

9 Incredible Benefits of Probiotics You Had No Idea Could Do To Improve Your Health



The health benefits of probiotics have been proven for decades, and the majority of them have been documented through scientific research. Most of the health benefits associated with probiotics relate to your digestive system.(1) However, recent studies have discovered that many other conditions such as Alzheimer's, depression/anxiety, [chronic inflammation](#), and even autism are linked to microbiome imbalance.

A number of these digestive system benefits have either a direct or indirect impact on your mental, and overall health.

The National Institute of Health (Nih) launched the Human Microbiome Project in 2008: a research collaboration to chart, for the first time ever, the microorganisms that are part of the body.

This huge challenge aims not only to analyze and identify the diversity of bacteria but also to measure the impact of the microbiome on a range of acute and chronic health conditions, from obesity, [diabetes](#), common respiratory illnesses, eczema, depression, anxiety, and autoimmune conditions such as Crohn's disease. The theory is that in addition to—or maybe instead of—using antibiotics to kill harmful bacteria, probiotics can conceivably be used to restore the “good” or healthy bacteria to bring the body back into balance.

What are probiotics?

Probiotics are live microorganisms that live in your body. You can get more of this friendly bacteria via fermented foods such as Kefir, [kombucha](#), and fermented vegetables such as Kimchi, pickles, sauerkraut and more. Ideally, you want to get your pre and probiotics from foods. However, you can also get them in a supplement form— I prefer refrigerated probiotics (live foods) [like these](#), but [these](#) are also great.

Increasingly more research studies reveal that the balance or imbalance of bacteria in your digestive tract is connected to general health and wellness.

Probiotics promote a healthy balance of gut bacteria and have actually been connected to a wide variety of health benefits. These include weight loss, improved digestion, IBS and leaky gut and other digestive disorders, mental health, and immune function among others.

Here's is an introduction to 9 amazing health advantages of taking probiotics:

1. Probiotics Are The good or Friendly Bacteria

The microorganisms in your gut aid your body digest foods, taking in nutrients, gaining energy and remaining healthy. However, this complicated balance of gut bacteria can change significantly throughout your life.

They even assist the body produce vitamins K and vitamin B. Probiotics help to ferment some short-chain fatty acids found in carbs. A big portion of these makes it through the upper intestinal tract undigested. The microorganism in the lower intestinal tract aid ferments these types of carbs, developing useful nutrients and waste by-products.

Without probiotics in our gut, we would not have the ability to absorb specific fibers and take in nutrients and calories from them (10).

2. Probiotics May Help with Weight loss

Antibiotics will destroy a healthy inner ecosystem. However, probiotics restore it. Once your gut flora is properly balanced with good bacteria, the body will naturally drop excess weight. Probiotic-rich foods including kefir and cultured vegetables will populate the gut with helpful bacteria that fight inflammation and control the growth of harmful microbes.

Probiotics help you feel fuller for longer periods of time, burn more calories and absorb less fat. This is partially brought on by increasing levels of a *particular hormonal agent*, such as **GLP-1**. [4]

They might also help with weight reduction directly. In one research study, dieting women who took *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* for about 3 months lost 50% significantly more weight than women who didn't take a probiotic. [5]

Another research study of 210 individuals discovered that taking even low doses of *Lactobacillus gasseri* for 12 weeks led to an 8.5% decrease of stomach fat.

So how do we benefit from Probiotics the most?

First of all, **diversity** matters. Diversity is described in terms of the number of different strains of bacteria living in the gut. Bottom line—the more, the merrier.

Changes in your inner ecosystem can help **predict weight issues and obesity**. For example, the numbers of *Bifidobacteria* are higher in children who tend to maintain a normal weight than in those who later become overweight.

According to this [article in bodyecology](#), Scientists have been able to identify five ways that gut health influences weight. Here's an excerpt:

- **Metabolism:** Gut bacteria harvest energy from the food that you eat. Some harvest more energy than others. The bacteria living in your gut provide roughly 4-10% of your daily calories.
- **Hormonal Balance:** Gut bacteria regulate the release of gut hormones. These hormones control blood sugar, encourage satiety (the feeling of being “full”), and reduce leaky gut.
- **Genetics:** Your genome helps shape your inner ecosystem. For example, genetic mutations that affect levels of the “satiety” hormone **leptin** are associated with more fat-forming bacteria and less good-for-you *Bifidobacteria*.
- **Inflammation:** Unhealthy gut bacteria produce toxins that trigger a systemic inflammatory response. Research shows that levels of bacterial toxin are higher in those who struggle with obesity or type 2 diabetes. In animal studies, high levels of bacterial toxin will cause weight gain—*without any shift in diet*.
- **Leaky Gut:** Intestinal inflammation—or leaky gut—drives obesity and problems with blood sugar. When the gut barrier is “leaky,” bacterial toxins make their way into the bloodstream. A dose of probiotics (like *Bifidobacteria*) has been shown to reduce leakiness and improve blood sugar. [6]

3. Particular Probiotic Strains Can Help Keep Your Heart Healthy

Experimental data has demonstrated that Probiotics can help reduce LDL cholesterol (bad) and blood pressure. Likewise, prebiotics inhibit hepatic lipogenesis in rats and, consequently, induce a significant hypotriglyceridemic (high triglycerides) effect. [15]

Probiotics support the development of regulatory T cells in the immune system. T-cells are a type of white blood cell that is of key importance to the immune system and is at the core of adaptive immunity.

Befidobacteria, in particular, induces the upregulation of particular cells which have a direct anti-inflammatory effect and enhance the generation of Treg cells. [16]. These T cells help reduce overzealous immune responses throughout the body. That means, fewer number of white blood cells being sent to a damaged artery and, therefore, less inflammation and less chance of accumulation of cholesterol in the area.

According to [this study](#) Probiotics help reduce blood cholesterol in three different ways- here's an excerpt:



- Probiotics create acids that counter cholesterol production: As probiotic bacteria absorb fiber from the intestines, they generate acids. One of the specific acids, i.e. propionic acid, reduces production of cholesterol by the liver.
- Probiotics break down liver bile acids: Bile acids assist the body in digesting fats, and the liver produces these bile acids from cholesterol. The liver recycles bile acids and utilizes them over and over. Probiotics break down bile acids and, therefore, the liver has to make additional bile acids, using up more cholesterol in the progression.

- Probiotics actually eat cholesterol: Probiotic bacteria have been shown to break down cholesterol and use it for nourishment.



Thus, it can be concluded that probiotics can be included in your diet through new technologies like microencapsulation and immobilized cell technologies. Further research in this area may offer exciting avenues in health care strategies.[2]

Scientific evidence exists to indicate that there is potential for the derivation of health benefits from consuming food containing probiotics. However, it was felt that additional research data are needed to confirm a number of these health benefits in humans.

Moreover, bile, a naturally occurring fluid mainly made from cholesterol, assist in food digestion. By breaking down bile, probiotics can stop it from being reabsorbed in the digestive tract, where it can get in the blood as cholesterol. [Jennifer L. Pluznick, Ph.D.](#), assistant professor of physiology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Is at the leader in animal research into gut bacteria. Pluznick' research demonstrates the idea that bacteria living in the gut can produce chemicals as part of their normal metabolism after they're exposed to the food we eat.

When those chemicals are then absorbed into the blood stream, it's believed that they activate receptors in the blood vessels which in turn lower blood pressure. In studies on mice, these blood pressure changes are substantial, especially when considering the potential impact over the course of a lifetime.

Pluznick explains: “We know that there’s a symbiotic type of relationship between gut bacteria and their hosts—that’s us. Certain chemicals that the gut bacteria produce can alter blood pressure. We also know that when mice or rats or people have high blood pressure, the bacteria in their guts are different. Those things each reveal a piece of the puzzle.”

In order to experience any advantages connected to high blood pressure, supplements needed to go beyond 8 weeks and 10 million colony-forming strains (CFUs) day-to-day.

4. Probiotics Can Help Prevent and Treat Diarrhea

Probiotics are commonly known for their ability to prevent diarrhea or decrease its severity. One of the typical side effects of taking antibiotics is Diarrhea. This happens in part because prescription antibiotics can adversely impact the balance of good and bad bacteria in the gut.

A number of research studies recommend taking probiotics while on a course of antibiotics because it'll decrease the threat of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (9).

According to [this](#) article, interactions between the gut microbiota and the host have been demonstrated to influence intestinal and systemic immunity. This wards the GI against pathogens, intestinal motility, sensation, secretion and barrier functions, liver metabolism, detoxification of xenobiotics, energy harvest, growth and development, and behavior.

In one research study, scientists discovered that taking probiotics lowered antibiotic-associated diarrhea by 42% . On the other hand, Probiotics can prevent or help with other kinds of diarrhea not related to prescription antibiotics.

Another review of 35 research studies discovered that certain strains of probiotics can decrease the duration of contagious diarrhea by approximately 25 hours (10).

Effectiveness differs, depending upon the type and dosage of the probiotic taken. For example, strains such as *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, *Lactobacillus casei* and the yeast *Saccharomyces boulardii* are most frequently linked with a lowered threat of diarrhea (11).

5. Probiotic Supplements Greatly Improve Several Mental Health Conditions

An increasing number of research studies have linked gut health to psychological health and mood. [12]

In this [study](#) participants who received the placebo intervention, compared to participants who received a 4-week multispecies probiotics intervention showed a significantly reduced cognitive reactivity to sad mood, which was largely accounted for by reduced rumination and aggressive thoughts.

A review of 15 human research studies discovered that supplementing with Bifidobacterium and Lactobacillus strains for 1 to 2 months, showed efficacy in improving psychiatric disorder-related behaviors including anxiety, depression, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), obsessive-compulsive disorder, and memory abilities, including spatial and non-spatial memory. [13]

Dr Kelly Brogan a well known functional medical psychiatrist from NYC talks about the connection between the microbiome and mental health in her article [Probiotics for the Brain](#).

Here's an excerpt from here article:

If depression is a downstream collection of symptoms, and inflammation, oxidative stress, and mitochondrial dysfunction are driving these symptoms, what is at the source? It appears, from data in animals and humans, that disruption to our gut ecology may be a major player, and the microbiome has stepped to the forefront of cutting-edge [psychiatric research](#).

*Enter **psychobiotics**: “a live organism that, when ingested in adequate amounts, produces a health benefit in patients suffering from psychiatric illness.” A review by [Dinan et al.](#) encompasses the clinical basis for the use of probiotics in mental health with reference to animal studies in which behavioral changes resulted from exposure to bacterial strains such as *asbifidobacterium* and [lactobacillus](#). In placebo-controlled trials in humans, measures of anxiety, chronic fatigue, and depression and anxiety associated with irritable bowel syndrome.*

Taking probiotic supplements for 8 weeks reduced anxiety levels and decreased levels of C-reactive protein (a marker of chronic inflammation) and hormones such as insulin, compared with individuals who did not take a probiotics. [14].

6. Probiotics Help Balance

The Friendly Bacteria in Your Digestive System

Probiotics are full of beneficial or “good bacteria”. These are live microorganisms that provide a vast array of health benefits when consumed. [7] These benefits are believed to arise from the capability of probiotics to restore the natural balance of gut bacteria.

An imbalance indicates there is more bad bacteria and not an adequate amount of good bacteria. This can happen due to illness, medication such as prescription antibiotics, a poor diet, and lifestyle in general. Some of the symptoms of gut flora imbalance can consist of digestion issues, allergic reactions, obesity, mental health problems, skin problems, and more. [8]

Probiotics are normally found in fermented foods or taken as supplements. Furthermore, they are safe for everyone including children.

7. Probiotics May Reduce the Severity of Certain Allergies and Eczema

Allergies~ When it comes to seasonal allergies, your body sees pollen as a foreign invader — it will have a reaction to pollen, and then overreacts by sending out inflammatory substances to compensate. Allergic symptoms are oftentimes nothing more than the body's reaction to stress. The cells in our bodies have previously learned how to successfully cope with whatever stressors we are dealing with. It is already built into our chromosomes, genes, and DNA.

Kefir contains both Vitamin C and B which are excellent nutrients needed by your adrenals. [Vitamin C](#) trains our immune system to function properly and being that Vitamins C and B are both water soluble they dissolve in water, with then dissolve quickly in the body. Unlike fat-soluble vitamins, water-soluble vitamins are carried to the body's tissues, but the body cannot store them.

When you're under stress and your body is reacting to [pollen](#), your adrenals will use up these vitamins fast and require more later! You need vitamin C, and lots of it throughout the day, when you're miserable and struggling with

pollen. Not just any kind of vitamin C, but wholesome foods containing lots of vitamin C. Eat cultured foods – especially cultured vegetables. You may snack on Kefir, Yogurt with fruits high in vitamin C such as: Kiwi, oranges, guava, strawberries to boost your immunity to pollen.

Eczema~ As we now know bacteria play an important role in eczema regardless of their tiny size and in the overall health of your skin. Apart from constant skin infections associated with severe disease, there's actually one more important idea that colonizing bacteria—those that simply live on the skin—may also directly create inflammation.

Many studies have discovered a very peculiar characteristic in patients with atopic dermatitis (AD). That is, the balance of bacteria on the skin is very abnormal, with a predominance of “bad” bacteria such as staphylococcus. Reacting to this information. Particular probiotic strains can definitely lower the seriousness of eczema in kids and babies.

One research study discovered that eczema symptoms improved for babies fed probiotic-supplemented milk, compared with babies fed milk without probiotics.

Another research study followed kids of females who took probiotics during pregnancy. Those kids had an 83% lower danger of developing eczema in the very first 2 years of life (17).

Nevertheless, the link in between probiotics and minimized eczema seriousness is still being researched, and more have to be done.

Some probiotics might likewise decrease inflammatory response in individuals with milk or dairy allergic reactions. Moreover, Probiotic bacteria seem to modulate the nonspecific immune response differently in healthy and hypersensitive subjects. This is seen as an immunostimulatory effect in healthy individuals and as a down-regulation of immunoinflammatory response in milk-hypersensitive subjects.

8. Probiotics Can Help Minimize Symptoms of Certain Digestive Disorders

Over one million people in the United States experience inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), consisting of ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease among other GI conditions.

Particular kinds of probiotics from the Bifidobacterium and Lactobacillus strains have actually enhanced chronic symptoms in individuals with moderate ulcerative colitis.

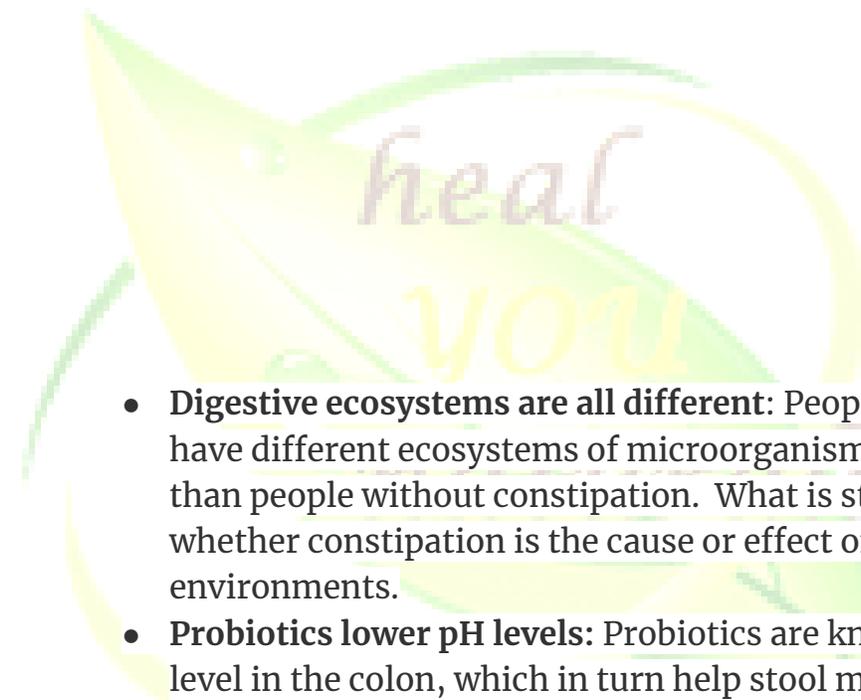
Probiotics support healthy systems of the human body from your mouth to your gut and help control harmful microorganisms like germs. Using the right amounts, probiotics aid digestion and improve nutrient absorption.

Probiotics occur naturally in [fermented foods](#) and cultured milk, best known as Kefir. However, you can also find manufactured probiotic supplements. Read on to learn more about the effects of probiotics on your digestive health.

Probiotics have been known to help with digestive issues such as:

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) lactose intolerance, Crohn's disease, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), constipation, colic, and ulcerative colitis.

Probiotics are known to be safe for most of us, and there are some general guidelines. Here is the finding:



- **Digestive ecosystems are all different:** People with constipation have different ecosystems of microorganisms in their intestinal tract than people without constipation. What is still being researched is whether constipation is the cause or effect of these different environments.
- **Probiotics lower pH levels:** Probiotics are known to lower the pH level in the colon, which in turn help stool move faster through it.
- **Probiotics relieve antibiotic-related diarrhea:** Probiotics may be especially helpful in decreasing diarrhea associated with antibiotics and *Clostridium difficile*. The reason for this, is that probiotics replenish the good bacteria that antibiotics most certainly kill.
- **Probiotics may help absorb protein:** Probiotics can help your body better absorb proteins in your diet, as well as other vitamins,, minerals and nutrients. [19]

Remarkably, one research study discovered that supplementing with the probiotic E. coli Nissle was just as reliable as drugs in keeping remission in individuals with ulcerative colitis. Nevertheless, probiotics appear to have little result on signs of Crohn's disease, and more studies need to be conducted.

They have actually likewise been revealed to lower the danger of extreme necrotizing enterocolitis by 50%. This is a deadly bowel condition that happens in newborns.

Overall, research indicates a positive association between taking probiotics and healthy digestion in adults and children. Healthy digestion also leads to better mental and oral health, a healthy immune system, and even healthier skin.

If you want to reap the benefits of probiotics, introduce them slowly into your diet with traditional fermented foods or supplements.

9. Probiotics and Your Kidneys

A kidney stone is a compact piece of material that forms in the urinary tract when there are excessive amounts of certain substances such as uric acid, calcium and oxalate.

Calcium oxalate is found in about 80 percent of Americans with [kidney stones](#). While calcium oxalate is naturally found in urine, this and the other substances

found in kidney stones do not normally cause issues because they are at a relatively low concentration. They normally travel through the body and are disposed of in urine. However, when they reach high concentrations the body isn't able to pass them all — this is when kidney stones form.

There are many ways to treat kidney stones, including surgical removal or using shock waves to break up the stone into smaller, passable pieces, but these treatments don't really address why they develop to begin with.

How probiotics help degrade oxalate

There is a particular type of bacterium that is naturally found in the digestive tract, *Oxalobacter formigenes* (*O. formigenes*), that has been shown to degrade oxalate, thus preventing the formation of kidney stones. Its levels vary depending on gut acidity and salts, and in some people, it's hard to be detected. It is also very vulnerable to commonly used antibiotics. In one study, adult volunteers who took in a dose of *O. formigenes* had a lower concentration of oxalate in their urine.

While it isn't clear if *O. formigenes* is present in cultured foods, another study showed that bacteria strains in fermented foods could be effective at reducing oxalate concentrations. This was observed in a four-week study in which six patients with major risks for kidney stones received probiotics on a daily basis containing *L. acidophilus*, *L. plantarum*, *L. Brevis*, *S. thermophilus*, and *B. infantis*— every single one of which are found in cultured foods. The results were incredible! They showed a great reduction of oxalates in every six subjects.

Another research study, revealed that patients with chronic fat malabsorption and other GI diseases including IBS have a 10-100 fold chance of developing kidney stones [20]. These patients were given increasing doses of lactic acid bacteria mixture.

After month one, mean urinary oxalate excretion fell by 19%. After month two,

oxalate excretion remained reduced by 24% during the second month. During the third month on 3 doses per day oxalate excretion increased slightly, so that the mean was close to the baseline established off treatment.

It was concluded that Manipulation of gastrointestinal (GI) flora can influence urinary oxalate excretion to reduce urinary supersaturation levels. These changes could have a beneficial effect on stone formation rates. Therefore, adding those particular strains of probiotics can prevent the formation of kidney stones, and most importantly lowers the risk of developing them.

The Best Way to Benefit From Probiotics

As mentioned above, you can get probiotics from a range of foods or supplements.

Live probiotic cultures are normally found in fermented dairy foods such as yogurts and milk beverages. You can also ferment nut milk such as: almond, coconut, cashews, and any other nut you can tolerate and love.

Introduce cultured foods like [pickled veggies](#), tempeh, miso, kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, and non-GMO organic soy foods that might likewise include some lactic acid-healthy bacteria.

Also, you can take high-quality probiotics as tablets, pills, and powders which contain the bacteria in dried form. Those probiotics that have to be refrigerated, are best. (I like [these](#) and [these](#))

Nevertheless, understand that some probiotics can be ruined by stomach acid prior to they even reaching the gut– suggesting that you get none of the designated advantages. An indication of excessive acid production is [acid reflux- GERD](#). Find out if your stomach acid is balanced properly [here](#).

If you wish to experience any of the health advantages mentioned above, it's crucial that you take in appropriate quantities of probiotics.

The majority of the research studies revealing advantages utilized doses of 1 billion to 100 billion live organisms or colony-forming systems (CFU) each day.

There you have it! A few more reasons to add more probiotics to your diet.

Where do you get Probiotics from and how have you benefited from them?

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