



The Pros of Probiotics

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All of a sudden, it seems that probiotics have invaded every aisle of the supermarket. But if you're still confused about what probiotics actually are and why they're so beneficial, then read on!

Your intestines are home to billions of friendly bacteria belonging to hundreds of different species that perform a host of useful functions. Some manufacture Vitamin K or biotin (a B vitamin). Some digest the fiber in your diet and release mildly acidic byproducts that help you absorb calcium and iron—and possibly even reduce your risk of colon cancer. Some stimulate the growth and proper development of new cells in your intestines, while others stimulate the intestines' immune tissues to produce antibodies against harmful invaders. Still others spread out to prevent harmful yeasts or food-borne bacteria—like salmonella, E. coli, campylobacter and shigella—from being able to gain a foothold, multiply and cause infection. Emerging research is even investigating a possible role of diverse ecosystem of bacteria in preventing food allergies and obesity. As you can see, a diverse, thriving community of these critters in your gut is a very important thing for good health!

The community of beneficial bacteria that live in your intestines is collectively known as your “gut flora.” The beneficial bacteria you eat to help boost the gut flora's population are called “probiotics.”

So how does one help cultivate a diverse and well-populated gut flora? There are two main ways:

- Be a good host: Feed the probiotics a high fiber diet to keep them healthy and thriving; and limit your use of antibiotic medications to those that are truly medically necessary.
- Invite others over: Eat foods that contain a variety of live, active probiotic species and strains known for their different health benefits on a regular basis... and do so especially after taking a course of antibiotic drugs.

Since so many of us have a hard time eating enough fiber in our diets, eating probiotic-rich foods is an important strategy for overall health. Cultured dairy products—such as yogurts and kefir—are among the tastiest, most convenient and time-tested vehicles for delivering a daily dose of probiotics.

Redwood Hill Farm goat milk kefir and Green Valley Organics Lactose Free yogurts and kefir all contain [Flourish](#)[®]: a proprietary blend of 10 different live & active probiotic strains. Each strain was selected for its unique and complementary role for flavor development and health promotion. Together, they're responsible for the terrific, signature “tang” of the products they've cultured, their smooth and creamy textures, and the health benefits they deliver!

