



PROBIOTICS AND PREBIOTICS

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There are more bacteria in the intestinal tract than the total number of cells in our body. In health, “good” bacteria like *Acidophilus* and *Bifidobacteria* dominate. These bacteria are very useful to our bodies, helping break down food into useable fragments, producing nutrients that feed the intestinal cells and generating a number of vitamins. Beneficial bacteria of this sort we call probiotics.

Probiotics play an important role in restoring intestinal integrity. (See *Why The Emphasis On Digestion*). This happens in part because of their nutrient capacity and part because they drive out and replace bacteria, which produce leaky gut.

Prebiotics are starches and similar foodstuffs, which help probiotics function and grow. These may also very helpful in restoring gut integrity.

The Standard American Diet generally favors bad bacteria and discourages probiotics. That being so, most Americans need to take probiotic supplements from time to time to maintain good digestive function. This is especially true of people who have had “leaky gut” in the past - it seems their resistance to GI trouble is less than it should be, and unless they continually replace their probiotics, they can relapse to some extent.

Our office obtains very high quality probiotics for our patients, at a reasonable price. Probiotics must remain refrigerated to preserve viability of the bacteria. Do not buy probiotics which claim they do not have to be refrigerated; once the bacteria are exposed to air and moisture, they begin to grow and need to be refrigerated to stay vital.

Selected References:

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