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6 probiotic-rich recipes to support gut health

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Our gut hosts up to 100 trillion microorganisms, made up of as many as 5,000 different species. This collection of microbes, known as our microbiome, influence how our immune system works, how we digest food and how we absorb nutrients.

Some research has also pointed to a role of the microbiome in how the body responds to certain cancer treatments and to reducing treatment side effects such as diarrhea.

Since our diet directly nourishes and replenishes these gut bacteria, what we eat can impact the health of our microbiome. For many people, including those living with cancer, there may be benefits to eating foods rich in probiotics, which are the good bacteria and yeasts that support a healthy microbiome.

Probiotic foods include yogurt, kefir, fermented vegetables like kimchi and sauerkraut, fermented soybeans (such as natto, tempeh, or miso), and kombucha. Talk to your care team before adding fermented foods to your diet and opt for commercially prepared options from reputable brands that follow strict food safety standards.

Here are some recipes that can help you add more probiotics to your diet. As always, consult with your care team for the guidance and recommendations that are best for you.

Probiotic Strawberry Parfait

Servings: 1

What you need:

1⁄2 cup sliced strawberries (fresh or frozen and thawed)

1 cup unsweetened yogurt with live and active cultures

1⁄4 cup sliced almonds

Directions:

1. Scoop a layer of yogurt into a small bowl or cup.
2. Add a layer of sliced strawberries and top with a few sliced almonds.
3. Repeat your layering until you run out.

Kefir Overnight Oats

Servings: 2

What you need:

1 cup of kefir (plain or flavored)

½ cup oats

1/4 cup fresh fruit (such as blueberries, strawberries, or banana slices)

1 teaspoon honey (optional)

Directions:

1. In a mason jar or container, mix kefir and oats. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
2. In the morning, stir well then taste. Optionally mix in honey for added sweetness.
3. Top with fruit and enjoy.

Miso Soup with Seaweed and Tofu

Servings: 2

What you need:

2 cups water or dashi

2 tablespoons miso paste

1-2 oz tofu, cubed

1 green onion, chopped (optional)

½ sheet nori, cut into large rectangles (optional)

Directions:

1. Heat the water or dashi in a pot until it’s warm but not boiling.
2. Remove from heat, add miso paste, and stir until dissolved.
3. Add tofu cubes, along with optional nori and green onion. Serve immediately.

Kombucha and Berry Ice Pops

Servings: 6

What you need:

3 cups liquid kombucha (flavor of your choice)

1/2 cup fresh berries (such as blueberries or strawberries, chopped)

Directions:

1. Pour kombucha beverage into popsicle molds, filling each halfway.
2. Divide up the berries between each mold; pour additional kombucha into popsicle molds.
3. Freeze for at least 4 hours, or until solid.

Chocolate Yogurt

Servings: 1

What you need:

1 cup Greek yogurt

1 tablespoon cocoa powder

1-3 teaspoons honey (optional)

Directions:

In a bowl, mix the Greek yogurt and cocoa powder until well combined. Add honey to taste.

Probiotic Avocado Toast

Servings: 1

What you need:

1 slice of whole-grain or sourdough bread

1/2 ripe avocado

1-2 tablespoons sauerkraut

Directions:

1. Toast the bread until golden and crispy.
2. Mash the avocado onto the toast with a fork.
3. Top with sauerkraut, spreading it evenly over the avocado.

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