

Prebiotic Foods

a source of non-digestible fibre in food that feeds the gut microorganisms



What are prebiotics?

Prebiotics are non-digestible food components which are resistant to breakdown by stomach acid and enzymes in the human gastrointestinal tract, specifically fermentable fibres which act as fuel for beneficial gut microorganisms, and stimulate their growth and activity. These microorganisms aid digestive and metabolic processes, support the immune system, plus make advantageous nutrients like short-chain fatty acids (SCFA) which play a role in the regulation of metabolism, inflammation, and disease

Common prebiotic compounds

Common types of prebiotics are resistant starches, beta-glucans, inulin, and pectin. Resistant starches are found in starchy foods such as legumes, green bananas, boiled and chilled potatoes. Beta-glucans can be found in oats and barley. Inulin can be found in onions, garlic, and Jerusalem artichokes. Whilst pectin can be found in fruits like apples and berries. These prebiotic compounds help establish healthy gut microbiota and improve microbial diversity, support satiety, aid blood glucose control, provide a source of antioxidants.

Health benefits

Prebiotic-induced short-chain fatty acids may contribute to reduced inflammation by preserving intestinal lining health and inhibiting the passage of pro-inflammatory molecules across the gut wall, thereby strengthening the immune system and potentially lowering the risk of infections.

Immune Function

Gut Health

Prebiotic foods are effective for improving stool consistency, number and frequency of bowel movements in individuals with chronic constipation.

Metabolic Health

Prebiotic foods may help regulate blood sugar levels, improve insulin sensitivity, and reduce the risk factors for metabolic disorders including obesity and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM).

Appetite regulation

Prebiotic foods have the potential to diminish appetite and decrease cravings for certain foods, particularly those high in sugar.

Food sources:

Aim to consume a broad variety of plant foods in your diet daily to benefit from the many health benefits of fibre and specifically prebiotic fermentable fibres. Common food sources include chicory root, Jerusalem artichokes, dandelion greens, asparagus, onions, leeks, garlic, oats, barley, wheat bran, bananas.

