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Episode 141 – Why Your Digestive System Needs Prebiotics

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Welcome, everyone, to another episode of Empowering You Organically. I'm your host, Jonathan Hunsaker, joined by my cohost Miss TeriAnn Trevenen.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Hey, everyone.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

So today we are talking about prebiotics. I know that often the talk of the town is probiotics. And I think there's a lot more emphasis that could be put on prebiotics, understanding what they are, why they're so important to our health, and what they do. And it's also really important right now, with COVID-19 and other stuff, to really understand how prebiotics and probiotics help boost our immune system, or make us more immune to the craziness going on out in the world. So let's talk about some prebiotics.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Yeah. So first we're going to talk about our digestive system, to kick this off. Our digestive system is responsible for breaking down nutrients from food consumed for growth, cell repair, and energy. Since digestive health is very important, individuals must take note of the ways on how to keep their digestive system as healthy as they always can. So digestive system is huge for our overall health.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Also, gut health, we're talking gut health, your digestion, gut health, super critical to our overall health and function of our body. Experts and other medical specialists provide evidence showing that prebiotics and probiotics are partners in improving our digestive health. Although probiotics and prebiotics both promote better digestive health, there are some differences between the two, like how they work in their specific role in the digestive system. So we're going to talk more about prebiotics today.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Prebiotics are a special type of carbohydrates found in foods and supplements. These naturally feed the good bacteria inside your gut, like Bifidobacterium and lactobacilli. Its main role is to feed the good bacteria in your gut and avoid feeding the bad bacteria such as the pathogens. Good bacteria inside your gut plays a very vital role in the improvement of your immune system and keeping the overall digestive system healthy. So I was just talking about that, gut, digestive health and immune system go hand in hand more so than we ever have known in the past. Research is moving forward in a big way on gut health, digestion, and immune system, and how they play an intricate part in the health of one another.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Absolutely. And I think there's something... I don't know that many people know the difference as much between a prebiotic and a probiotic. And I'll break it down into a super layman's terms. And probiotic is actually putting the good bacteria into your gut. So you're actually taking it and it is the good bacteria in your gut. The prebiotic is actually food for the good bacteria in your gut. And there's definitely lots of conversations out there that a prebiotic is more important than a probiotic because it's not affected by the acids in your stomach and other processes in your digestive track. And I'm not going to say that one is better than the other. I'm going to say that both are very important. But it's just good to really understand what the difference is between that prebiotic and a probiotic.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Yeah. Well, as you mentioned, they're resistant to acids, body enzymes, and heat. They're not destroyed or absorbed the moment they travel into your digestive system. Once they've reached the colon intact, they will feed the good bacteria, which makes them grow and multiply, which kind of seems counterintuitive, right? But that's the process. And so it's supporting your gut and your digestion in a way that probiotics doesn't. They work hand in hand together.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

So really quickly, we already know that vegetables and fruits are rich in prebiotics. So here's a few foods that you can get prebiotics from that are more full of those prebiotics, banana, peas, beans, cherries, oats, raw onions, garlic, leeks, fresh herbs, eggplant, asparagus, kiwi. Some of my favorites are on that list, so I love that. Makes me feel good about knowing I'm getting my prebiotics in my nutrition.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

We tend to ignore prebiotics, and we focus on the probiotics, like we talked about, is the most effective agent in promoting digestive health. But if you opt to have a higher intake of prebiotics, there's a lot of benefits that come with that. So we're going to talk a little bit about those benefits of getting those prebiotics into your regimen.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

So improvement of digestion is the first benefit. Prebiotics help in the stimulation of the growth of good bacteria in your gut, like we talked about. Since the prebiotics acts as food for the probiotics, they help balance all the harmful toxins and bacteria living in your digestive tract, and they also make it possible for you to have great digestion. Studies actually show that higher intake of prebiotics increases the probiotic organisms such as lactobacillus and bifidobacterial.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Absolutely. I'm not sure where I was going to go from there-

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Well, let's go to the [inaudible 00:05:48].

Jonathan Hunsaker:

...other than just yes, I agree.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

So the next thing that prebiotics can do for you is enhance your immune system function. So gut, digestion, immune system, they all go hand in hand. Dietary consumption of prebiotics helps improve the immune system. Prebiotics also improved the stool quality as well as reduces the risk of many infections and gastroenteritis.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

So let's go back to that for a minute, improves the stool quality. A lot of people don't want to talk about poop and bowel movements, but it actually really tells you a lot about your health. And so probiotics and prebiotics also work hand in hand together to make sure that your digestion's working, your immune system's working, that your stool that's passing through your body, your bowel movements and things like that are really on point and working the way that they're supposed to be, which is a huge part of overall gut health.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

There's articles and stuff out there that can actually tell you what your poop is supposed to look like. And I actually highly encourage looking at it and making sure that you're on track with that, because it actually does tell you a lot about your health.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Hey, we talk about poop in my house all the time. I have three and five-year-old girls. So poop always-

TeriAnn Trevenen:

If you have kids in the house, you talk about poop.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Poop always comes up.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Yep. Yep. One last thing on the immune system, prebiotics boosts immunity, because they enhance the ability of the digestive system to absorb all the important nutrients from the foods that we eat. So super important to be able to absorb all those nutrients, and prebiotics help with that.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

I think that there's so many buzzwords that go around, especially when we have coronavirus, COVID-19, all of that going around. And it's like, hey, this boosts immunity and that boosts immunity, and everybody's just trying to sell you something that boosts immunity. And I think it's important just to understand the why, understanding how, understanding all of that.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

I mean, listen, we're made up of a lot more than just us, right? There is so many different bugs that live in us that make up us, right, all kinds of different things that are going on inside of our body. And all of that needs to be in balance to fight off those bad intruders, so to speak.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

That's why probiotics are so important. It's why they help boost the immune system, because you're getting all of that good bacteria in there that's going to help fight off the bad. It's why the prebiotics are so important, because it's giving them the proper food, right? So there's all of these different things, because when we're trying to fight something off, it's not just us, so to speak, and what makes us us. It's everything that lives inside of us that feeds off of us that makes us us, if that makes sense.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Everything works together in a big cycle-

Jonathan Hunsaker:

It-

TeriAnn Trevenen:

[crosstalk 00:08:38] ecosystem in our body, just like the world.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

It does. And it's been part of my challenge [inaudible 00:08:48], and I talked about this on a podcast that we just filmed, where we talk about detoxing and we talk about these big detoxes and flushes, and you're just flushing everything out of the system. You're flushing whole lot of the good with the bad. Whereas I think there's a lot more effective ways to just add more good, add more food, prebiotics, for the good, to where you don't need to just flush everything out at once. You can, over time, really build it up, and it just keeps you stronger and more hearty, so to speak.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

Absolutely. So let's move on to our next tip. And this is always a bonus feature, in my opinion, of anything health-related. And prebiotics help to lower inflammation. Inflammation is one of the main causes of disease, such as heart disease and many other diseases. We're talking chronic inflammation. Inflammation is actually something that's good for your body to present to you when something's wrong. So from time to time, if you have an inflammatory response, like lymph nodes being swollen, because you have a sore throat, it tells you something's wrong.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

But chronic inflammation, over time, and not managing it leads to disease. And it's really, really a big sign of something is very, very wrong, if it consistently happens over time. Luckily, prebiotics can lower the inflammation. It is also believed that prebiotics contributes to the improvement of our metabolism as well. So not only does it lower and reduce inflammation in the body, but it improves our metabolism.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

The metabolic function in our body is very critical. We often think of metabolism just like, "Oh, you process food fast, and you're thin." It's not just that. The metabolic function in our body supports so many different functions in our body. And prebiotics actually support the improvement of your metabolism. And that metabolic function helps with energy, lowers stress levels. Yes, it can also help in weight loss as well. But so many benefits come from a healthy metabolism.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

This also helps the body for better absorption of nutrients entering your body. So some really good benefits there. And finally, it can reduce the risk of heart disease. Eating foods that are high in prebiotics can help your body reduce glycation, which is the primary cause of trigger inflammation. This also lowers your body's insulin resistance. So there's been a lot of research and studies behind prebiotics and impacting things around heart disease. So that's another added benefit. If that's something that runs in your family, you have a genetic predisposition, something to note on that.

TeriAnn Trevenen:

And there's a few other things, really quickly, better gut health, lower stress response, higher immune system, lower risk of weight gain and obesity, better hormonal balance, which I think we're all after. It's super important to have a good hormonal balance and healthy cortisol levels. So just a lot of benefit there when it comes to prebiotics and making sure you get those into your nutrition. We talked about some foods today that you can add into your nutrition to make sure you're getting those prebiotics.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

Yeah. And again, I mean, I think that probiotics get all of the attention and everything's all about probiotics. And I think that they're absolutely essential to your diet, making sure that you're taking some. And also consider that prebiotics are just as essential as a probiotic and possibly even more essential. I mean there's more and more studies coming out showing all of the benefits of prebiotics that... Even as we talk about it, I think about how I need to consume more foods to get more prebiotics, and even take a prebiotic supplement, because I may not be getting enough of it in my body.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

I take my probiotics, my enzymes, everything else on the Organixx's list. But one thing we don't have is a prebiotic. And I want to make sure that I'm checking in with myself, that I'm eating enough foods to get all the prebiotics to really feed my gut microbiome everything it needs to be as strong and healthy as possible.

Jonathan Hunsaker:

So with all that said, we have tons of show notes at empoweringyouorganically.com. Just go there and you can watch the video, you can listen to the audio, you can subscribe on iTunes, you can download the show notes, and anything else you want to do at Empower You Organically, where we have, I think, nearly a hundred other podcasts. So if you are bored, if you're doing some research to try to get healthier, consider that we've done a podcast that may help you in a certain area of your life. And as always, thanks for tuning in. We'll see you on the next one.



TeriAnn Trevenen:

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