
What Are Prebiotics?

Okay. You're watching Food As Medicine TV, where we help you heal from the root cause. Emerging research suggests that maintaining a healthful gut microbiome, we talked about the gut, it helps us reduce the risk of a variety of conditions from cancer to autoimmune disease, hormonal imbalances, food allergies, [00:00:30] and irritable bowel syndrome, things a ton of people struggle with. Now, for those of you who don't know, the gut microbiome, it consists of many different microbes. We can define the gut microbiome as the collective genetic material of all the bugs in your digestive tract, good, bad, and indifferent. I say indifferent because you have a group of neutral bacteria in your gut called commensal bacteria. [00:01:00] They are kind of like the impressionable teenagers of a gut bacteria kingdom. They haven't figured out which way they're going to go yet, whether it's good or bad, because it depends upon the influence you exert upon them with what you eat.

We should have a balance of 80 to 90% good bacteria and only 10 to 15, 20% max of the bad bacteria, of the bad bugs. Their purpose [00:01:30] is to keep our immune system challenged, to inform it, keep it on its toes so we can stay healthy. However, because of the Standard American Diet that we've so appropriately acronized as SAD and other things like copious amounts of high fructose corn syrup and sugar, genetically modified foods like corn and soy and canola, the radical overuse of antibiotics, environmental toxins, immunity [00:02:00] that is weakened from prolonged and chronic stress, we have flipped that ratio. The odds are stacked against us. We've flipped that ratio. The vast majority of people, they've got 80 to 90% bad bugs, and they have only 10 to 15% good bugs. That is dragging down all aspects of health and wellbeing, which is why I'm here with you today.

I want to talk to you about the power of prebiotics, not probiotics [00:02:30] to build your microbiome but prebiotics. Now, we've all heard of probiotics. Those are the good bugs in your system, and we want more of them, but we want more of them the natural way, where the body can create and maintain them on its own versus always having to take a probiotic supplement in order to get them. This is where prebiotics come in. Prebiotics are the fuel or the food for your good bacteria, [00:03:00] and they are profoundly helpful in supporting human health because they feed the good bacteria in the colon or the large intestine, meaning that they support the growth of probiotic species in the lower intestinal tract. Actually, this is cool, they provide a nutrition source to heal the cells within the colon. Very, very helpful. Let's talk about some examples of super healthy prebiotic fibers you might see listed [00:03:30] on some food labels.

I'm sure you've seen inulin listed before, which is a type of chicory. It is a very healthy prebiotic. I have here not coffee, but Teeccino, which is a chicory herbal coffee. It's an amazing coffee upgrade. Anybody want to go with me, maybe upgrade their coffee to Teeccino instead of coffee? Maybe after you watch this, you can at least decide to go half and half. Your family's not going to notice the difference, [00:04:00] but you're going to cut down on the acid that coffee does. You're going to stop leaching your minerals, and you're going to add some really good prebiotics in. We also have acacia gum. It's in a lot of gums, and it's a great fiber to help lower the bad cholesterol. Then, we also have fructooligosaccharides. We affectionately call them FOS. What these guys are are just simply plant sugars, but they're powerful plant sugars that are found [00:04:30] in asparagus and these weird looking roots right here that are Jerusalem artichokes or sunchokes. They use FOS to make natural medicine for constipation, traveler's diarrhea, and high cholesterol levels. You can just eat them and get food as your medicine.

For my science-oriented tribe members, here's what happens with these foods. We consume these prebiotics. Then, they feed [00:05:00] our good gut bacteria. That allows us to make something called short-chain fatty acids. Short-chain fatty acids are a subgroup of fatty acids produced in small amounts when dietary fiber is fermented in the colon. The most important fatty acid that is produced during this fermentation process is butyric acid. This supports the healing of the damaged cells in both the small and the large intestine. That is [00:05:30] a lot of food as medicine happening here. How does it get better than that? Just incorporating these couple of things I've told you about are going to help you get healing in both the small and large intestine. Garlic is also loaded with antiviral properties. Onions are bacteria magnets, meaning they will collect and process out the bad bacteria from the body, but they're not to be eaten if you have small intestinal bacterial overgrowth because they're a little too [00:06:00] good at being bacteria magnets in that case.

While you would think, "Wait a minute. Garlic and onions, they don't have much fiber." They don't. They have two grams of fiber, but 17% of that fiber is prebiotic fiber. Get your apple a day in because apples with the skin on are very helpful. The skin contains pectin, and 50% of pectin is fiber. If your digestion or metabolism is super compromised, then you might not be able to tolerate the [00:06:30] skin just yet, and you may need to cook your apples and cook the skin in order to get your prebiotics until your digestion gets a little bit healthier, and you can have them raw. Coming back to Jerusalem artichokes, they are loaded with prebiotic fiber inulin. Sunchokes, they're a species of sunflower, and they happen to be rich in iron and potassium as well, makes them great for your adrenals and great for your thyroid. I love to make a mock mashed potato out of sunchokes, [00:07:00] add in some butter, add in some



almond milk, maybe a little collagen, a little salt because just a half a cup of these guys contain 76% prebiotic fiber.

Now, for those of you who have compromised gut health and want to talk about when we should skip prebiotics because bacteria ferment these fibers as food and this supports the good bacteria colonies when we already have a relatively healthy ecosystem. [00:07:30] We talked about if you have SIBO, small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, and you're feeding your body these foods, they can cause gas and bloating and constipation with any type of overgrowth that's going on. We have to do some gut healing first before we can then have these foods be healthy once again. There you have it, friends, prebiotics 101. If this information is interesting to you, we have [00:08:00] talked about gut health a ton at The Whole Journey. I encourage you to look deeper, visit a couple of our other shows, and to definitely watch our webinar that's going to explain the five steps to gut healing so you know when you can add these prebiotics in. You're going to head to FreeGutWebinar.com, and I will teach you about the five steps to healing your gut. Thank you so much for being here, and we'll catch you next time [00:08:30] on Food as Medicine TV.