

ACTIVIA®

LIVE AND ACTIVE CULTURES VS PROBIOTICS

UNDERSTANDING LIVE AND ACTIVE CULTURES

Fermented foods are created by allowing beneficial microbes to grow and transform the ingredients of the food¹. These tiny living organisms modify the food's texture and taste as they work. For food to be recognized as containing "live and active cultures," it must still have these living microbes present in the final product. Foods like yogurt, sauerkraut, and kimchi are great examples of items containing these cultures.

However, some fermentation-based foods undergo processes like pasteurization, cooking, or filtering, which may eliminate these beneficial live cultures. Take sourdough bread, for instance: it starts with live cultures, but they don't survive the baking process, so the finished bread doesn't contain live and active cultures. Yet, some products are pasteurized in a way that doesn't harm these cultures, ensuring they remain in the final food item. While many fermented foods are nutritious and provide live cultures, not all can be classified as probiotics without specific scientific evidence of health benefits from particular strains².

UNDERSTANDING PROBIOTICS

The term "probiotic" has its roots in a Greek word that means "for life." Probiotics are living microorganisms that offer health benefits when consumed in the right amounts³. These benefits are specific to the probiotic's type, which is identified by its genus, species, and strain, and must be supported by research.

Probiotics are available in certain foods and supplements, with some yogurts and fermented milks being fortified with additional probiotic strains. However, it's important to note that not all fermented foods contain the necessary live cultures to provide health benefits⁴. Always read labels carefully to ensure you're getting a probiotic product with proven health advantages.^{5,6}

COMPARING LIVE AND ACTIVE CULTURES WITH PROBIOTICS

In the realm of health and nutrition, understanding the difference between live and active cultures and probiotics is essential. Both play important roles in promoting digestive health, but they serve different purposes and offer distinct benefits. Here's a closer look at how these beneficial microbes compare:

	LIVE & ACTIVE CULTURES	PROBIOTICS
PRESENCE IN FOODS	Live and active cultures are found in fermented foods like yogurt, sauerkraut, and kimchi.	Probiotics are specific strains of live microorganisms added to foods or supplements.
SURVIVAL THROUGH PROCESSING	Live and active cultures may not survive food processing methods such as baking, pasteurization, or filtering.	Probiotics are often added to products in a way that ensures their survival through processing and storage, allowing them to confer health benefits.
HEALTH BENEFITS	Live and active cultures contribute to the general healthfulness of foods and can aid digestion. However, not all live and active cultures have scientifically proven health benefits beyond general well-being.	Probiotics are selected for their specific health benefits, supported by scientific research.
SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE	Live and active cultures in foods are generally recognized for their role in fermentation and may contribute to health, but they lack strain-specific health benefit evidence.	Probiotics must have documented health benefits, confirmed by scientific studies. These benefits are strain-specific and quantifiable.
LABELLING AND IDENTIFICATION	Live and active cultures are often mentioned on the labels of fermented foods without specifying the strains or their specific health benefits.	Probiotics are identified by their genus, species, and strain on product labels, and often, the specific health benefits are highlighted, based on research.

REFERENCES

1. How Are Probiotics Foods and Fermented Foods Different. The International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Available at: <https://isappscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ProbioticsvsFermentedFoods.pdf>. Accessed February 10, 2022. 2. Probiotics: Dispelling Myths. The International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Available at: <https://isappscience.org/infographic-dispelling-myths/>. Accessed February 10, 2022. 3. Probiotics, Prebiotics, Synbiotics, Postbiotics and Fermented Foods Defined. The International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Available at: <https://isappscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/DefinitionsInfographic.pdf>. Accessed February 10, 2022. 4. Probiotics. The International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Available at: https://isappscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Probiotics_0119.pdf. Accessed February 10, 2022. 5. National Institutes of Health (NIH) Probiotics Fact Sheet for Health Professionals. Available at: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Probiotics-HealthProfessional/>. Accessed February 20, 2022. 6. Probiotic Checklist: making a smart selection. International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP). Published 2019. Available at: <https://isappscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Probiotic-Checklist-Infographic.pdf>. Accessed February 16, 2022.



GUT HEALTH