



Prebiotics for the Improvement of Human Health

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KEYWORDS Prebiotics. Nutrition. Mineral Absorption. Anticancer. Immunology

ABSTRACT The prebiotics concept was launched in 1995, defined as non-digestible food ingredients that affect host health beneficially by selectively stimulating the growth and/or activity of one or a limited number of bacterial species in the colon. In this review the prebiotics concept is revisited and the physiologic consequences of prebiotic consumption are evaluated. The review focuses primarily on randomised controlled trials in humans. Most of the research has been done with the $\beta(2-1)$ fructans. Therefore, they are used as an example of prebiotics. The results are relevant to the fields of gut function, mineral absorption, immunology, lipid metabolism and cancer. Thus it can be concluded that modification of intestinal microbiota by selectively fermented prebiotics is central in determining their nutritional properties and are thought to improve health status by reducing markers of disease risk.

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