

The Health Benefits of Fermentation

It provides 'good' bacteria that contribute to a healthy digestive system. It was used as a way of preserving foods and drinks before there was refrigeration. The process of fermentation, involves microorganisms such as bacteria, yeast or fungi that convert organic compounds - such as sugars and starch - into alcohol or acids. This enhances the natural, beneficial bacteria in food, known as *probiotics* or 'good' bacteria

Example: Starches and sugars in vegetables and fruits convert to lactic acid that acts as a natural preservative.

The bacteria help with digestion, absorption and assimilation of nutrients. And play a role in the function of our immune system. There are also 'bad' bacteria residing that also reside in the gut and the challenge is achieving the right balance between the two.

Eliminating refined high sugar foods and including probiotic-rich fermented foods is thought to bring the gut back into balance and support the immune system. (1 trillion bacteria = 4 pounds)

Powerhouse probiotics foods include:

Kefir - A probiotic cultured drink, kefir contains multiple strains of bacteria and yeast. Kefir is rich in minerals and vitamins, particularly the B vitamins and vitamin K

Sauerkraut - A fermented cabbage dish, high in fiber, vitamins A, C, K and various B vitamins and it's also a good source of iron, manganese, copper, sodium, magnesium and calcium

Miso – A traditional Japanese paste made from fermented soybeans and grains. It has lots of essential minerals, millions of beneficial bacteria and is a good source of various B vitamins, vitamins E, K, and folic acid.

Kimchi – Fermented cabbage and other vegetables containing vitamins A, B1, B2 and C and minerals such as iron, calcium and selenium

Lassi – A pre-dinner yogurt drink made from soured milk.

Kombucha – A fizzy, fermented black tea. Yeast turns sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide, and bacteria called acetobacter convert the alcohol into acetic acid, giving it a sour taste. Watch out for sugar in shop-bought Kombucha, you're better off making it at home

Tempeh – Fermented soy beans is a rich protein source.

Yogurt - Lactobacilli bacteria convert lactose sugar in milk into glucose and galactose, which break down further into lactic acid, giving yogurt its sour taste. Live bacteria remain in the yogurt and provide a valuable contribution to gut microflora

Positive Benefits of Fermented Foods:

- Fermented foods are easier to digest
- Increase the availability of vitamins and minerals for our bodies to absorb.
- Are supporting the mucosa (gut lining) as a natural barrier,
- Makes the immune system more robust
- Removes natural compounds interfering with the nutrient absorption

Fermentation at Home:

Pickles themselves are not fermented, and so do not offer the same health benefits of fermented vegetables.

You can ferment any vegetable but some work better than others. Cabbage is easy, as are radishes, carrots, turnips, apples and beetroot. The fermentation process creates a distinctive sour flavor but experiment to discover what you like.

Include prebiotics-rich foods too such as onions, asparagus, leeks and artichokes. These fiber-rich foods feed the good bacteria in the gut.

For More Information See:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/health-benefits-offermenting>