



Live And Active Cultures vs Probiotics



Understanding live and active cultures

Fermented foods are made through desired microbial growth and enzymatic conversions of food components.¹ Live microbes change the texture or flavor of food during the fermentation process. For foods to be considered to have live and active cultures, live microbes must exist in the end product. Naturally fermented foods such as yogurt, sauerkraut, and kimchi are examples of foods that contain live and active cultures. Some fermented foods are processed by pasteurization, cooking or filtering which can kill or remove the live cultures.² For example, while sourdough bread is made with live cultures, the final baked product does not contain live and active cultures because the live microbes do not survive the cooking process. Keep in mind, there are some commercially prepared foods where pasteurization occurs before the fermentation process which allows the live and active cultures to remain in the product. Although some fermented foods may be healthy and provide a source of live and active cultures, they may lack scientific studies defining a strain-specific health benefit and are therefore not considered to be probiotic.²

Understanding probiotics

The word "probiotic" comes from the Greek word meaning "for life". Probiotics are live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host.³ A probiotic is classified by genus, species and strain which is backed by studies showing a documented health benefit. Probiotics can be found in both foods and food supplements. Some yogurts and fermented milks may contain added probiotic strains, but not all fermented foods contain live cultures that meet the criteria of a probiotic.⁴ It is important to check product labels carefully, as not all products on the market that are labeled as 'probiotic' have documented health benefits.^{5,6}

Tips for consuming probiotic foods

There are several ways to actively include probiotics in a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle to reap the benefits of these helpful bacteria.

<p>1. Consume probiotic yogurt with added probiotic strains</p> 	<p>2. Try kefir with ADDED probiotic strains</p> 
<p>3. Look for dried fruits and juices with probiotics added</p> 	<p>4. Some of the studied probiotic strains are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Bifidobacterium animalis lactis</i> DN-173 010/CNCM I-2494 ■ <i>Lactobacillus casei</i> DN-114 001 ■ <i>Bifidobacterium</i> BB-12®* 

*BB-12® is a registered trademark of Chr. Hansen H/S.

REFERENCES

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Gut Health

