

BY ALISON BAILIN BATZ

# Good Bacteria Each Day Keeps the Doctor Away

**T**his month, we observe the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Nutrition Month, a topic that is seemingly always top-of-mind. Every day, new studies are released buzzing about how we can best fit in more fruits, veggies and fiber into our diets to stave off a litany of illnesses. But, have you ever considered what to feed the bacteria in your own body? Yes, we just said feed the bacteria. Here is what you need to know about how good bacteria can keep you healthy.

## Colon and Bacteria – Health Warriors

Believe it or not, the colon is one the biggest, toughest warriors in the struggle between good and evil bacteria, toxins and other health-related body functions. In fact, according to Dr. Frank W. Jackson, a 40-year gastroenterologist and CEO of Jackson GI Medical, the colon:

- Acts as an incubator, prodigiously growing good bacteria
- Acts as a garbage disposal, eliminating waste from the body
- Acts as a fuel source for the immune system

But, just like high-powered sports cars and jumbo jets, this super organ requires fuel to operate.

“There is a special type of soluble fiber, called prebiotics, which are used mostly by the good bacteria in your body as a fuel,” Dr. Jackson says. “With the help of prebiotics, the colon provides a warm, oxygen-free environment for beneficial bacteria to grow. These bacteria, in turn, manufacture

the nutrition source for the colon itself.”

The many benefits of prebiotics include:

- Improvement in the colon bacterial makeup, resulting in decreased dangerous bacteria
- Bowel regularity
- Increased calcium and magnesium absorption, resulting in stronger bones
- Strengthened immune system as 70% of our immune function comes from the colon
- Increased energy coupled with appetite suppression, resulting in weight loss and/or maintenance

“Some studies today are also finding prebiotics can decrease



one's risk of several cancers, including colon, stomach, lymphoma, bile ducts, and even lung and breast," says Dr. Gregory Maggass of Arizona Center for Cancer Care in Gilbert.

Dr. Maggass also noted that aside from family history and smoking, what we put into our bodies is the most critical factor on whether someone gets cancer – or not.

"When bad bacteria outnumber the good, polyps form, tumors grow and cancer develops," Dr. Maggass says.

### Picking Prebiotics

According to Dr. Jackson, the two most-studied prebiotics today are inulin, which feeds the left side of the colon, and oligofructose which feeds the right.

"These probiotic bacterial breeders have been found in more than 36,000 different plants, and are amongst our green friends' biggest fuel source," Dr. Jackson says. "Interestingly, as our food industries and agriculture have developed, however, the foods in which we get prebiotics have become limited.

Today, prebiotics are most common in wheat, onions, bananas, garlic, leeks, chicory root, Jerusalem artichokes, wild yams, agave and jicama.

**"Based on our current diets, Americans are really only getting this critical bacteria-grower in wheat and onions; while Europeans, on average, consume five times the amount on any given day," Dr. Maggass says.**

As a result, many Southeast Valley residents are turning to prebiotic supplement programs, like Prebiotin, readily available at the neighborhood Sprouts, Cooper's Nutrition stores and select High Health stores around the Valley. Most prebiotics supplements are sweet to the taste and recommended to be taken daily. They can easily be added to your morning coffee or tea as well as taken directly with water.

"The key with supplements promoting prebiotics is that they are plant based and focused on full-spectrum support, meaning they contain both inulin and oligofructose, so that both sides of the colon are supported," said Dr. Jackson.

For more information on colon nutrition and prebiotics, please visit [jacksongi.com](http://jacksongi.com). 202

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