

Prebiotic-Probiotic-Synbiotic Comparison Sheet

Use this one-page guide when the supplement aisle starts sounding smarter than it is.

Category	What It Means	Why Someone Might Try It	Main Caution
Prebiotic	An ingredient that feeds selected gut microbes	to support stool frequency or microbiome activity	may worsen gas or fullness
Probiotic	Live microbial strains	to support transit, stool form, or broader gut regulation	results depend on the exact strain or blend
Synbiotic	A probiotic plus a prebiotic in one formula	to combine both support levers in one product	evidence is still formula-specific and the added prebiotic may backfire

Best Use Questions

Prebiotic

- Do I tolerate fermentable fibers reasonably well?
- Am I mainly trying to support stool frequency or stool softness?

Probiotic

- Do I want the cleaner trial with fewer added variables?
- Do I know which strains or blends actually have constipation data?

Synbiotic

- Does a combo formula make sense for me, or does it just sound more advanced?
- Am I willing to watch for added-prebiotic bloating?

Bottom Line

The best next step is not always the most complicated label. Choose the category that fits your symptoms, your tolerance, and your ability to track the result clearly.