elements are essential for digestive health? Consider this: “According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), upward of 60 to 70 million Americans are affected by digestive diseases ... 236,000 US citizens die of digestive-related disease every year and 1.9 million are disabled. Digestive diseases and disorders cost the U.S. over $100 billion per year.”
HEALTH BEGINS in the **GUT**

70 MILLION AMERICANS suffer from digestive disease and it costs the USA **100 BILLION DOLLARS IN MEDICAL BILLS.**

More than **40** diseases have been linked to **BACTERIAL IMBALANCE** including **DEPRESSION, ARTHRITIS, IBS, & CANCER**

Your Gut Hosts between **500 & 2,000** species of microorganisms (bacteria, yeast, parasites, viruses, etc.)

60-80% of **IMMUNE SYSTEM** is located in the gut.

Our bodies are **MORE BACTERIA THAN HUMAN.**

Our bodies have **10 TIMES** more microbes than human cells.

Our microbes have **360 TIMES** more protein-coding DNA than we do.

Gut bacteria create **95%** of the body’s serotonin.

**Dr. Axe**

**FOOD IS MEDICINE**
These statistics are staggering, yet poor gut health actually affects much greater numbers than these statistics illustrate. That’s because your digestive health affects every physiological system in your body.

And the many toxins we’re subjected to today decrease digestive function, affecting our ability to utilize nutrients and rid ourselves of cholesterol — triggering chronic inflammation in the body, which is the cause of many chronic conditions and diseases.

The secret to restoring your digestive health is all about balancing out the good and bad bacteria in your gut. If you are going to be healthy, you MUST consider consuming probiotic-rich foods and supplements daily.

**What Are Probiotics?**

Probiotics are bacteria that line your digestive tract and support your body’s ability to absorb nutrients and fight infection. There are actually 10 times more lactobacillus probiotics in your gut than the total number of cells in your body!

Your skin and digestive system host about 2,000 different types of bacteria. Probiotic benefits have been proven effective in supporting immune function and healthy digestion, as well as beautiful skin.

Your good gut bacteria is also responsible for:

- Producing vitamin B-12, butyrate and vitamin K2
- Crowding out bad bacteria, yeast and fungi
- Creating enzymes that destroy harmful bacteria
- Stimulating secretion of IgA and regulatory T Cells

Probiotics have been in our systems right from the moment that we stepped into the world. When a newborn is in the mother’s birth canal during delivery, they are exposed to the bacteria of their mother for the first time. This event starts a chain of events inside the infant’s GI tract, which starts to produce good bacteria.

Most people, including children, are in need of a probiotic boost due to the use of prescription medication — particularly antibiotics as well as high-carbohydrate diets, the consumption of chlorinated and fluoridated water and eating conventional foods such as non-organic meat and dairy, which contain antibiotic residues. These chemicals kill off probiotics in your system, which will damage your digestive tract over time.²
The Top 7 Probiotic Killers include:
1. Prescription Antibiotics
2. Sugar
3. Tap Water
4. GMO Foods
5. Grains
6. Emotional Stress
7. Chemicals and medications

In order to improve your gut flora balance, make sure to avoid the probiotic killers. We are exposed to many of these foods, toxins and stressors on a daily basis — and if you’re going to restore your digestive health, they must be addressed. If they are not addressed, your gut micro-organisms become imbalanced and your system can become a breeding ground for bad bacteria, yeast, viruses, fungi and parasites.3

The only way to fix this issue and heal your gut is to eliminate the foods that feed bad bacteria and to start consuming probiotic-rich foods and supplements.

20 Probiotic Benefits Proven by Research

The strongest evidence to date finds that probiotic benefits include:
• boosting immune system research
• prevent and treat urinary tract infections
• improve digestive function
• heal inflammatory bowel conditions like IBS4
• manage and prevent eczema in children
• fight food-borne illnesses

New studies underway may soon prove that probiotics can:
• reduce flu and colds
• reduce overuse of antibiotics
• treat kidney stones
• treat colic
• prevent cavities and gum disease
• treat colitis and Crohn’s disease
• combat antibiotic-resistant bacteria
• treat liver disease
• battle cancer5
• manage autism
• lower cholesterol
• fight bacteria that causes ulcers
• improve acne
• aid in weight loss
Are there Probiotic Side Effects?

Probiotic side effects can sometimes include diarrhea, if you take too much too fast. You can start off with a smaller amount like 1 tablespoon of kefir or 1 probiotic capsule a day and work your way up.

But overall, the side effects of probiotics are positive!

How Probiotics Work

Your gut contains both beneficial and harmful bacteria. Digestive experts agree that the balance of gut flora should be approximately 85 percent good bacteria and 15 percent bad bacteria.

If this ratio gets out of balance, the condition is known as dysbiosis, which means there is an imbalance of too much of a certain type of fungus, yeast or bacteria that is negatively affecting the body. By consuming certain types of probiotics foods and supplements, you can help bring these ratios back into balance.

Also, it is important to understand that probiotics are not a new idea. Throughout history, cultures have thrived on probiotics found in fermented and cultured foods, which were invented for food preservation long before the refrigerator. In fact, the refrigerator could be one of the worst inventions for you digestive health because now we don’t have to culture or ferment our foods to keep them from spoiling. As a result, we lose out on those vital probiotics.
Health Benefits of Probiotic Foods

According to neurologist Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride:

“Every traditional culture, when you look at their traditional diet, they ferment their foods. They fermented everything. You can ferment dairy, grains, beans, vegetables, fruits, meats, and fish. Everything can be fermented, and there were fermented beverages in every culture. When the cabbages were ripe in September, you made it a fermented cabbage.

Perhaps for a month or two, you were eating fresh cabbage, but then for the rest of the year, 10 months of the year, you ate your cabbage in a fermented form. Quite a large percent of all the foods that people consume on a daily basis were fermented. And with every mouthful of these fermented foods you consume trillions of beneficial bacteria.”

Fermented foods have been consumed for over 5,000 years, and even in the past 100 years, certain cultures have excelled on probiotic-rich foods.

Germans consumed sauerkraut, Indians consumed lassi, Bulgarians consumed kefir, Asians cultures consumed kimchi, Russians consumed raw yogurt and Kenyans consumed amasi.

Fermented foods give you way more units of probiotics and strains of probiotics than a supplement ever will. When Dr. McBride tested the fermented vegetables she made to a bottle of a good quality probiotic, she found that her vegetables had trillions of probiotic units and over 30 strains — which means her one serving of fermented vegetables was equal to an entire bottle of probiotics.

Dr. McBride also states that, “Nature is extremely wise and populated all organic fruit and vegetables, the dust on our soils, and all plant matter with Lactobacilli. The fresh cabbage leaves, if it’s organically grown (not the one from chemical farming), will be covered in Lactobacilli lacto-fermenting bacteria. You don’t need to add anything. You just chop it up. Add some salt in the initial stages. (The salt is added in the initial stage in order to stop putrefactive bacteria from multiplying.) Then as the Lactobacillus stop working and start multiplying, they produce lactic acid. That’s why they’re called Lactobacillus. That’s just lactic acid.
If you look at the research in lactic acid, it is one of the most powerful antiseptics. It kills off lots and lots of bad bacteria.... So as the lactic acid starts producing, it will kill off all those putrefactive and pathogenic microbes and preserve the food. It’s a great preservative... A good batch of sauerkraut can keep for five to six years without spoiling or rotting, as long as it is covered by its own juice.”

This process of fermentation does even more than than preserve your food, — it also makes the nutrients in the food more bio-available. According to Dr. McBride, the amount of bio-available vitamin C in sauerkraut is 20 times higher than in fresh cabbage!\(^6\)

One of the other aspects that make the probiotic benefits in fermented foods so amazing is that they also kill off bad bacteria!

**Top 10 Probiotic Foods List**

Here is a list of the most beneficial probiotic-rich foods:

**#1 Kefir**

Similar to yogurt, this fermented dairy product is a unique combination of milk and fermented kefir grains. Kefir has been consumed for well over 3,000 years, and the term kefir began in Russia and Turkey and means “feeling good”.

Kefir is created by the fermentation of milk from the bacteria and yeasts, which breaks down lactose in the milk. That is why kefir is suitable for those who are otherwise lactose intolerant.

It has a slightly acidic and tart flavor and contains anywhere from 10 to 34 strains of probiotics. Kefir is similar to yogurt, but because it is fermented with yeast and more bacteria, the final product is higher in probiotics.

**#2 Sauerkraut**

Made from fermented cabbage and other vegetables, sauerkraut is not diverse in probiotics, but is high in organic acids (what gives food its sour taste), which support the growth of good bacteria. Sauerkraut is extremely popular in Germany today.

Sauerkraut is high in vitamin C and digestive enzymes. It is also a good source of natural lactic acid bacteria such as lactobacillus. Sauerkraut juice has been studied to benefit digestive issues like leaky gut, diarrhea and constipation. It is also effective at helping you kick a cold fast.
#3 Kimchi
Kimchi is a cousin to sauerkraut and is the Korean take on cultured veggies.

It is created by mixing a main ingredient such as chinese cabbage with a number of other foods and spices, like red pepper flakes, radishes, carrots, garlic, ginger, onion, sea salt and fish sauce. The mixture is then left aside to ferment for 3 to 14 days.

#4 Coconut Kefir
Coconut kefir is ade by fermenting the juice of young coconuts with kefir grains. This dairy-free option for kefir has some of the same probiotics as traditional dairy kefir but is typically not as high in probiotics. Still, it has several strains that are great for your health.

This kefir has a great flavor and you can add a bit of stevia, water and lime juice to it and make a great tasting drink.

#5 Natto
A popular dish in Japan consisting of fermented soybeans. Natto contains the extremely powerful probiotic bacillus subtilis, which has been proven to bolster your immune system, support cardiovascular health and enhance digestion of vitamin K2.

Natto can also contain vitamin B₁₂, which is lacking in vegan diets and is one of the highest plant-based sources of protein at 17.7 grams per 100 gram serving size.

#6 Yogurt
Possibly the most popular probiotic food is live cultured yogurt or greek yogurt made from the milk of cows, goats or sheep.

In most cases, yogurt can rank at the top of the probiotic foods list if it comes from raw grass-fed animals. The problem is there is a large variation on the quality of yogurts on the market today. It is recommend when buying yogurt to look for three things. First, make sure it comes from goat’s milk, sheep’s milk or A2 cow’s milk; second, make sure that it is grass-fed; and third, ensure that it is organic.

#7 Kvass
Kvass has been a common fermented beverage in Eastern Europe since ancient times. It was traditionally made by fermenting rye or barley, which gives it its mild flavor. In more
recent years, it has been created using beets and fruit, along with other root vegetables like carrots.

Kvass uses lactobacilli probiotics, which have blood and liver cleansing properties.

#8 Miso
Miso is one the mainstays of traditional Japanese medicine and is commonly used in macrobiotic cooking as a digestive regulator. Miso has been a staple in Chinese and Japanese diets dating back approximately 2,500 years.

Today, most of the Japanese population begins their day with a warm bowl of miso soup, which is believed to stimulate the digestive system and energize the body.

Made from fermented soybeans, rice or barley, adding a tablespoon of miso to some hot water makes an excellent, quick, probiotic-rich soup.

The fermentation process can take anywhere from a few days to a couple of years to complete and the end result is a red, white or dark brown colored paste with a buttery texture.

Miso soup is famous throughout the world and it is very easy to prepare. Simply dissolve a tablespoonful of miso in a pot of water filled with seaweed and other ingredients of your choice.

#9 Kombucha
Kombucha is an effervescent fermentation of black tea that is started by using a SCOBY, also known as a symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast. Kombucha has been around for over 2,000 years and is believed to have originated in 212 B.C. in the Far East. It later surfaced in Japan and then spread to Russia.

Many claims have been made about kombucha, but its primarily health benefits include digestive support, increased energy and liver detoxification.

#10 Raw Cheese
Goat’s milk, sheep’s milk and A2 cow’s milk aged cheeses are particularly high in probiotics, including thermophilus, bifidus, bulgaricus and acidophilus. Always buy raw and not pasteurized or you will not be getting any of the probiotic benefits.
How to Pick the Best Probiotic Supplements

It’s important to note that there are different types of strains of probiotics. The probiotic benefits experienced with one probiotic strain may be completely different from the health benefits seen from another probiotic.

*Certain strains of probiotics support immunity, while others support digestion — and some even help burn fat and balance hormones.*

If you want to use probiotics to help with a specific health concern, it’s vital to select the right probiotic for the right condition. Or, consume a wide range of probiotics in your food and you will be covered.

As we discussed earlier, you are what you digest and there are no other compounds in the world that support digestion and the assimilation of nutrients better than living probiotics. While many companies are now producing probiotics, the majority of them are ineffective at best. In fact, most probiotic supplements today are destroyed by your stomach acid before they ever get to your digestive tract.

When reading a probiotic label, it should reveal the genus, species and strain of the probiotic.

The product should also give you the CFUs (colony forming units) at the time of manufacturing.

Also, the majority of probiotics can die under heat, so knowing the company had proper storing and cooling of the facility is important.

**There are five specific things you want to consider when buying a probiotic supplement:**

1. **Probiotic Capsules/Brand Quality.** Look for brands that are reputable.
2. **High CFU Count.** Purchase a probiotic brand that has a higher number of CFUs — from 15 billion to 100 billion.
3. **Strain Diversity.** Search for a probiotic supplement that has 10 to 30 different strains.
4. **Survivability.** Look for strains like *bacillus coagulans*, *saccharomyces boulardii*, *bacillus subtilis*, *lactobacillus rhamnosus* and other cultures or formulas that ensure probiotics make it to the gut and are able to colonize.
5. **Research.** Do your homework and look for brands that have strains that support your specific needs. You can find specific strain benefits in the chart on the next page.
**Beneficial Probiotic Strains**

**Bifidobacterium bifidum** — the most dominant probiotic in infants and in the large intestine. Supports production of vitamins in the gut, inhibits harmful bacteria, supports immune system response and prevents diarrhea.\(^7\)

**Bifidobacterium longum** — supports liver function, reduces inflammation and removes lead and heavy metals.\(^8\)

**Bifidobacterium breve** — helps colonize healthy gut community and crowd out bad bacteria.\(^9\)

**Bifidobacterium infantis** — alleviates IBS symptoms, diarrhea and constipation.\(^10\)

**Lactobacillus casei** — supports immunity, inhibits H. pylori and helps fight infections.\(^11\)

**Lactobacillus acidophilus** — relieves gas and bloating, and improves lactose intolerance. Has shown a 61 percent reduction in E. coli, lowers cholesterol levels\(^12\) and produces vitamin K. Also important in GALT immune strength.

**Lactobacillus bulgaricus** — a powerful probiotic strain that has been shown to fight harmful bacteria that invades your digestive system and is stable enough to withstand the acidic digestive juices of the stomach. Also neutralizes toxins and naturally produces its own antibiotics.

**Lactobacillus brevis** — shown to survive the GI tract, boost cellular immunity, enhance natural T-killer cells and kill H. pylori bacteria.\(^13\)

**Lactobacillus rhamnosus** — supports both bacterial balance and healthy skin. Helps fight urinary tract infections and respiratory infections, and reduces anxiety by lowering stress hormones and GABA neurotransmitter receptors.\(^14\) Also, survives the GI tract.

**Bacillus subtilis** — an endospore probiotic that is heat resistant. Elicits a potent immune response and supports GALT.\(^15,16\) Suppresses the growth of bad bacteria, such as salmonella and other pathogens.

**Bacillus coagulans** — an endospore probiotic that is heat resistant and improves nutrient absorption. Also has been shown to reduce inflammation and symptoms of arthritis.\(^17\)

**Saccharomyces boulardii** — a yeast probiotic strain that restores natural flora in the large and small intestine and improves intestinal cell growth. Has proven effective in treating inflammatory bowel disease like Crohn’s disease.\(^18\) Also shown to have anti-toxin effects,\(^19\) be antimicrobial and reduce inflammation.\(^20\)
## Beneficial Probiotic Strains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probiotic Strain</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<td>The most dominant probiotic in infants and in the large intestine. Supports production of vitamins in gut, inhibits harmful bacteria, supports immune system response and prevents diarrhea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lactobacillus Acidophilus</strong></td>
<td>Relieves gas, bloating, improves lactose intolerance. Shown 61% reduction in E. coli, lower cholesterol levels, and creating of vitamin K. Also, important in GALT immune strength.</td>
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<td><strong>Bacillus Coagulans</strong></td>
<td>An endospore probiotic that is heat resistant and improves nutrient absorption. Also has been shown to reduce inflammation and symptoms of arthritis.</td>
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<td><strong>Bifidobacterium Longum</strong></td>
<td>Supports liver function, reduces inflammation, removes lead and heavy metals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lactobacillus Casei</strong></td>
<td>Supports immunity, inhibits H. pylori, and helps fight infections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bifidobacterium Infantis</strong></td>
<td>Alleviates IBS symptoms, diarrhea, and constipation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lactobacillus Brevis</strong></td>
<td>Shown to survive the GI tract, boost cellular immunity, enhanced natural T-killer cells, and kill H. pylori bacteria.</td>
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<td><strong>Bifidobacterium Breve</strong></td>
<td>Helps colonize healthy gut community and crowd out bad bacteria.</td>
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<td><strong>Bacillus Subtilis</strong></td>
<td>An endospore probiotic that is heat resistant. Elicits a potent immune response and supports GALT. Suppresses growth of bad bacteria like salmonella and other pathogens.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lactobacillus Bulgaricus</strong></td>
<td>A powerful probiotic strain that has been shown to fight harmful bacteria that invades your digestive system and is stable enough to withstand the acidic digestive juices of the stomach. It also neutralizes toxins and naturally produces its own antibiotics.</td>
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<td><strong>Lactobacillus Rhamnosus</strong></td>
<td>Supports bacterial balance and supports healthy skin. Helps fight urinary tract infections, respiratory infections, and reduce anxiety by reducing stress hormones and GABA neurotransmitter receptors. Also, survives GI tract.</td>
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<td><strong>Saccharomyces Boulardii</strong></td>
<td>A yeast probiotic strain that restores natural flora in the large and small intestine and improves intestinal cell growth. It has proven effective in treating inflammatory bowel disease like Crohn’s disease. It’s been shown to have anti-toxin effects, be antimicrobial, and reduce inflammation.</td>
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Getting The Best Probiotic Benefits

Again, to get the most probiotic benefits, it is important to get a balanced source of probiotics with many different strains. Follow the action steps below as you begin to adjust your diet and incorporate a balanced probiotic supplement.

**Action Steps:**
- Do your best to remove substances from your life that can destroy probiotics, such as sugar, grains, GMOs, tap water, antibiotics and emotional stress.
- Consume two servings daily of probiotic-rich foods from the top 10 list.
- Take a probiotic supplement that has (at the very least) 10+ strains of probiotics with at least 15 billion CFUs.

**References**


2 Reid G. Probiotics to Prevent the Need For, and Augment the Use Of Antibiotics. Canadian Journal of Infectious Disease and Medical Microbiology. 2006;17(5):291-295


9 Mariko Wada, Satoru Nagata, Masahiro Saito, Toshiaki Shimizu, Yuichiro Yamashiro,


