



Probiotic & Prebiotic Foods for Constipation: Do They Work?



What is Constipation?

Constipation occurs when you have less frequent bowel movements than usual. This can lead to stools that are hard and dry, making them difficult to pass.¹

Probiotics

Probiotics are living microorganisms that may positively affect gastrointestinal health and help you with regular bowel movements.²

Probiotic foods are fermented, but not all fermented foods contain probiotics.³ Some research suggests that some yogurts and kefir with specific bacterial strains may help with overall gut health and bowel regularity.⁴



Probiotic Strains

When it comes to probiotic supplements, the type (and dose) of probiotic strain you take matters. Each probiotic is unique, with specific strains that can help specific conditions. Some popular strains that are linked to different types of constipation relief in adults include:⁵

- Lactobacillus reuteri for functional constipation
- Bifidobacterium animalis for Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Lactobacillus casei strain Shirota for Ulcerative Colitis

Prebiotics

Some prebiotics may be beneficial for managing constipation by shortening stool transit time and increasing fecal weight.³

Prebiotics have a different role from probiotics and are naturally found in many dietary foods.⁷

Examples of foods that contain prebiotics include:⁶

- Asparagus
- Garlic
- Onion
- Honey
- Banana
- Tomato



Healthcare professionals are qualified to provide dietary recommendations that prevent or treat constipation. If these strategies aren't working, they may recommend over-the-counter laxatives, including:⁸

- Stimulant laxatives
- Bulk-forming laxatives
- Stool Softeners
- Osmotic Laxatives

These products may not be right for you. Always read and follow the label and talk to your doctor.

