



# Natural Health Research Institute

Your One-Stop Website for Research on Natural Health and Wellness

March 2023

[www.naturalhealthresearch.org](http://www.naturalhealthresearch.org)

## Health Benefits of Probiotics and Prebiotics

Probiotics are living microorganisms such as bacteria and yeasts that directly add to the population of good microbes in your digestive system. They are beneficial because they restore and balance the gut microbiome, supporting whole-body wellness. Probiotics offer a long list of health benefits including:

- Managing digestive discomfort (including IBS)
- Reducing diarrhea
- Improving gut integrity
- Boosting the immune system
- Killing GI infections
- Enhancing nutrient absorption
- Reducing gas and bloating
- Protecting against antibiotic resistance
- Improving mental health and reduce stress
- Supporting skin health
- Decreasing systemic inflammation
- Reducing risk of chronic disease



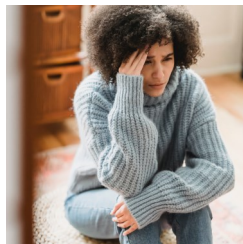
Probiotics can be found in dietary supplements and fermented foods like miso soup, sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, kefir, and pickled vegetables.

Prebiotics are specialized plant fibers that feed the beneficial bacteria in your gut. They pass through the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract and remain undigested because the human body can't fully break them down. Prebiotics act as a fertilizer in the gut microbiome. They provide food for the good bacteria and enable them to thrive and cultivate a diverse gut flora. Prebiotics have been shown to help with mineral absorption which can improve bone density, aid in appetite suppression, influence mood, boost immune functions, enhance your body's anti-inflammatory response, ease constipation, and regulate blood sugar.

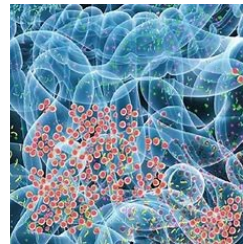
Good sources of prebiotics are bananas, apples, onions, garlic, berries, legumes, beans, peas, oats, barley, wheat bran, Jerusalem artichokes, asparagus, dandelion greens, and leeks.



[Probiotic Bifidobacterium longum BB68S Significantly Improves Cognitive Function in Healthy Older Adults](#)



[Probiotic Adjunct Therapy Ameliorates Symptoms of Major Depressive Disorder](#)



[Effect of Prebiotics on Overweight and Obese Children](#)



[Daily Supplementation of Lactobacillus paracasei IJH-SONE68 Improves Symptoms of Chronic Allergies](#)



*This was written by our founder, Elwood Richard, in his last year of life. Mr. Richard had a passion for sharing his knowledge on living a healthy lifestyle.*

I was recently diagnosed with mesothelioma, a disease caused by exposure to asbestos. My only exposure was sixty years ago when I used asbestos to insulate a lab furnace. I can't remember if I was warned to use a mask when working with asbestos, but I did not. Mesothelioma has hampered my activities to the extent that by the start of my treatments I was only able to walk 100 yards at a time. Consequently, I have had a lot of time to consider the reasons that this happened to me; in addition, I have also given a lot of thought about other health choices that we all need to consider.

**Radioactivity:** My son was conceived when I was taking a course in radioactivity and he was born with a double thumb. This could have been much worse. High energy particles from radioactivity shoot through the body and shatter molecules into high energy fragments which result in unpredictable outcomes. Since no family member was ever born with any double member, it is likely that radioactivity caused the problem. However my film badge readings showed no problems.

**Agricultural Chemicals:** Just over the course of my lifetime, scientists like Rachael Carson have developed information about the harm caused by DDT and other chemicals that were once deemed safe. Although the chemical industry vilified her, many of these were eventually discontinued in the USA. The main ingredient in Roundup, glyphosate, is associated (but not necessarily the cause of) with serious illnesses and reduced life expectancy. We can avoid these by planting home gardens and buying organic foods.

**Pharmaceutical Hazards:** Prescription drugs are now the fifth leading cause of death in the USA. They may be needed at times, but should not be used without good reason.

**Irradiated Foods:** Food irradiation is used to increase its shelf-life and reduce the risk of food-borne illness. However, irradiation can cause significant changes in food chemistry through the production of free radicals and radiolytic by-products. The long-term effects of these changes on humans is largely unknown.

**Food Chemicals:** These are everywhere, but avoiding processed foods reduces your intake. One example is a chemical called - diacetyl (butter flavor) which may lead to Alzheimer's disease and cell death.

**Caffeine:** Caffeine has been linked to small increases in blood pressure, loss of brain function, increased blood sugar levels, insomnia, and irregular heartbeat.

**Cured Meats:** Meats like beef jerky normally contain nitrates which according to the World Cancer Research Foundation Panel cause colorectal cancer.

These are only a few of the many choices we all make every day. Don't dismiss possible threats to health that are life threatening. All threats listed above were considered insignificant at one time.

Hoping this will lead to better health for you. Elwood Richard, Technical Editor Natural Health Research Institute. All information listed above, including references, are on the [NHRI website](#).

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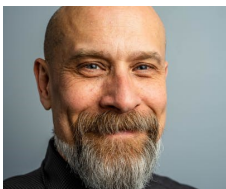
*Written by Jessica Patella, ND.* The study found an association between regular vitamin D supplement takers and lower percentages of past or present melanoma compared to non-supplementers (32/117, 18.1% vs. 32/99, 32.3%,  $p=0.021$ ).

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