

# MINUTE NUTRITION NEWS

February 2017

## Healthy Bugs for a Healthy Gut

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Gut microbiota, gut flora, probiotics, prebiotics....these are all terms that we repeatedly hear related to our health. What are they? Are they in our food or in a pill? How are they good for our health? Find out in this issue the latest information on what can keep your gut healthy and happy.

### Gut Microbiota & What Affects It

Gut microbiota (also known as gut flora) is the vast and diverse community of microorganisms that live in our digestive system. These microorganisms are very tiny, live bacteria that can affect our health. Our gut has tens of trillions of these bacteria with over 3 million genes. That is enough bacteria to weigh up to 2kg!

Every person has their own unique gut microbiota. The species of bacteria in our gut is constantly changing and can be affected by many things such as how we were delivered and fed as a baby, age, medications and diet. A healthy and balanced gut microbiota can provide benefits with improved digestion and immunity.

### How Our Diet Affects Gut Microbiota

Our diet is important for maintaining a healthy and balanced gut microbiota. Certain foods promote this more than others. See the table below for a summary.

|                     | Probiotics   | Prebiotics  |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>What is it?</b>  | Probiotics are live microorganisms that support and help balance our existing gut microbiota. Specific strains of probiotics can also help with the management of various digestive conditions.  | Prebiotics are the “food” for our gut microbiota that supports their growth and function. They are a specific type of dietary fibre in our food that can be fermented by our gut microbiota.  |
| <b>Food Sources</b> | Fermented beverages or foods, such as aged cheese, probiotic yogurt, kefir, kombucha.<br><br>Foods such as kimchi, sauerkraut and dill pickles have probiotics if they have not been treated with heat during processing.<br><br>*Heat during pasteurization, baking, cooking or filtering will kill the probiotics. | Naturally in onion, garlic, leek, asparagus, artichoke, banana, wheat, oat, soy bean and chicory root.<br><br>Prebiotics are also added into foods like yogurts, cereals, breads and drinks. Look for chicory fibre, inulin, galactooligosaccharides, oligofructose, & fructooligosaccharides on the label. |
| <b>Supplements</b>  | Supplements are available. Specific strains are required for certain health benefits. Check with your Nurse Practitioner to see what is appropriate for you.   | Supplements using the ingredients above are available. Since prebiotics are a dietary fibre, it is important to introduce gradually into the diet.  |

**References** 1. PEN, 2016. Gastrointestinal System – Microbiota – Background.

2. Gut Microbiota for Health. Gut Microbiota Info. Retrieved from <http://www.gutmicrobiotaforhealth.com/en/about-gut-microbiota-info/>.

3. Dr. Sanders, M.E. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Probiotics. Retrieved from <http://isappscience.org/probiotics/#>

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# RECIPE OF THE MONTH

February 2017

## Easy Kefir Pancakes

Dairy products in grocery stores today are pasteurized during their treatment process to kill off harmful bacteria. Unfortunately, this also results in the killing of the good bacteria. Kefir is a fermented milk drink that has healthy bacteria added back in and a good choice for those who want a natural source of probiotics. In this recipe, keep in mind that cooking the pancakes can kill off some or all of the probiotics in the kefir, so be sure to drizzle it generously on top once the pancakes are ready to serve!



Makes 5-6 three-inch pancakes

### Ingredients:

|           |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|
| 1 cup     | All purpose flour |
| 1 ½ tsp   | Baking powder     |
| 1 ½ tbsp. | Sugar             |
| ½ tsp     | Salt              |
| 1         | Large egg         |
| 1 ½ cups  | Plain Kefir       |
|           | Canola oil        |

### Directions:

1. Whisk together flour, baking powder, sugar and salt in a large bowl. In another bowl, lightly beat eggs and whisk in kefir.
2. Add dry ingredients to the kefir mixture, all at once, and stir to combine. Don't over-whisk: A few lumps are to be expected.
3. Heat a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add enough oil to slick the surface and decrease the heat to medium-low or low.
4. Using a measuring cup or ladle, add ¼ cup portions of batter to the pan. Cook slowly until bubbles form on the top surface, the batter begins to lose its gloss, and until pancakes are golden brown on one side (this may take 3-4 minutes). Flip, and repeat on the other side. When gently touched they should feel soft and springy, not wet inside. Adjust heat as necessary to keep the pancakes from browning too quickly.
5. Serve with fresh fruit, apple sauce and drizzle of kefir.

### Nutrition information (Per serving):

150 calories, Fat 3.5 g (5% DV), Carbohydrate 24 g (8% DV), Fibre 1 g (4%), Protein 6 g, Sodium 250 mg (10% DV), Sugars 7 g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 25%, Iron 8%