

What are probiotics and prebiotics?

Probiotics are beneficial bacteria which naturally live within the body (known as the ‘gut microbiota’) and help to break down and digest food within the gut.

Prebiotics are high-fibre foods, found in fruits, vegetables and legumes that the body finds hard to digest, but which the bacteria in the gut can use as food. These help to fuel the bacteria, supporting their growth, health and function within the gut.

The table below provides examples of food sources for both. All of these items can be purchased from supermarkets, local farm shops or health food stores.

Type	Examples of Food Sources	Extra Guidance
Prebiotics	Vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artichoke • Asparagus • Chicory root • Garlic • Leeks • Onions 	Tip: If not used to eating much fibre, then take it slowly at first to reduce the risk of intestinal discomfort.
	Fruit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Avocado • Bananas (esp. green/unripe) • Berries 	
	Oats	Tip: Steel-cut oats typically contain the most fibre, followed by rolled oats. Use to make porridge for breakfast.
	Flaxseeds	Tip: Add a tbsp to homemade porridge
Probiotics	Fermented foods <i>e.g.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sauerkraut</i> • <i>Kimchi</i> • <i>Pickles (not in vinegar)</i> • <i>Pickled vegetables</i> • <i>Kombucha tea</i> • <i>Kefir</i> 	Tip: Naturally (non-ultra-processed) fermented foods are usually found in the fridge section within supermarkets. Try adding a tsp or two of kimchi or sauerkraut to your sandwich for an extra crunch.
	‘Live’ or ‘Cultured’ Yoghurt <i>e.g. Greek yoghurt</i>	Tip: Look for brands that say ‘live cultures’ on the packaging
	Cheese <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheddar • Parmesan • Gouda 	Tip: Aim for aged, hard cheeses, but be mindful of saturated fat content.
Both	Tempeh (fermented soy product, like tofu)	Tip: This can be added to cooking sauces.
	Miso	Tip: Add a tsp of paste to pasta sauces or add a tsp to a mug of warm water to create a broth to drink.
	Sourdough bread	Tip: Freezing does not eliminate the effects. If you do freeze then use airtight wrapping to retain moisture and avoid freezer burn. Defrost in the fridge rather than room temperature and consume soon after.