

# Comparison of intestinal health promotion potential between *Prunus armeniaca* seed and *Rheum rhabarbarum* in healthy rats

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## Abstract

Cereal and pseudocereal are widely used in the traditional Chinese medicinal practice. Based on a Chinese proverb “lung and intestine being interior-exteriorly related”, it is traditionally believed that *Prunus armeniaca* seed is able to promote the health of lung and gut by relieving cough and constipation simultaneously. This study was aimed to investigate the potential of *Prunus armeniaca* seed powder in promoting a healthy gut environment and was compared with *Rheum rhabarbarum* which is commonly used as cure for constipation. Rats were fed daily with *P. armeniaca* and *R. rhabarbarum* samples and different fecal parameters were assessed after 7 days of feeding. Although only *R. rhabarbarum* was able to markedly elevate fecal moisture and decrease intestinal transit time, it was revealed that the ability of *P. armeniaca* and *R. rhabarbarum* to enhance the growth of *Lactobacillus spp.* were comparable in contrast to normal control group. These results showed that both *P. armeniaca* and *R. rhabarbarum* ingestion possessed potential prebiotic properties. These findings at least in part supported the above traditional proverb, a culture heritage in using these materials for dietary therapy in intestinal health maintenance.

**Keywords:** traditional Chinese medicine; prebiotic; *Prunus armeniaca*; *Rheum rhabarbarum*

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