



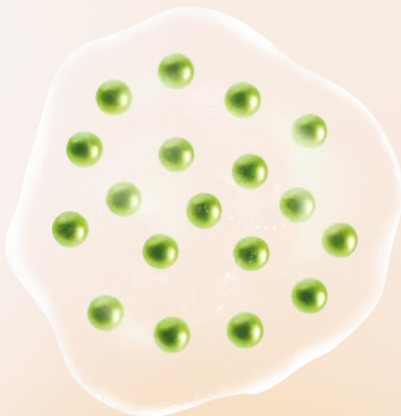
EDA Biotic®

Sinergia Probiótica

Prebióticos Inulina y FOS

Inulina

FOS



TECNOLOGÍA
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El concepto de prebiótico ha evolucionado, pero un consenso actual lo define como un sustrato que es selectivamente utilizado por microorganismos del huésped y confiere un beneficio para la salud [53]. No todos los carbohidratos dietarios cumplen este criterio; deben resistir la digestión en el tracto gastrointestinal superior, llegar intactos al colon y ser fermentados por bacterias específicas como *Bifidobacterium* o *Lactobacillus*, generando metabolitos como los ácidos grasos de cadena corta (SCFA) que tienen efectos beneficiosos locales y sistémicos [54]. Entre los prebióticos aceptados formalmente por la Asociación Científica Internacional de Probióticos y Prebióticos (ISAPP por sus siglas en inglés) se encuentran los fructanos tipo inulina (ITF), los galactooligosacáridos y la lactulosa [55].

Para que un compuesto sea considerado un prebiótico debe cumplir con varios criterios bien establecidos. En primer lugar, debe resistir la digestión gástrica y en el intestino delgado, de manera que llegue intacto al colon [56]; además, debe ser fermentado selectivamente por la microbiota colónica, favoreciendo el crecimiento de microorganismos beneficiosos [57]. Otro requisito fundamental es la producción de metabolitos con efectos positivos, como los ácidos grasos de cadena corta (SCFA), que contribuyen a la salud intestinal y sistémica [57]. Finalmente, es necesario que se demuestren efectos beneficiosos en estudios realizados en humanos, lo cual asegura la relevancia clínica de su acción [58].

Dentro de las alternativas de prebióticos se encuentra la inulina, un polisacárido de la familia de los fructanos, constituido por cadenas lineales de unidades de fructosa con un extremo terminal

de glucosa, enlazadas principalmente por uniones $\beta(2\rightarrow1)$, como puede verse en la Figura 7 [59].

Su grado de polimerización (DP) varía entre 2 y 60, alcanzando hasta 100 según la fuente vegetal [60]. Según la longitud de la cadena se distinguen: oligofructosa (DP <10), inulina nativa (DP 2-60) e inulina HP (DP >10) [58].

Esta estructura química le otorga propiedades funcionales como solubilidad diferencial, capacidad de formar geles, resistencia a la hidrólisis enzimática y estabilidad térmica, lo que la hace útil como fibra dietaria, reemplazo de azúcares y grasas en la industria alimentaria [57].

La inulina se encuentra en más de 30,000 especies vegetales, especialmente en raíces, tubérculos y bulbos [61], entre ellas las más representativas se muestran en la Figura 8. Las principales fuentes vegetales de inulina incluyen la achicoria (*Cichorium intybus*), cuya raíz contiene entre 15 y 20% de este fructano y es ampliamente utilizada a nivel industrial [62]. Otra fuente destacada es el topinambur o alcachofa de Jerusalén (*Helianthus tuberosus*), un tubérculo que aporta entre 14 y 18% de inulina [63].

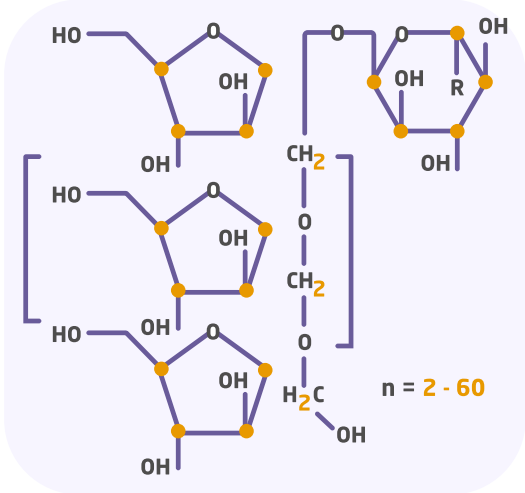


Figura 7. Estructura química de la inulina (fructanos tipo inulina), estructura elaborada con base en la información [59].

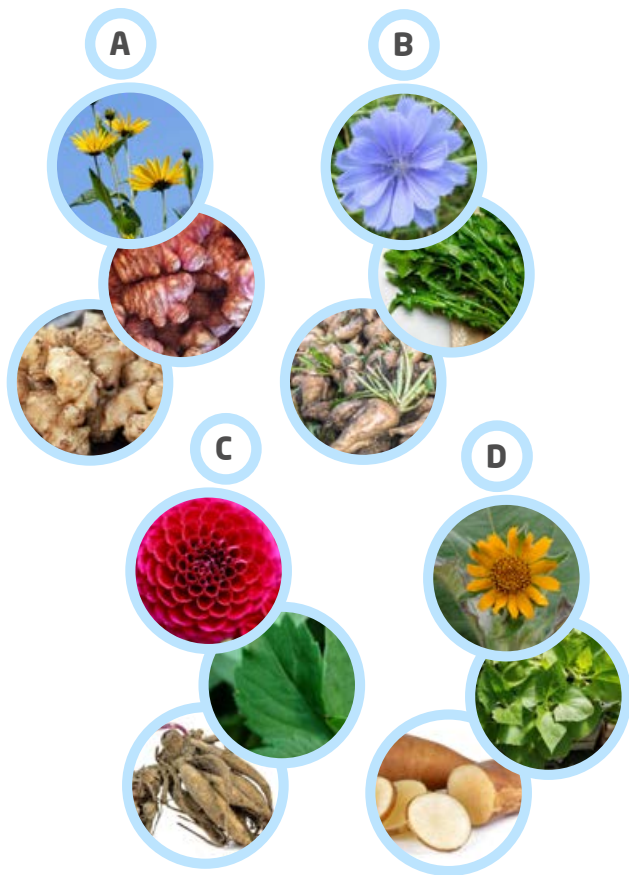


Figura 8. Principales fuentes vegetales comerciales de inulina. Alcachofa de Jerusalén (a), Achicoria (b), Dalia (c), Yacón (d) [60].



Asimismo, dalia (*Dahlia pinnata*) constituye un tubérculo con más del 10% de inulina, empleado incluso en aplicaciones farmacéuticas [57]. Finalmente, el Yacón (*Polymnia sonchifolia*), originario de Sudamérica, se distingue por sus raíces con un contenido de inulina que oscila entre 13 y 14%

Otros alimentos comunes que aportan inulina en la dieta diaria son ajo, cebolla, puerro, espárrago, trigo, cebada, centeno, plátano y alcachofa [60].

Las fibras dietarias como la inulina son productos naturales de las plantas que pueden extraerse mediante la disgregación del producto vegetal intacto, acumulando el material deseado y seguido de otros procesos externos y químicos. La inulina o los polímeros de fructosa, junto con otros carbohidratos como la glucosa, están encapsulados por la pectina, la celulosa y la hemicelulosa de la pared celular vegetal. Se encuentran rodeados por una red compleja [65]. Por lo tanto, la separación de la inulina del material completo requiere un conocimiento adecuado de su localización y de la metodología a aplicar, que permita degradar los componentes no deseados y lograr así el aislamiento del producto requerido [57]. La localización de la inulina en el producto vegetal se muestra en la Figura 9.

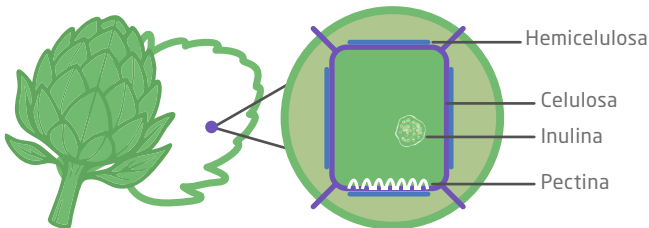


Figura 9. Localización de la inulina [57].

La evidencia en humanos y modelos animales respalda a la inulina como uno de los prebióticos más efectivos. Diversos ensayos clínicos muestran que su consumo puede inducir cambios significativos en las proporciones de la población microbiana después de la suplementación prebiótica durante 2 semanas (3 a 5 g/día de inulina), tal como lo muestra la Figura 10 [60]. Adicionalmente, se conoce que la inulina ejerce múltiples efectos benéficos como prebiótico. En primer lugar, modula la microbiota intestinal, favoreciendo el crecimiento de géneros como *Lactobacillus* y *Faecalibacterium prausnitzii* [55]. Estos cambios se asocian con mejoras en parámetros metabólicos, entre ellos, la sensibilidad a la insulina, el perfil lipídico y la reducción de triglicéridos [55].

Asimismo, la inulina ha mostrado potenciar la absorción de minerales como calcio y magnesio, lo que repercute positivamente en la salud ósea [57]. Finalmente, contribuye a la saciedad y al control del peso corporal, ya que la fermentación colónica produce ácidos grasos de cadena corta (SCFA) capaces de estimular hormonas reguladoras del apetito como GLP-1 y PYY [57].

Por su parte, los fructooligosacáridos (FOS) constituyen uno de los prebióticos más estudiados y se caracterizan por ser carbohidratos de bajo contenido calórico, solubles en agua y resistentes a la digestión en el intestino delgado [66]. Su estructura se basa en una unidad de glucosa unida a dos o más residuos de fructosa mediante enlaces β (2-1) o β (2-6), con ejemplos representativos como 1-kestosa, nistosa y fructofuranosil-nistosa [67].

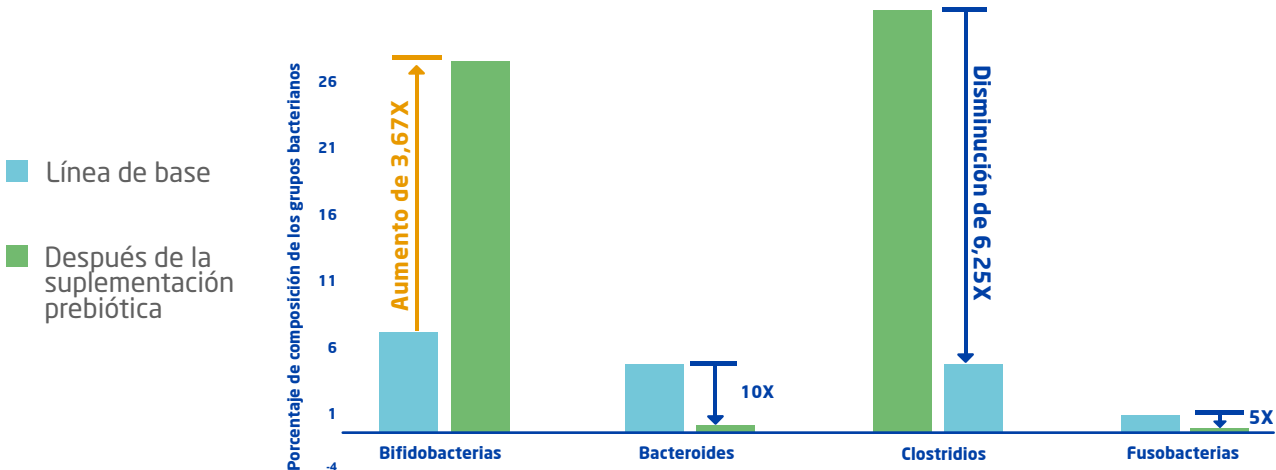


Figura 10. Cambios en las proporciones de la población microbiana después de la suplementación prebiótica durante 2 semanas (3 a 5 g/día de inulina): Regulación a la baja de *Bacteroides*, *Clostridia* y *Frusobacteria* y regulación al alta de *Bifidobacterias* [60].



Una vez alcanzan el colon, son fermentados por la microbiota intestinal generando ácidos grasos de cadena corta, lactato y otros metabolitos con efectos beneficiosos para la salud [68]. Estos compuestos promueven el crecimiento selectivo de bacterias como *Bifidobacterium* y *Lactobacillus*, inhiben la proliferación de microorganismos patógenos y se han asociado a mejoras en parámetros metabólicos y gastrointestinales, incluyendo la reducción de colesterol, la absorción de minerales como calcio y magnesio y la regulación del tránsito intestinal [66,69]. Diversos estudios han documentado su utilidad en la prevención y manejo de enfermedades como la obesidad, la diabetes tipo 2, las enfermedades cardiovasculares, el cáncer de colon y los trastornos inflamatorios intestinales [70].

Entre sus fuentes naturales destacan especies vegetales como trigo, cebolla, ajo, centeno, tomate, espárrago, achicoria, plátano y topinambur; gracias a estas propiedades, los FOS se emplean comercialmente como ingrediente funcional en la industria alimentaria [70]. Su inclusión en fórmulas infantiles, productos lácteos y panificados responde tanto a su capacidad prebiótica como a su contribución tecnológica, dado que mejoran la textura, el perfil sensorial y la retención de agua, a la vez que proporcionan un dulzor moderado equivalente al 30-40% del de la sacarosa [69].

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