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## HEALTH OBSERVANCE

### National Minority Health Month

*Kim Farrell – Wellworks For You*

April marks the observance of National Minority Health Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the health disparities that continue to affect racial and ethnic minority populations and encouraging action through health education, early detection, and control of disease complications.

Historically, minorities in many regions, including the United States, have faced substantial obstacles to health and wellness. These barriers range from socio-economic factors, such as lack of access to quality healthcare and health insurance, to cultural barriers including language and distrust of the healthcare system. This results in higher rates of diseases like hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers among minority populations.

National Minority Health Month is an initiative led by the Office of Minority Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It was first established as National Minority Cancer Awareness Week in the 1980s but has since expanded to encompass all aspects of minority health. The goal is to build a stronger nation by promoting healthier lives through the inclusion of strategies and policies that address the social determinants of health.

Activities and campaigns during the month encourage health education, community involvement, and the development of policies that improve access to quality health care. They also focus on promoting healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and recognizing the role that individuals, families, and communities can play in improving the health of their members.

Healthcare professionals, policy makers, and community leaders come together to promote activities and develop programs that address the health needs of these communities. It's an opportunity for health professionals to advocate for and implement strategies to improve health literacy and health outcomes for minority populations.

The observance of National Minority Health Month is not just a time for reflection but also a call to action. It urges individuals, health professionals, organizations, and policymakers to work together to address health disparities and improve the health of minority communities. By doing so, it contributes to health equity and a healthier, more inclusive society.

Source: <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/>



### Intellectual Wellbeing: Unlocking Potential

Intellectual wellbeing refers to the state of engaging your mind actively, continuously learning, and expanding your knowledge to improve your abilities and foster a stimulating, creative life.

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### Navigating Gut Health: Prebiotics vs. Probiotics

Though these words sound similar, they play very different roles in maintaining our digestive health; and understanding these roles is key to our wellbeing.

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## Unlocking the Potential of Intellectual Wellbeing

*Kellie O'Keefe – Wellworks For You*

In a world that buzzes with constant activity and demands, nurturing our minds is as crucial as taking care of our bodies. This is where the concept of intellectual wellbeing comes into play, a less discussed but profoundly impactful aspect of our overall health. Intellectual wellbeing refers to the state of engaging your mind actively, continuously learning, and expanding your knowledge to improve your abilities and foster a stimulating, creative life.

At its core, intellectual wellbeing involves curiosity and lifelong learning. It's about seeking out new skills, challenging your mind with puzzles or complex problems, and engaging in stimulating conversations that expand your worldview. It's the kind of wellness that keeps your mind sharp, your interests diversified, and your creative juices flowing.

### How to Enhance Your Intellectual Wellbeing

**Embrace Continuous Learning:** Never stop learning. Whether it's picking up a new hobby, learning a new language, or reading about a subject that fascinates you, continuous learning keeps your brain active and engaged.

**Seek Out Challenges:** Step out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself intellectually. Try solving puzzles, playing strategy games, or tackling complex projects that require deep thinking.

**Nurture Creativity:** Engage in creative activities such as writing, painting, or playing a musical instrument. Creativity stimulates your imagination and promotes innovative thinking.

**Reflect Regularly:** Spend time in introspection. Journaling or meditating can help you understand your thought processes better, leading to a more robust intellectual life.

**Engage in Healthy Debates:** Participate in discussions and debates on various topics. It exposes you to different viewpoints and forces you to think critically.

**Stay Informed:** Keep up with current events and trends. Understanding what's happening in the world makes you more informed and helps with decision-making.

By incorporating these strategies into your daily life, you can significantly enhance your intellectual wellbeing. As you continue to challenge and nurture your mind, you'll not only expand your knowledge and skills but also improve your quality of life, creativity, and even your relationships. Start today and unlock the endless potential of your intellect!

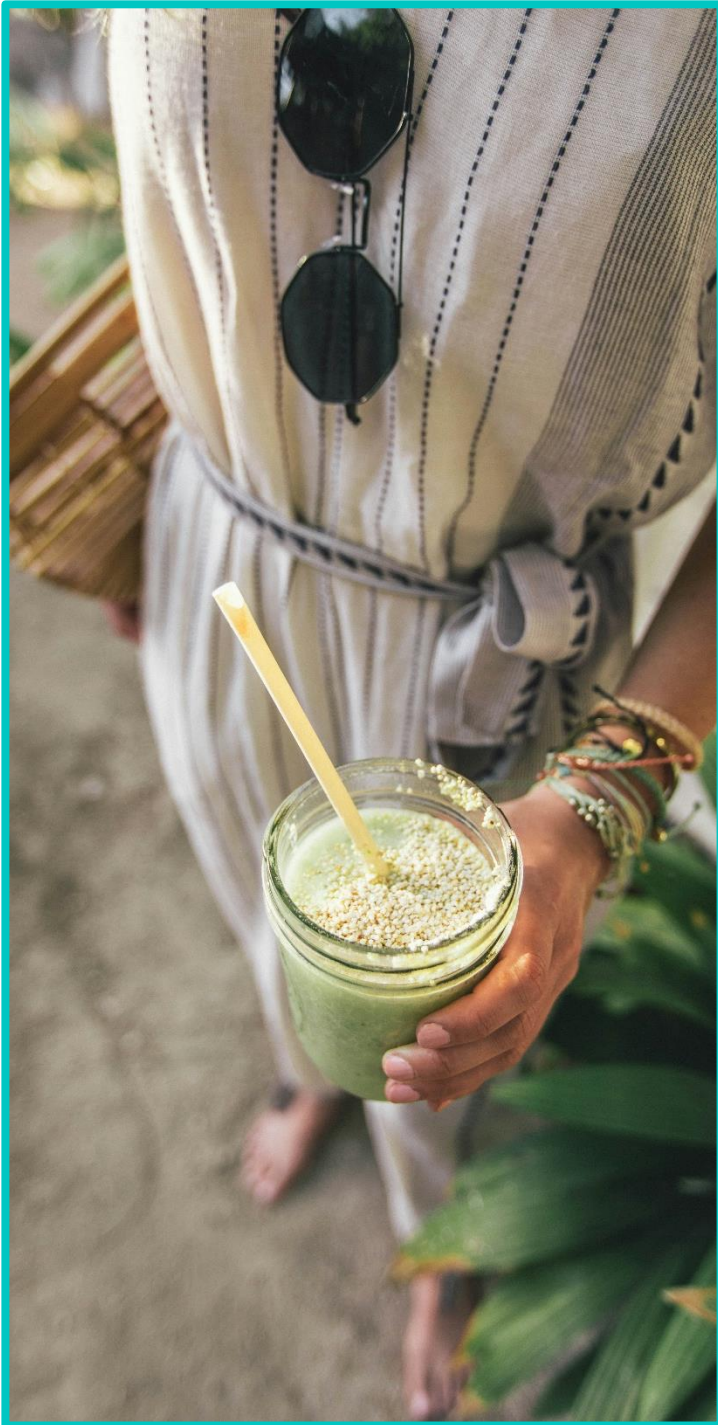
Source: <https://www.myamericannurse.com/intellectual-wellbeing/>





# Prebiotics vs. Probiotics

## Navigating the Gut Health Maze



Lisa Kyler – Wellworks For You

Did you know there are trillions of bacteria living in your gut, forming a complex ecosystem that significantly impacts your overall health? Understanding this intricate system is key to our wellbeing, and two terms often pop up in this context: prebiotics and probiotics. Though they sound similar, they play different roles in maintaining our digestive health.

### Probiotics: The Friendly Bacteria

Probiotics are live microorganisms, often referred to as "good" bacteria, that add to the population of healthy microbes in your gut. They are the actual bacteria that help in improving gut health, boosting immunity, and even enhancing nutrient absorption. Found in fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, and supplements, probiotics help restore the natural balance of your gut flora, especially after it's been disrupted by illness, stress, or antibiotics.

### Prebiotics: The Fertilizer for Bacteria

Prebiotics, on the other hand, are non-digestible fibers that serve as food for probiotics. Think of them as the fertilizer that helps the good bacteria grow and flourish. They're found in high-fiber foods like bananas, onions, garlic, leeks, asparagus, and whole grains. By feeding the friendly bacteria, prebiotics help enhance the functioning of probiotics, leading to a healthier digestive system.

### Synergy for Health: Combining Prebiotics and Probiotics

For optimal gut health, incorporating both prebiotics and probiotics into your diet is beneficial. This combination is sometimes referred to as "synbiotics," reflecting their synergistic relationship. By consuming a variety of fermented foods and fiber-rich plants, you can create an environment in your gut that supports health and wellbeing.

Remember, balance is key. Overconsumption of either can lead to discomfort, so it's about finding the right amounts that work for your body. Consulting with a healthcare provider, especially when considering supplements, can help tailor the right approach for your needs. As you navigate through the choices, your gut will thank you for the care and attention you're giving to its tiny inhabitants!

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/probiotics/faq-20058065>

## FEATURED RECIPE

### Chickpea Pasta with Mushrooms & Kale

4 Servings | Total Time: 30 Minutes

*Dairy-Free, High-Protein, Heart-Healthy, High-Fiber*



#### INGREDIENTS:

- 8 ounces chickpea rotini or penne (see Tip)
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large cloves garlic, sliced
- Pinch of crushed red pepper
- 8 cups chopped kale
- 8 ounces cremini mushrooms, quartered
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Grated Parmesan cheese for serving (optional)

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Reserve 1 cup of the cooking water, then drain.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and crushed red pepper; cook, stirring once, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add kale, mushrooms, thyme, and salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the pasta and enough of the reserved water to coat; cook, stirring, until combined and hot, about 1 minute more. Serve topped with Parmesan, if desired.

#### TIP:

We chose chickpea pasta for this dish instead of whole-wheat because it's packed with tons of fiber, protein, and nutrients—some brands provide more than 40% of your daily recommended fiber, plus 20 grams of protein per serving. Look for it with other gluten-free pastas.

#### NUTRITION

##### Per Serving:

<b>Calories:</b> 340	<b>Protein:</b> 17g
<b>Carbohydrates:</b> 38g	<b>Dietary Fiber:</b> 10g
<b>Fat:</b> 18g	<b>Saturated Fat:</b> 2g
<b>Sugar:</b> 7g	<b>Sodium:</b> 366mg

Source: <https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/7939117/chickpea-pasta-with-mushrooms-kale/>