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# Oxygen

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with Nicole Wilkins

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November/December 2016 Issue

# Probiotics vs. Prebiotics

What's the difference, and do you need both for a healthy gut biome?

A new study of **1,900** adults published in the *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition* found that taking **probiotics** resulted in a greater reduction in overall body mass index, with the greatest **weight loss** occurring in people taking more than one type of probiotic.

College students suffering from **colds** who took a probiotic of *Lactobacillus* **recovered** two days earlier and had symptoms that were 34 percent **less severe** than those who did not take the probiotics.

## Probiotics

Deep inside your belly there are bugs. Millions and billions and trillions of bugs. But this is not a setup for a horror movie: These probiotics are the good bugs that keep your digestive system healthy by controlling the growth of harmful bacteria and enhancing the absorption of nutrients in your gut.

Probiotics are living organisms that hitchhike to your GI tract in the foods you eat, such as yogurt, miso soup and sourdough bread, and they work to improve immune system function, lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and keep you regular.

## Prebiotics

Just like you need food to live, so do your little gut bugs. This is where prebiotics come in. A prebiotic is a non-digestible plant fiber that nourishes the existing bacteria in your gut, helping them grow and improving the good-to-bad bacterial ratio. Prebiotics are found naturally in foods

such as onions, beans, asparagus, oatmeal, artichokes and edible fruit skins, and they are not affected by heat, cold, acid or time.

## The Winner? Both

Eating certain foods in combination makes for the ideal gut-vironment. For example, having a yogurt with an apple delivers prebiotics and probiotics into your system, while a chicken sandwich on sourdough bread with a spinach salad will make your belly bugs jump for joy. This is because leafy green vegetables contain sulfoquinose (SQ), a sugar that is essential for nourishing your good bacteria, allowing them to proliferate and in turn limiting the ability of bad bacteria to colonize, according to a study published in *Nature Chemical Biology*. Interestingly, SQ is the only sugar molecule that contains sulfur, and when SQ is digested by the bacteria, the sulfur gets released back into the environment. Explains a lot about broccoli!

Get your daily dose of prebiotics and probiotics to keep your insides happy and healthy with these fab food finds.



### Regular Girl Probiotic Fiber & Probiotic Blend

Throw a serving into a juice, smoothie or protein shake and get 5 grams of prebiotic fiber and 8 billion active probiotics.  
 ▶ [regulargirl.com](http://regulargirl.com), 20 on-the-go single-serving packets \$35



### Suja Pressed Probiotic Water

This water, enhanced with the essence of organic fruits and vegetables, has 2 billion vegan CFUs\* and only 10 calories.  
 ▶ [Target](http://target.com) and [sujajuice.com](http://sujajuice.com), \$3



### Icelandic Provisions Skyr

Similar to Greek yogurt, skyr has a rich, creamy texture and is made with live, active heirloom cultures.

▶ [Target](http://target.com), [Wegmans](http://wegmans.com), [Shaws](http://shaws.com) and [ShopRite](http://shoprite.com), \$2



### Health-Ade Kombucha

Get your bubble fix with this small-batch, organic, fermented tea, which naturally contains active probiotics and healthy acids.

▶ [Health-ade.com](http://health-ade.com), \$5



### Vital Proteins Collagen Whey

Grass-fed, pasture-raised collagen combined with coconut water and 2 billion probiotics make this the ultimate blend for improved performance and recovery.

▶ [vitalproteins.com](http://vitalproteins.com), \$50



### DRINKmaple

Made with water drawn straight from the tree, this lightly sweet water contains 46 naturally occurring prebiotics, polyphenols, antioxidants, electrolytes and minerals.

▶ [Kroger](http://kroger.com), [Whole Foods](http://wholefoods.com), [Wegmans](http://wegmans.com), \$3

\*CFU = colony-forming units