

Prebiotics

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Most everyone knows about probiotics, the microflora that inhabits your intestinal tract. This flora is essential to proper absorption and is used as a selective barrier for contaminants and microbial invaders. The need for probiotics has developed an alternative industry which has flourished due to an unprecedented assault on your microflora. This assault is the result of the indiscriminate use of anti-biotics by the medical and agricultural industries. Replacing the micro-flora is essential and has led to the concept of creating an environment conducive for continued propagation. It has been discovered that high fiber foods nourish this essential microflora. Dietary fibers are only found in wholesome plant foods. The recommendation is to eat plenty of these foods. In particular: fruits, vegetables (especially root vegetables), legumes (peas/bean/lentils), barley and oats, and the soluble and insoluble fibers found in the bran layers of whole grains.

Promoting good foods isn't a money maker, so the industry came up with the prebiotics inulin and FOS (fructo-oligosaccharides). These chemicals are found naturally in foods. Particularly in foods such as chicory, Jerusalem artichoke, garlic, onions, leeks, burdock, jicama, cocoa beans, and to a lesser extent apples and bananas. Separating these chemical derivatives from the foods they are naturally found in doesn't mean that they are still safe or effective. Similarly, sucrose is found abundantly in many foods but it certainly doesn't make it safe when isolated. Stevia leaf is a wonderful sweetener but its' chemical derivative will eventually be proven unsafe.

The simple concept, taught at the School of Natural healing, is that the whole is greater than its parts and in the whole lies the safety.

David Christopher is a Master Herbalist and the director of The School of Natural Healing. He also cohosts the popular radio show "A Healthier You" and is a popular international teacher and lecturer.