



## The Fiber Fix

Life-threatening staph infections are on the rise. So are E.coli contaminations in our meats and produce. And multiple antibiotic resistances are a growing health threat in the battle against once treatable diseases.

As concerns rise over how to combat these public health issues, a simple answer may be sitting right on the plate in front of you. Most people know that fiber is good for them.

It positively impacts everything from blood sugar levels and weight loss to serum cholesterol levels. And it plays a vital role in protecting against colon cancer, diverticular disease, obesity and more.

What many may not realize is that a high-fiber diet — and the healthy balance of “good guy” bacteria (probiotics) it promotes — is critical to supporting overall good health and immunity. Unfortunately, the typical diet of fast food and highly processed meals is nearly devoid of this important nutrient.

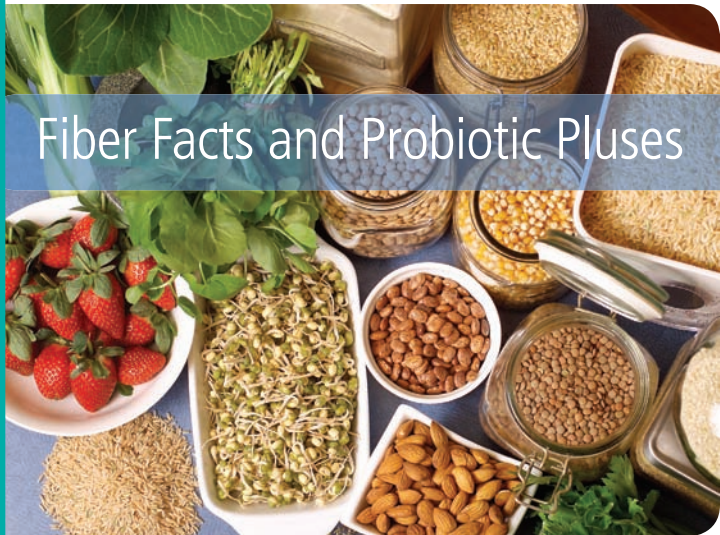
The good news is that the importance of probiotics is taking center stage among researchers and the media. Word is getting out and more people are looking for ways to up their intake of both fiber and probiotics.

This issue of *Science & Health Today* offers a good overview of the benefits of fiber and probiotics, as well as simple ways to add these nutrients to your daily diet. Once again, mom was right — eat your roughage!

To Your Health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl W. Hastings". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Dr. Carl W. Hastings**  
Reliv Vice Chairman and Chief Scientific Officer



## Fiber Facts and Probiotic Pluses

- U.S. adults average about 15 grams of dietary fiber intake per day — about half of the recommended 30 grams of fiber to promote good health.
- Dietary soluble fiber, when part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.
- Fiber is found only in plant foods, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds.
- Food processing removes much of the natural fiber from many of our basic foods.
- Only half the U.S. population eats fruit on a given day; a quarter eats no vegetables in a day's time.
- Probiotics are friendly bacteria found on the skin, in the gut and in other orifices that are crucial to a person's health and well-being.
- There are more bacteria associated with the human body than there are human cells in it.
- The two strains of bacteria recognized as most important to health are lactobacilli and bifidobacteria.
- A high-fiber diet promotes the growth of friendly bacteria that aid in proper digestion and support a healthy immune system.

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## What's Fiber's Gut Reaction?

More than just filler in foods, fiber is a key ingredient that's critical to health-promoting biological processes. And scientists now recognize that fiber has the ability to fight five major diseases: heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes.

A low-fiber diet can lead to overgrowth in the colon of harmful, "bad guy" bacteria. Too much of the wrong bacteria and the body starts absorbing the very toxins it should be eliminating. But a high-fiber diet promotes the growth of the friendly bacteria — probiotics — that aid in proper digestion.

Healthier bowels are a big benefit of fiber. When white flour became a staple of our Western diets, bowel disorders such as diverticulitis, hemorrhoids, polyps, colon cancer and irritable bowel syndrome became much more common. While there is still more research to be done, a strong link is likely.

**Sources:** Fiber Facts: Types, Function, Benefits, Dietary Requirements. [www.medicinenet.com](http://www.medicinenet.com).

*Eat Right to Prevent Colorectal Cancer.* American Cancer Society. [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

## Friendly Bacteria Are Health Pros

Right now, more than 1,000 different types of bacteria are making their home on your skin and in your body. While it sounds creepy, most of these bacteria are actually beneficial. But it's critical to keep the balance in favor of the beneficial bacteria — called probiotics — rather than harmful bacteria.

Probiotics, such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *bifidobacterium*, are a valuable part of a healthy diet and can actually help prevent or treat some illnesses and infections caused by more harmful bacteria. Friendly bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract also are vital to the digestion and absorption of food and nutrients.

### Probiotics' Many Benefits

A healthy gut with a good balance of probiotics can keep your whole body healthy. Research is now moving ahead to discover probiotics' true potential for its role in the prevention and treatment of many health conditions, such as:

- **Diarrhea.** Probiotic's ability to decrease the incidence or duration of many types and causes of diarrhea is one of the most substantiated effects of probiotics.
- **Infection.** Probiotics have been effective in protecting against infections of the urinary tract or female genital tract.
- **Cancer.** Consuming probiotics may decrease cancer risk. Specifically, probiotics have shown an ability to reduce the recurrence of bladder cancer, and also may play a role in preventing colon cancer.
- **High Blood Pressure.** Probiotics may reduce blood pressure in people with mild hypertension.
- **Immune System.** Probiotics stimulate the immune system to help your body protect itself. Probiotics have even been shown to be effective in decreasing the development of allergies and the relapse of inflammatory bowel disease.

Good sources of probiotics include yogurt, as well as Reliv's SoySentials®, which includes *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, and ReversAge®, which includes both *bifidobacterium* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus*.

**Sources:** National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/probiotics>.

[www.usprobiotics.org/basics.asp](http://www.usprobiotics.org/basics.asp)

Conscious choice: Probiotics, [www.consciouschoice.com](http://www.consciouschoice.com)



## Bulk Up Your Fiber Intake

Fiber is easy to find — if you look past the processed foods. Processing strips the fiber off natural foods along with many other nutrients. Choosing whole, natural foods is a good start in

boosting your fiber intake to meet the recommended daily fiber quota of 30 grams per day.

Fiber falls into two categories: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber slows digestion and dissolves in water, which helps your body absorb nutrients. Soluble fiber is found in whole-grain oats and barley, oat bran, citrus fruits, apples, bananas, berries, beans, peas and soybeans.

Insoluble fibers adds bulk that satisfies the appetite and helps food pass more quickly through the stomach and intestines. You'll find insoluble fiber in whole-wheat bread, wheat cereals, wheat bran, rice, most other grains, nuts, seeds, cabbage, beets, carrots, Brussel sprouts, turnips, cauliflower and apple skin.

Another way to add fiber is to leave the peel on your fruits and vegetables and choosing whole fruits rather than just the juice.

High fiber diets also encourage probiotic growth and overall digestive health. Reliv's FibRestore® is loaded with 10 grams of soluble and insoluble fiber per serving, providing a third of the daily fiber recommended for good health.

**Sources:** Fiber for Your Health. <http://seniorhealth.about.com>

*Medline Plus Medical Encyclopedia:* Soluble vs. Insoluble Fiber. [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov)

Fiber. AHA Recommendation. American Heart Association. [www.americanheart.org/](http://www.americanheart.org/)