

Feeding your microbiome with polyphenol-rich foods

Polyphenol may be a crazy sounding word, but polyphenol-rich foods are easy to include in your diet, and your belly (and your immune system) will love them.

Polyphenol-rich foods include:

- blueberries
- flaxseed meal (I like it freshly ground and always refrigerate my seeds and meal)
- raw cacao
- plums
- cherries
- hazelnuts
- red wine (if you can tolerate it)
- resveratrol
- pomegranate
- curcumin
- and my favorite, green tea!

Chemical constituents in this class of food also travel through your small intestine largely undigested. The portion of the polyphenol-rich foods that make it to the colon are broken down by your gut bacteria into metabolites that increase the good guys and decrease the bad guys, helping you with your healthy inner ecology.

Several of these foods, including green tea, also have anti-microbial and anti-biofilm activity, supporting the inhibition of yeast overgrowth like *Candida albicans* and the formation of bacteria like *e.coli*, from disrupting the balanced microbiota population.

The polyphenols essentially act as prebiotics for your gut bacteria. Prebiotics are like food for your good bacteria – they are PRE biotics. The relationship between the polyphenol-rich foods and your gut bacteria is symbiotic. The bacteria work to break down the chemical bonds in the polyphenols to their biologically active components and the polyphenols feed and shape shift the make-up of the bacterial population. A win-win! Green tea anyone?