

 PEPSICO



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GUT CHECK



Biotics Basics, Myths, & Facts

FOR FITNESS PROFESSIONALS
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MYTH

**All “good bacteria”
are probiotics.**

FACT

**Not all beneficial bacteria are
probiotics.^{1,2}**

Our gut contains a variety of bacteria, but only certain bacteria qualify as probiotics - which must be live, identified at the strain level, and provided in sufficient amounts to have a proven health benefit in humans.



MYTH

**Fermented foods =
probiotics**

FACT

**Fermented foods and probiotics
are different.**^{1,3}

Fermented foods are created using microbes, but these microbes aren't always alive in the final product, nor do they necessarily have a measured health benefit.

Probiotics must be alive when consumed and provide a scientifically proven health benefit.

Fermented foods CAN be probiotic foods if they meet the probiotic definition.



MYTH

Prebiotics and fiber are the same thing.



FACT

Not all fibers are prebiotics and not all prebiotics are fiber.^{4,5}

Prebiotics are dietary components that we can't digest but benefit our gut microbes and health.

Fiber aids digestion, fullness, and regularity. Some fibers, such as inulin or soluble corn fiber, act as prebiotics. Other fiber simply help move waste through the gut, but don't feed microbes.



MYTH

One indulgent meal can permanently disrupt our gut microbiome.

FACT

Generally, healthy adults have an established microbiome that is stable and resilient.⁶⁻⁸

The gut microbiome is generally stable, but adapts to various changes in lifestyle.

Long-term diet quality—especially diverse plant foods—is the easiest way we can support our microbiome health.



MYTH

Everyone should take a probiotic supplement.

FACT

Most healthy people do not need probiotics as part of their daily diet.^{1,3}

Probiotics may help with antibiotic symptoms or with certain digestive issues.

For healthy individuals:

Benefits are limited

The gut microbiome usually doesn't require intervention

Gut health basics:

Eat a diverse, fiber-rich diet

Stay hydrated, get enough sleep, exercise, & manage stress



KEY TAKEAWAYS



Definitions of probiotics, prebiotics, and fermented foods are important.

- Fermented foods can be healthy, but they do not necessarily meet the 'probiotic' definition.
- Fiber is essential for health, but only certain fibers function as prebiotics.

Diet quality and lifestyle habits drive long-term gut health.



- The gut microbiome is complex, but resilient.
- Encourage consistency, not perfection.



Be skeptical of bold claims – evidence matters.

- Choose probiotic products that specify strain level with verified evidence-based health benefits.
- Certain supplements can help support gut health, but are not a replacement for overall diet.



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